

from our viewpoint...

Decision wrong for western Kansas

Reaction to the decision denying the air quality permits for the two coal-fired power plants at Holcomb continues to add to the rhetoric and misinformation about the \$3.6 billion project.

Secretary of the Department of Health and Environment Roderick L. Bremby said in his denial of the permit that he was basing his decision on the "emerging information about the contribution of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to climate change and the potential harm to our environment and health if we do nothing."

The decision will mostly likely be taken to the courts, and based on the argument that the permit meets all the requirements of the state law it is probable the decision will be overturned.

A week before Bremby's decision, Chesapeake Energy, an Oklahoma City-based company that is the country's largest independent producer of natural gas, released a poll saying most Kansas citizens would rather have a combination of wind power or natural gas rather than coal-fired power plants.

In a customer survey it is possible to draft the questions to get an expected response. In one example of the poll questions asked, those (under 51 percent of the 500 questioned) who said they had heard at least something about the power plant program were presented the following:

"... thinking about the proposal to build two new coal-fired power plants near Holcomb—I'd like to read you two viewpoints," the pollster said.

"Some people say that consumers deserve access to affordable electricity and coal is the most affordable energy source. It is less than half the price of natural gas. Therefore, to keep power prices low for consumers, we should build additional coal-fired power plants in Kansas."

"Other people say that the best energy alternative is a combination of wind and natural gas, both of which are readily available in Kansas. The mixture of wind and natural gas ultimately saves money in the form of economic benefits to the state, cleaner air, healthier children, and fewer public health risks. We should not build additional coal-fired power plants in Kansas."

"Which viewpoint comes closest to your own?"

Not surprisingly, 65 percent said they opposed building additional coal plants based on the opinions above.

On another question the pollster read this to get a response, "Now I am going to read you a few statements that have been made about new coal-fired power plants here in Kansas. Please tell me for each one, whether knowing this information would make you more likely or less likely to support building new coal-fired power plants near Holcomb."

"Over 300,000 children live in Kansas within a 30-mile radius of a coal-fired power plant. Soot particles... could harm children's lungs as much as actively smoking according to a recent survey."

Again not surprisingly 83 percent were less likely to support a coal power plant based on this information.

The first time we read this in the poll release it seemed like a large number. Where are those 300,000 children? Certainly not in southwestern Kansas. We know there aren't 300,000 people in western Kansas, let alone children.

Read the question carefully...300,000 children live within a coal-fired power plant...not the power plants being proposed. This, of course, was not mentioned to those taking the survey.

The fact the proposed power plants are part of a multi-energy center and would be nearly "carbon neutral" is never mentioned.

Like the decision by Bremby, the poll results are biased, and lend proof to the old adage "figures never lie, but those who figure do." — Tom Betz



I am learning to pack lighter, faster

Packing is a real trick. I'm traveling a lot more these days, and I'm learning to pack lighter and faster.

I remember when the children were young and we lived in the Colorado mountains, I would dream of our annual trip to Denver and start packing a month before we left. We'd travel by car and I'd take everything but the kitchen sink.

Then we started traveling by airplane to National Newspaper Association meetings, and I had to cut down on my baggage. Still you could take a lot in a couple of carry-ons and two checked bags.

By this time, I wasn't carting around stuff for babies and small children. Most of the time, it was just Steve and me.

Our annual Mexico vacation still required lots of luggage because there was no laundry facilities at the resort. I suppose I could wash our underwear out by hand in the sink and hung the pieces on the towel rack, but that seems tacky and besides, I'm on vacation.

A few years ago, a laundry opened a couple of blocks from the hotel. You just take whatever you want washed over there and the nice Mexican ladies run it through the washer and



cynthia haynes

• open season

dryer and fold it for you. You smiled. They smile. You pay and everyone is happy.

This allowed us to carry about half the clothes we normally took. Still, we tended to be prepared for temperatures from 50 to 100 degrees and ready for the next hurricane.

In January, I was lucky enough to go to Tunisia with a group of journalist. I took my computer bag, a 21-inch carry-on and a large suitcase. Every inch was stuffed and the weight was at the maximum.

One of the journalists was a Turkish television reporter — a slim young woman who had her computer case and a single 21-inch carry on bag. She looked neat and put together every day. She filed stories each night and appeared on camera several times.

How did she do it? We were on a 10-day trip. How did she bring enough stuff to look good for that long?

Her secret was simple. She said she carried two pair of black slacks and a long skirt, a blazer, several sleeveless shells, six long-sleeved blouses, underwear, an extra pair of shoes, some small pieces of jewelry and some shawl/scarves for either warmth or to cover her head when going into a mosque. She used the hotel laundry to recycle her clothes.

She also didn't buy a lot of junk while on the trip, so she had little to take up space on the way home.

Now, I can almost do that, but not quite. I still take the same number of pieces of luggage, but they aren't usually full on the trip out.

I, however, seemed compelled to buy trinkets, gifts and junk. I need to take home every piece of literature I get from the ministries of Agriculture, Tourism and Foreign Affairs, and from hotels, vendors and street people.

