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FOR THE HEALTH OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

Kansas Rural Center Legislative Policy Watch

Issue No. 5, February 2, 2024

Legislative Policy

Watch is a weekly online publication of the Kansas Rural Center (KRC) during the State of Kansas legislative session. KRC is a private, non-profit organization that promotes the long term health of the land and its people, through education, research and advocacy that advance an ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially just agriculture.

Policy Watch is produced by Paul Johnson, KRC Policy Analyst, pjohnson@centurylink.net

KANSAS WATER OFFICE BUDGET OVERVIEW

This 34-page overview begins with KWO's purpose and priorities. This \$39 million agency is primarily funded by the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF), user fees from the agency's Public Water Supply (PWS) program and the State General Fund (SGF). The budget is split between 'Water Planning & Implementation' - \$29.3 million - and the PWS program - \$9.6 million. Budget details for these two programs are found on pages 2-3 and pages 30-33. This overview continues with an explanation of the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) which has 24 members – 13 voting and 11 ex-officio. There is a map showing the location of the 13 voting members and their affiliations. The 11 ex-officio members are listed along with their present positions. There are 14 Regional Planning Areas and a map of water resource planning basins. The State Water Plan Fund is explained in detail regarding funding sources and historical lapses in required state funding. SWPF program/projects are detailed on page 8. Each program/project is explained in detail on pages 9 to 29.

Senate Sub. for HB 2302 established two new grant programs within KWO. The Technical Assistance Grant designates \$5 million for planning, engineering, or other technical assistance necessary to develop plans for water infrastructure projects. (There were 122 applications submitted with requests totaling \$56 million). The Water Projects Grant designates \$12 million for construction, maintenance, or replacement of water related infrastructure. (There were 187 applications submitted with requests totaling \$323 million).

[2024 Kansas Water Office: Budget Overview](#)

Kansas Legislative Research Department (KLRD) senior fiscal analyst Luke Drury wrote a 21-page budget analysis of KWO's 2023-2025



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budget. This analysis lists the agency's supplemental requests and the Governor's final budget recommendations for KWO. Each KWO program is explained in content and fiscal numbers. The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee held the budget hearings for KWO and made recommendations of no changes to the Senate Ways & Means Committee for final Senate recommendations.

[Kansas Water Office 2023-25 Budget Analysis](#)

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENT - 2024

Division of Environment Budget Director – Leo Henning – authored this powerpoint presentation. It starts with KDHE's organizational chart and the divisions of public health, environment, and healthcare finance. The Division of Environment protects Kansans by ensuring - clean air to breathe, clean water to drink and clean soil to live on. This Division has five bureaus: environmental remediation, water, environmental field services, waste management and air. There is a chart showing the various programs under each bureau. Funding source and expenditure charts follow for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. For 2025, the Governor has recommended \$10 million in SGF for small town (under 1,000) water and sewer infrastructure projects. There is a map showing the small town's water and sewer projects. There is a final page listing the challenges from employee recruitment/retention to per- and poly-fluorinated chemicals (PFAS) to nitrates in groundwater to drinking water & wastewater operators workforce.

[DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENT BUDGET](#)

As with KWO, KLRD's Luke Drury presented a 6-page budget analysis on the Division of Environment to the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources committee. This write-up started with a chart of the last 10 years for the Environment Division. It explains the five bureaus by listing programs and funding sources. As part of agency reorganization, KDHE's laboratory is now listed under the Division of Public Health instead of Environment. There was \$30.9 million in federal pandemic funds dedicated to building a new laboratory, which will be one block from the Capitol. There are a couple of pages on the adjustments to programs for FY 2025. (No changes were made to the Division of Environment budget by the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources committee.)

[KLRD Budget Analysis, 2024 Session](#)



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KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE 2024 BUDGET OVERVIEW

This 32-page overview is the most complete analysis of KDA's six divisions and 15 programs. KDA has 352 employees with 123 headquarter professionals, 34 administrative staff and 195 in the field. For the entire agency and the six divisions, statutory authority is listed by statute number. There is a budget chart on the first page showing the budgets for the fifteen programs from 2021 through the Governor's recommendations for 2025 of \$70.1 million. Expenditures are broken out by salary, fees, professional services, grants, aid to locals, rents and all other operating expenses.

The first program listed is the agricultural laboratory that moved to Manhattan in 2020. There is a listing of purposes. Laboratory supplies are increasing in cost, as are the cost of utilities for testing for these regulatory programs of meat & poultry, pesticides, dairy, etc. Agricultural marketing comes second.

There are ten employees and a budget of \$2.5 million, with a million of that coming from lottery funds. This program was moved to KDA from the Kansas Department of Commerce in 2011. Primary tasks are agricultural products (development, value-added, trademark registration), farmers' market (definition, registration, liability protection) and fostering development of agricultural industry. There are six sub-programs with definition of activities and budget numbers.

Animal Health has twenty-three employees and a budget of \$4.1 million. The purposes cover ensuring public health for the state's livestock production to eradicating infectious animal diseases to regulating pet animals to providing timely brand inspection services for counties and livestock markets. Conservation has ten employees with a 2025 budget of \$23.6 million. This program works closely with county conservation districts and provides financial assistance to organized watershed and drainage districts to reduce flooding through flood control structures and non-structural measures. Conservation implements Best Management Practices in a voluntary partnership with farmers, ranchers, urbanites and other land managers. Funding is from federal funds, State Water Plan Funds and fees. Water Resources program includes water appropriations, water management and water structures. This program has 84 employees with a budget of \$14.7 million. Water appropriations program administers the Kansas water Appropriations Act through rules and regulations pertaining to the management of water resources. Water structures program regulates human activities that affect the flow of rivers and streams. Administrative Services has 34 employees and a 2025 budget of \$7 million. The purpose is to provide management and policy oversight to KDA and officially represent the agency at the state, national and international level. This administration program provides general policy, outreach, coordination, and management functions for the entire agency.

