Coal plant debate also about power needs

LAWRENCE (AP) — Timothy Carr delivered his message with a matter-of-fact tone: The world is going to consume more energy; little of the electricity it will need will come from renewable resources, and much of that power will come from coal.

Carr, a senior Kansas Geological Survey scientist, spoke last week at a University of Kansas conference. His remarks came a day before former Vice President Al Gore received a Nobel Prize for his campaign on global warming and a day after environmentalists had denounced Sunflower Electric Power Corp.’s plan for two coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas.

Some of the loudest criticism of Sunflower’s proposal is heard from the city of Lawrence, and Carr seemed to sense that some audience members wouldn’t like his assessment.

“Shoot the messenger,” he said.

Sunflower’s $3.6 billion proposal has put it at the center of a debate over carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. But another question is part of the discussion: whether Kansas needs as much capacity to generate electricity as Sunflower plans to build.

“When you combine the benefits of both conservation and wind and look at the current coal plants and nuclear plant that we have, my view is that there is a very limited need for additional coal plants in the future,” Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson, co-chairman of an energy policy council, said during a recent interview.

Sunflower is seeking an air-quality permit from the Department of Health and Environment, and Secretary Rod Bremby has said he will decide whether to grant it by the end of this month.

Environmentalists want Bremby to reject the permit over the plants’ CO2 emissions, even though the state doesn’t regulate the greenhouse gas, which most scientists see as a major contributor to global warming. Many legislators, including Senate President Steve Morris and House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, are pressuring him to approve a permit, seeing the project as vital economic development.

The project would add two, 700-megawatt plants next to Sunflower’s existing 360-megawatt plant outside Holcomb, in Finney County. Construction on the second plant would be finished in 2013.

How big is the project? The total generating capacity of 1,400 megawatts would be enough to supply all of the households in Denver, Oklahoma City and Albuquerque, N.M., combined. Sunflower and a sister company, Mid-Kansas Electric Co., have 400,000 customers; together, the two have 1,200 megawatts of generating capacity.

Sunflower would export much of the new power into other states and argues the new plants will lead to bigger transmission lines that could hook up to wind farms. Sunflower executives — and many legislators — have no doubt the power will be needed, both in rural Kansas and points well beyond.

“We’re entering into a time frame where energy growth is phenomenal,” said Sunflower spokesman Steve Miller. “It’s probably going to be a once-in-a-generation time when rural Kansas is going to benefit.”

The same growth in energy consumption is expected worldwide, something Carr noted in his conference presentation. The International Energy Agency projects that energy consumption will be 52 percent higher in 2030 than it was in 2004.

And, as Carr also noted, coal is expected to remain a big source, particularly as China, India and other developing nations attempt to catch up to an American or European standard of living.

Of course, that prospect raises fears about climate change. Bill Downey, president and chief exec-
utive officer of Kansas City Power & Light Co., said after his own conference speech, “We have to find a way to clean up coal.”

But at least a few environmentalists don’t accept Carr’s assessment of energy needs over the next few decades and believe conservation efforts can significantly slow any growth in energy demand.

Dan Nagengast, executive director of the Kansas Rural Center, said Americans shouldn’t assume that other nations will emulate the “gluttonous” U.S. lifestyle. And, he said, legislators, utility executives and analysts aren’t considering the potential of homes and farms generating their own, “off-grid” power from solar panels or windmills.

“Everybody’s defending a system,” Nagengast said. “There’s no thought in there that there’s other ways to be, other than, you know, a giant utility with giant coal plants and giant wind-turbine arrays.”

Even participants in the debate who aren’t contemplating such a future question Sunflower’s desire to build so much coal-fired generating capacity and sell most of the electricity outside the state.

“Do we want western Kansas to be the place where every other state builds their coal-fired plants?” Parkinson said.

Miller said such arguments make him “almost livid,” adding that Sunflower wants to export power for the same reason Kansans export other products, such as aircraft.

And Jim Owen, a spokesman for the Edison Electric Institute, a trade group for investor-owned utilities, said assuming that a company will generate power only for customers within an assigned territory is an old business model.