On the way to someplace, my bags are light. I feel good about the way I have packed.

On the way home, I feel like a donkey with huge panniers on each side of me.

Someday, I'll learn to ship things home, but so far, I've been too cheap. After all, it's not that heavy. I can just put it in my carry on.

Right?

Rhetoric drowning out facts

Kansas House Republican legislators expressed their concern Thursday that the efforts of those opposed to coal-fired power plants in Kansas is drowning out the facts about Sunflower Electric's proposed Holcomb plant expansion denied last week by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius administration.

"State law required Sunflower to use the best available control technology when designing, constructing, and operating this expansion," said Rep. Carl Holmes (R-Liberal). "And because of those efforts, the plants' design would have made it the cleanest of all the plants in Kansas and the region."

Rep. Holmes, Chairman of the House Energy and Utilities Committee, said the design would have allowed Sunflower to operate all three plants in a way where mercury emissions would not exceed those of the existing plant. Existing water rights would have been used by the project and because of an existing regulation of the Kansas Division of Water Resources, the impact on the Ogallala aquifer will be unchanged.

Rep. Rob Olson (R-Olathe), Vice-Chairman of the House and Energy Utilities Committee, said that much of the opposition has been about the alleged impact the proposed plant expansion could have on climate change. However, those who claim to support the expansion of renewable energy sources like wind completely ignore the Sunflower's pledge to use renewable sources and include them in the expansion.

"Not much has been reported about Sunflower's commitment to using renewable sources to provide energy for our state," Rep. Olson said. "Part of the expansion plan was to



tom betz

• t, t & o

build new high-voltage transmission lines that would connect to Kansas wind farms, making them part of the national energy grid from coast to coast. The denial indefinitely delays Sunflower's ability to build transmission lines necessary for additional wind power growth in Kansas."

Rep. Larry Powell (R-Garden City), Chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee, said Sebelius' administration based its decision on Secretary Bremby's opinion that additional carbon dioxide in the atmosphere presents a "substantial endangerment" to the public health of Kansans. However, current Environmental Protection Agency and Kansas regulations do not consider carbon dioxide a pollutant and Kansas law does not give the Secretary or Kansas Department of Health and Environment the power to regulate carbon dioxide or any other unregulated emission.

"Sunflower's expansion included the development of the only fully integrated bioenergy center in the country," Powell said. "The center was to include a biodiesel and an ethanol plant; an anaerobic digester, a dairy farm, and a microalgae reactor that would have utilized carbon dioxide from the power plants. This would have made the expansion nearly carbon neutral. However, this denial could keep the center from being built."

House Speaker Melvin Neufeld (R-Ingalls) said basing the denial on the carbon dioxide concerns could have negative consequences on other industries in our state.

"Kansas feedlots and heavy industry as well as other power plants, including ethanol plants produce carbon dioxide. Does the Sebelius administration plan to regulate them as well," Speaker Neufeld asked. "If carbon dioxide is truly a substantial danger, one plant in Kansas that could be carbon neutral won't solve the problem when countries like Indonesia plan to build 40 coal-fired power plants in the next two years."

Neufeld emphasized again the denial will have a long term negative impact on the state's economy.

"Not only do we lose the \$3.6 billion expansion investment but those hundreds of jobs won't happen, other companies considering expansion in Kansas may see us as an unfriendly place to do business and tens of thousands of Kansans now face the very real possibility of higher electric bills," Neufeld said.

House Majority Leader Ray Merrick (R-Stilwell) warned if Kansas continues to refuse to allow baseload power expansion to happen in our state, we could soon be experiencing the power brownouts that happen in other states like California.

"The North American Electric Reliability Council warned last year that power plants and transmission lines are not being built fast enough to meet demands," Majority Leader Merrick said. "The Holcomb expansion would have helped fill the void that can only be met with new baseload generation -- the energy needed to be available at all times to power homes, industry, hospitals and schools in Kansas."

Sunflower Electric Power Corporation is a regional wholesale power supplier that owns and operates gas and coal-fired generating plants and a 1,200-mile transmission system for the needs of its six member cooperatives, which serve 118,000 people spread throughout a 21,000 square mile area in western Kansas.

Sunflower provides power to regional utilities in western Kansas and in 10 states.

Goodland is one of Sunflower Electric's customers in northwest Kansas.

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

e-mail: star-news@nwkansan.com

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor

Pat Schiefen, Society Editor

Sharon Corcoran, Repoter

Ramona C. Sanders, Reporter

Jordie Mann, Jessica Corbin, Advertising Sales

Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Betty Morris, James Jackson

Lana Westfahl, Kris McCool, Rebecca Foster, James Ornelas,

Amanda Campbell, Mike Jackson



nwkansan.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkansan.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansan.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, July 4th and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkansan.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansan.com

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; web address — roberts.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; web e-mail address — brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; Fax (202) 225-5124 web address — www.jerrymoran.house.gov

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 124-N, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676; e-mail address — jmorrison@ink.org

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Rm. 128-S, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785)-296-7399; e-mail address — ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Kansas Attorney General Paul Morrison, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767