KDA 2024 Budget Overview

This 29-page KLRD budget analysis for FY 2023 to FY 2025 provides in-depth information on the Governor's KDA budgetary recommendations and the special enhancements requested by the agency. This 2025 KDA budget is financed by State General Funds (\$14.6 million), State Water Plan Funds (\$22.9 million), lottery funds (\$1 million), federal funds (\$12.7 million) and all other funds/fees (\$18.8 million).

KDA 2023-25 Budget Analysis

CONSUMER UTILITY PLANS

After a few tries, the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) finally approved EVERGY's demand-side management (DSM) program portfolio, which includes energy efficiency and demand response programs for residential and business customers. In the recent EVERGY rate case, the KCC approved optional Time of Use (TOU) electric rates. Up until now, EVERGY has only had a pilot program for TOU rates. The KCC came before the Senate Utilities Committee to update the Committee on Kansas electric rates.

EVERGY proposed four residential DSM programs agreed to by the KCC. (1) The Whole Home Efficiency Program provides financial incentives and rebates towards EE measures and replacements. Specific programs include home assessments, repair kits, on-bill financing for appliances and EE products. (2) Home Energy Education Program provides home energy education reports to evaluate customers' homes and provide feedback to integrate EE and demand response measures to reduce energy usage. (3) Home Demand Response Program has measures to reduce load at peak usage periods. EVERGY provides residential customers with smart thermostats and water heater controllers to lessen peak usage. (4) Hard-to-Reach Homes Program provides additional EE program incentives to rural customers and subsidized housing. EVERGY's four business programs are similar to the residential programs with some changes specific to business needs. Building Operator Certification courses train business employees on DSM within their own buildings. TOU rates fall under the broader category of time-variable pricing. With the advent of advanced metering, a TOU rate means that the price a customer pays for electricity changes during the day, from lower rates when electricity is not in peak demand and higher rates when electric usage is in peak demand. EVERGY's initial residential TOU rate schedule features three time periods of rate differentiation (on-peak, off-peak, and super off-peak). Starting April 1, 2024, EVERGY will offer 2-period Residential rates (on-peak and off-peak during the summer; off-peak and super off-peak during winter). In the summer, on-peak is from 4pm to 8pm Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). Off-peak is all other hours. In Winter, Super off-peak is midnight to 6am, and off-peak is all other hours. For TOU rate comparisons: summer on-peak is 24 cents per kwh, and off-peak is 6 cents per kwh. There is some difference between Metro EVERGY TOU rates and Kansas Central EVERGY TOU rates.

KCC Utilities Division staff gave an update on the regional competitiveness of Kansas electric rates. The comparison was based on Kansas and nine regional states. All of the data came from the Department of Energy – Energy Information Administration. This rate comparison consisted of average residential, industrial, and commercial electricity rates for

each Investor-Owned Utility operating in these states. Statewide average electricity rates for cooperatives and municipal utilities were charted. Finally, a statewide average electricity rate for all consumers across all utility types. For the 38 Investor-Owned Utilities in these states, EVERGY Kansas Central (EKC) ranked 10th highest in rates and 14th highest in bills for residential customers. Rates were 8.23% higher than the average utility outside Kansas. Bills were 7.55% higher than average outside Kansas. For commercial, EKC ranked 15th in rates, 4.51% higher than average outside Kansas. EKM ranked 24th in rates, -3.58% lower than the average outside Kansas. For industrial, EKC ranked 19th in rates, 2.64% higher than average outside Kansas. EKM ranked 5th in rates, 22% higher than average outside Kansas.

[Presentation on Important Recent Utility Developments](#)

[Update on Regional Competitiveness of Kansas Electric Rates](#)

Farm to Food Bank Funding/Legislation

The Kansas Farm-to-Food Bank program continues the success of the Local Food Purchase Assistance program which was a short-term USDA-funded program managed by KDA and the Kansas' food banks (Kansas Food Bank, Harvesters, Second Harvest). KDA had received two (LFPA) grants of \$2.5 million each which have now been spent through the three food banks. These funds were used to purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, beef, pork, honey and cheese from 22 Kansas producers. The Governor put \$1 million from SGF into KDA's budget to continue this program in 2025. The Kansas Farm-to-Foodbank program is an investment in local and regional food production that improves Kansas' self-sufficiency. HB 2564 – which will be heard before the House Agriculture and Natural Resources committee on Tuesday – February 6 – codifies this farm-to-foodbank program into statute.

[Karen Siebert's testimony in support of the Governor's budget recommendation](#)

[HOUSE BILL No. 2564](#)

Upcoming Events



WEALTH Day at the Capitol

February 5 - 9am - 4pm

KS State Capitol

SW 8th & SW Van Buren St

Topeka, KS 66612

Join organizations, advocates and legislatures to connect on water, energy, air, land, transportation,

During the legislative session, the [League of Women Voters of Kansas \(LWVK\)](#) hold weekly zoom calls at **4pm on Fridays** with their policy observers. The League has offered to open up these calls for interested Policy Watch readers. Cille King is the policy coordinator for the League.

and health.

[More Info Here](#)

You will need to email Cille at advocacy@lwwk.org to be added to the notice list. Agendas come out a day or so before the call.

Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date Kansas Rural Center's news and reflections from the Capitol!



[See Previous Editions of Policy Watch](#)

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If you are receiving KRC Policy Watch through one of these organizations and have questions, contact the organization directly.

If you wish to be removed from the KRC list, contact info@kansasruralcenter.org

For questions about Policy Watch content, contact Paul Johnson at pdjohnson@centurylink.net

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