“Increasingly, we’re moving to regional electricity markets,” he said. “Distinctions of this nature will become less important.”

Owen, Sunflower and others accept projections that Americans’ demand for electricity will grow enough that new coal-fired power plants must be built to keep up with it. Environmentalists aren’t likely to concede the point.

Entrepreneur’s path is in your reach

Digital Evolution founder advises others to trust their own destinies and start a business.

By HUMA KHAN
Special to The Star

Everyone — not just business owners — can and should be an entrepreneur, according to Neal Sharma, founder and chief executive of the Overland Park-based Digital Evolution Group.

Being an entrepreneur versus an employee is simply a matter of choice, said Sharma, 31, who started his e-consultancy in 1999 with Dale Hazlett when they were graduate students at the University of Kansas.

“That choice is rooted in fear and business illiteracy,” he said last week as the guest speaker in the 2007 Entrepreneur Speakers Program Series at Polsinelli Shalton Flanagan Suethaus PC.

“If you can overcome that, you can drive your own car, party till you drop and build a building based on your beliefs.”

Sharma outlined his reasoning to about 40 people who attended the event, sponsored by the Institute of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Missouri—Kansas City.

“Never trust your destiny to the business acumen of someone else,” Sharma said. “In my business, my partners and I drive the car.”

Entrepreneurs, he said, must decide how they are going to steer the car and mitigate risks.

For example, even though Sharma and his partners initially spent hours designing creative software tools, they realized that focusing on consulting services was more profitable. With the capital raised by focusing on

SEE SUCCESS | D25

SUCCESS: ‘No end to the party’ for entrepreneurs

FROM D23

one aspect, they were then able to expand their services. Digital Evolution, now a $2.7 million firm, has recorded double-digit growth since its inception.

Another reason for pursuing an entrepreneur focus, he said, is that there is “no end to the party!” An employee’s salary may reach a ceiling, but an entrepreneurial venture can catapult to $30 million or $350 million. Entrepreneurs are limited only by their own potential, Sharma said.

He likened being an entrepreneur to building a cathedral. Since people spend their work life laying bricks to construct a building, so to speak, why not build one that is an embodiment of one’s beliefs, convictions and morals?

Employees can also drive the car, hold a never-ending party and build a cathedral, Sharma said, if they are part of an entrepreneurial venture that allows them to grow. He said the 30 employees at his firm have the opportunity to drive the car relative to their amount of risk in the company.

Sharma, who started Digital Evolution with $300,000 raised from four angel investors, said the average employee does not take any less risk than an entrepreneur. In fact, he said, employees are bound to others’ decisions and have to worry about issues such as health care and taxes.

“What you are thinking about is how am I going to happen to the world tomorrow, not what’s going to happen to me,” he said.

The biggest challenge for Digital Evolution was being distracted by its own creativity, Sharma said, noting the importance of focusing on a narrow set of goals before spending capital on other services or products.

Sharma outlined three things necessary to start a business: intellectual capital, which he described as processes in systems, not people; financial capital; and relationship capital.

“If you understand that your reputation is your greatest asset, then you understand that relationship is important,” he said.
Joint fiber-optic cable lease helps KU, K-State connect

BY ROB ROBERTS | STAFF WRITER

The University of Kansas and Kansas State University have leased more than 250 miles of unused fiber-optic cable, adding crucial new digital capacity and connectivity for the universities' research operations.

Denise Stephens, KU's chief information officer, said the deal will provide a 50-fold increase in the campuses' ability to share information with the world while putting KU and K-State on a digital par with university research communities in surrounding states.

"This was critical," Stephens said. "We've got faculty and researchers, particularly in the science, technology, mathematics and engineering areas, who need to, in real time, move large amounts of data all over the world. The very limited bandwidth we have on this campus ... just is not enough. It has become increasingly difficult for some of our research community to compete for grants and work effectively with colleagues abroad and in other parts of the United States."

The cable, which will serve researchers, faculty and students at KU Medical Center as well as at the KU and K-State main campuses, was leased for 20 years from two providers.

Stephens said she was not yet at liberty to disclose the providers. But another KU source disclosed that one provider is Denver-based Qwest Communications International Inc.

KU and K-State will split the $2.5 million cost of the cable during the life of the 20-year deal, Stephens said. Other research universities and entities will be allowed to tie in.

Most of the cable runs from Smith Center, Kan., to downtown Kansas City, where it connects with high-speed networks, including Internet2 and National LambdaRail, a major research network.

That stretch runs along Interstate 70 in northeast Kansas, taking it by KU's main campus in Lawrence and K-State's in Manhattan.

In addition, a branch runs between Downtown and the KU Medical Center campus in Kansas City, Kan., said Jim Bingham, the medical center's chief information officer.

Bingham said a similar branch could be extended from either the medical center or KU-Lawrence to serve K-State's planned satellite campus in Olathe.

KU and K-State are expected to "light" the unused, or "dark" fiber, in the fall.

roberts@bizjournals.com | 816-421-5900
Warming seen as a trigger for wars

Experts foresee the prospect of battles over food, water and land if climate change transforms Earth.

By CHARLES J. HANLEY
The Associated Press

What does global warming have to do with global peace? The globe may find out sooner than we think, experts say.

"Climate change is and will be a significant threat to our national security and in a larger sense to life on Earth as we know it to be," retired Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, former U.S. Army chief of staff, told a congressional panel last month.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee agrees. In awarding the prize Friday to climate campaigner Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N-sponsored network of scientists, the Norwegian committee said that the stresses of a changing global environment may heighten the "danger of violent conflicts and wars, within and between states."

Those like Sullivan who study the issues point particularly to the impact of drought and altered climate patterns on food and water supplies, leading to shortages that could spur huge, destabilizing migrations of people internationally.

In a report in May, scientists advising the German government noted specific scenarios that could upend the lives of millions, driving them across borders to overwhelm other lands.

"The dieback of the Amazon rain forest or the loss of the Asian monsoon could have in-calculable consequences for the societies concerned," said the German Advisory Council on Global Change.

In some cases, potential backlashes from warming weren't foreseen even a few years ago. One example: The stunningly swift shrinking of Arctic Ocean ice in recent summers has drawn attention to looming international disputes over rights to the newly open seas.

The unpredictability of when, where and how some of the changes will occur has frustrated Pentagon planners and others.

A 2003 report commissioned by the Pentagon involved a scenario for abrupt climate change that hinged in part on fears that the Atlantic's Gulf Stream current might slow, chilling northern Europe and eastern North America and curtailting food harvests. Now, however, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says it's "very unlikely" that the current will slow abruptly.

Unpredictability was dispelled elsewhere in the panel's reports this year. It found, for example, that warmer and drier conditions were already shortening the growing season in Africa's Sahel, a conflict-ridden region long burdened by food and water shortages.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the German scientists cited other potential "hotspots," including:

- Egypt's vital, low-lying Nile Delta, where the livelihoods of millions may be at risk from rising sea levels and salinization of agricultural areas.
- The Asian subcontinent, where the retreat of Himalayan glaciers will dry up downstream water supplies, and rising seas and stronger cyclones will threaten tens of millions on the Bay of Bengal coast.
- The poor nations of Central America, where more intense hurricanes could severely damage economies, destabilize political systems and send streams of uprooted people toward the U.S. border.

At the same time, the German scientists said, the climate challenge is an opportunity to unite the international community. In that spirit, Britain last April organized the first U.N. Security Council meeting to consider climate change as a threat to international peace.

Global efforts have faltered, however, in trying to cut back emissions of carbon dioxide and other global-warming gases.

Leaders are growing nervous. At the U.S. Army War College last March, military and scientific specialists quietly convened in a colloquium on "Global Climate Change: National Security Implications." Among the topics discussed: the possible need for a new National Security Act to "oblige intergovernmental cooperation" on climate by future U.S. administrations.

Area experts aid panel

Two Kansas scientists and one from Missouri were members of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize, along with Al Gore.

Chuck Rice, a Kansas State University professor of agronomy, and Johannes Feddema, a University of Kansas geography professor, were lead authors of a global warming report. Tony Lupo, a University of Missouri associate professor of atmospheric science, was a contributing writer.

Marã Rose Williams |
Putting ‘family’ in family practice

BY NICOLE KELLEY
nkelley@theworldco.info

Family is a key word when it comes to one of Lansing’s newest physicians, not only in the office but at home.

For Dr. Jessica Yoakam, family is all in days work.

Yoakam recently joined the medical community of St. Luke’s Medical Group, and she said she hoped to bring an inviting practice that entire families will want to grow up with over the years.

Not only is family what brought Yoakam here; it’s what she said will make her stay.

As a new mother, Yoakam wanted to finally settle down and give her 21-month-old daughter, Ainsley, a place to grow up close to grandparents. Because her husband, Josh, grew up in Lansing, the Yoakam clan had several relatives to give them a tie to the area.

After attending medical school at the University of Kansas, completing her residency in Des Moines, Iowa, at Mercy-Mayo Family Medical Center and then a fellowship in women’s health at University Hospital in Cleveland, Yoakam said it was nice to have a place to call home.

She said her family has settled into their neighborhood nicely and is excited about all the friends that she, Josh and Ainsley will meet.

Yoakam said the transition into her new job is going smoothly. Already, she’s brought in toys for the waiting room of the office she shares with Dr. Samuel Dandar to make the practice more inviting for children and families.

Yoakam said her focus mostly would be on women and children’s health. But she added that when you see the mom and the kids, the father is not usually far behind. Such variety is what keeps her excited about work.

“I like going through the day never knowing what I’m going to see next or who the next patient will be,” she said.

For as long as she can remember, Yoakam said she always knew she’d be a doctor.

But with motherhood, she said she’s found herself understanding a different side of medicine. Through extra advice or tricks that worked for her, she said she hopes to give guidance to

SEE DOCTOR, PAGE 3A

JESSICA YOAKAM poses with her husband, Josh, and their 21-month-old daughter Ainsley. Yoakam just moved to Lansing and is a new family doctor with Saint Luke’s Medical Group.
Doctor: Putting family into practice

From Page 1A

her patients and make them feel like she can relate to their issues.

For example, Yoakam said many of her patients have been excited so far to hear she is supportive of stay-at-home parents. In Yoakam's family, it is Josh who stays home with their daughter.

At first, Yoakam and her husband had picked out a day care for Ainsley to attend because Yoakam was still in training and Josh was working as an epidemiologist, someone who works with disease outbreak investigation. With Josh's degree in public health and the fact that their daughter was born in the winter, neither parent felt comfortable sending Ainsley to day care.

It wasn't a hard decision, however. Josh said within days he gave his resignation and hasn't looked back, cherishing the time he has to give his daughter the upbringing him and Yoakam always hoped for.

Josh said that during the day Ainsley is stuck to his side like glue, but at 5 p.m. a switch flips when Yoakam comes home from work. That's when Ainsley shows her mom just how great having the home and family to come back to can be.
October has been designated Alpha Delta Kappa month. For those of you who aren’t aware of what this organization is all about, it is essentially a sorority created for women educators.

Alpha Delta Kappa was issued a charter in 1947, giving the sorority the privilege of organizing chapters in every one of the 50 States. In 1956, the ADK was made international. Today ADK has over 57,000 members and over 1,900 chapters in fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico, Jamaica and Australia.

Eligibility requirements for the sorority have been established. They include having been in a teaching position for at least two years; a member hopeful must be recommended by an active member and be actively engaged in education at the time of the initiation.

Membership requirements include regular attendance at meetings and willingness to abide by the ADK Constitution and bylaws.

The purposes of the sorority are:
- To give recognition to outstanding women educators who are actively engaged in teaching, administration, or some specialized field of the teaching profession.
- To build a fraternal fellowship which will add to their effectiveness in the promotion of excellence in education.
- To promote high standards in education and to assist in strengthening the status and advancement of the teaching profession.
- To promote educational and charitable projects and activities, to sponsor scholarships, to further and maintain worthy standards in the field of education and to cooperate with worthy community programs relating to education and charities.
- To contribute to world understanding, goodwill and peace through an international fellowship of women educators united in the ideals of education.

The women who are members of Alpha Delta Kappa find that the benefits include friendship and support as well as association with their educational peers. They also find that membership affords them the opportunity to promote excellence in education and gives them a forum where they can honor and recognize each other in the area of professional achievement. They stay informed through organizational publications, and develop professional and personal growth along with being exposed to developmental opportunities.

There are two chapters of Alpha Delta Kappa in Montgomery County, one in Independence, designated as Alpha Pi, which was chartered on May 6, 1962, and the Nu Chapter, which had it’s beginnings in Dearing. The Nu Chapter was first installed on December 2, 1950 in the Sunflower Room of the Dale Hotel. Said Smith, “I remember how fancy the Dale was back then. The room had velvet curtains, it was so nice.” Nu Chapter originally started with 25 members. Only three of the founding members are still active today. Their names are Jean Smith, Florence Babcock, and Doves Davis. These ladies still attend meetings and stay involved with the sorority.

Nu Chapter has 15 members today, Bobbi McClellan, a teacher at Community Elementary, is the present President; Jean Potter is President Elect; Jean Smith is the Secretary; Allison Wilson is their Chaplain, Ginny Barrett is the group’s Historian; Betty Mielke is the Corresponding Secretary.

The woman responsible for organizing the Chapter was Agries Shipman Robertson, a representative of Alpha Delta Kappa International. She was an extraordinary woman and revolutionary for that era. Robertson actually drove from town to town, school to school, recruiting women educators to become members of the sorority. Said Babcock, “I don’t think I would have become a member if Agnes hadn’t had a flat tire. She came into our school (Old Parker) and asked to use the phone. I had to tell her we didn’t have one. She was at her wit’s end, ‘What am I going to do, I have a flat tire,’ she said. Well, of course several of my older boys at the school were perfectly capable of changing her tire. So I asked them to do so. She gave them each a dollar for helping her.” Babcock began teaching at a very young age. She was 18 years old when she started and had some students that were 17. She had attended Ringo School before she became a teacher, there were actually students that had been in the first grade when she graduated.

Being a part of the Nu Chapter and ADK has given Florence experiences that she
never dreamed of, she said, "In the sorority I do things I never thought this country girl would ever do. I have spoken in front of 2,000 people, I have done more traveling than I ever thought possible." Her husband, Rolland is the official photographer for the group and Ginny Barrett often travels with the two of them, she said, "I have traveled and met so many nice people thanks to Florence. Of course, when we arrive, Rolland is always very popular because he has the camera."

During her career in Nu Chapter, she has been the State Treasurer (1966-1970); the State President (1986-1988); she has been given the honor of being named the Kansas Woman of Distinction in 1988; was Regional Historian from 1986 to 1988; was District III Chairman from 1983 to 1985; was South Central Grand Vice President from 1989 to 1991; Grand Historian from 1991 to 1993; and Jetancer Chairman from 1997 to 1999 which required her to attend seven International Conventions which are held in every even year. She was also honored as on the "Golden Sisters" at the 50th year celebration convention. She was the only member from the central region at the convention.

Dovea Davis got her start in teaching at the West Coffeyville School. She was also the Principal of the Dearing School for many years. She said, "I was just a member, not a regular member, driving back and forth to meetings. When we first started, we met in people's homes. We would read a report from the State and have some kind of educational program at each meeting. Of course our group was involved in civic activities as well."

The Nu Chapter offers a scholarship each year to a High School Senior, usually from Dearing, Caney, or Coffeyville. The Kansas level ADK has scholarships at Kansas University, Emporia University and Pittsburg State University. The Nu Chapter holds an auction each year to raise money for the local scholarship and the group contributes to the Salvation Army and other charitable organizations.

The International ADK organization gives $25,000 a year to St. Jude Children's Hospitals and Research facilities and another $25,000 to the Susan G. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research and education.

Jean Smith, who was teaching at Robbins School when she was first inducted, became the first President of Nu Chapter. She has some good memories of her early students, she said, "When I taught at Robbins, which is out on old Hwy 166, it's a church now, with a new building, but it was the oldest building in the county at one time. The Daltons actually went to school in that original building. Back when I started there, we had outhouses instead of indoor plumbing and a lot of times there would be snakes in there when we arrived early in the morning. And sometimes a rat would have been in my desk. Well my eighth grade boys, they were always very protective of me. They'd come armed with a baseball bat to deal with whatever critter was lurking there. They were really good to me, those boys." Not only was Jean the first President of the Nu Chapter. She was also listed in the 1973 volume of Outstanding Elementary Teachers of America and was honored by the Nu Chapter at one of their final meetings of the season. At that time she had been teaching for about 30 years. 10 of those years were in rural schools, 20 at Garfield Elementary in Coffeyville. At the time the group honored her, she was teaching a kindergarten class at Garfield. Florence was there to present Jean with a gift and gave a brief summary of her career.

These three wonderful women have many great memories to share about their years of teaching, how things have changed and developed in the area of education over the decades, and how much Nu Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa has meant to them. Spending time with them was an honor, it's wonderful to be with women who dedicated their lives to teaching children and who also dedicated themselves to Alpha Delta Kappa. Nu Chapter and kept the friendships that they acquired there alive and strong.
Some of the original 25 members of Nu Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority at the Chapter’s induction, held at the Dale Hotel’s Sunflower Room on December 2, 1950.

Kansas Nu Chapter honored these five charter members: The late Mary Lois Carson, Jean Smith, the late Ruth Duryea, Florence Babcock, and Dovea Davis the year this was taken is uncertain, probably late 1990s.
The three founding members as they are today, Florence Babcock, Jean Smith, and Dorea Davis

To the right is Agnes Shipman Robertson, she was instrumental in forming the Montgomery County chapters of Alpha Delta Kappa. On the left is Jean Smith and in the center is Mattie Broughton
Jean Smith was the first President of Montgomery County’s Nu Chapter, she was honored by her peers after 30 years of teaching and in 1973 was named as one of the outstanding elementary school teachers of the year.

Below are Ruth Duryea, Florence Babcock and Jean Smith at the Chapter’s 25th Anniversary celebration.
Letters to the Editor: 155-233

It is time for Kansans to speak out on health reform

It is time for Kansans to speak out on behalf of meaningful health reform in our state. While we know about the 300,000 persons without health insurance whose needs have to be addressed, less visible are the hundreds of thousands of us with what is still called health insurance but should really be called asset protection instead.

Steadily and almost without our knowledge, insurance plans have stabilized premiums in recent years while they have gutted benefits for what we had once felt were comprehensive insurance plans.

Deductibles have skyrocketed, pushing people into plans that carry low premiums but require massive infusions of out of pocket expenses. Meanwhile, insurance company profits soar.

Health insurance used to be about distributing risk among large numbers of people so that no one segment of society would bear undue financial burden for the hardships of some.

The problem as viewed by many in corporate America now is not that we don’t have enough health insurance or that it isn’t good enough. The problem is that we have too much and that it is too good.

If we don’t choose to pay lots of money towards policies that force us to pay more for less, somehow we are to blame, or worse yet, are acting irresponsibly, making informed choices in our own worst interest — falling prey to the so-called moral hazard.

We’ve gone from health insurance being responsible for taking care of us to practicing personal sacrifice so that we can take care of the insurance industry. Health insurance no longer supports our economy; increasingly it IS our economy.

By 2030, it is estimated that 1 in 4 dollars spent in this country will be spent on health care. Last year, we spent almost $200 billion alone just on administrative costs. Since 2000, premiums have increased by 87 percent, yet wages have risen by only 20 percent.

It is time to ask more of our political leaders. It is time to reassert our belief that access to quality health care is a right and not a commodity. The consumer voice will strongly influence whether this happens in our lifetime or that of our children.

The Kansas Health Policy Authority will be considering a number of major options in the weeks ahead that may determine the course of this health reform in Kansas for years to come.

It is imperative that they consider the needs of people before profits in the direction they take. But policy makers throughout the state have to hear from consumers as well. It is time to speak out.

Michael Fox
President, Kansas Health Consumer Coalition

Fox is an associate professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management, Senior Research Scientist in the Research and Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas and President of the Kansas Health Consumer Coalition. The Kansas Health Consumer Coalition is an organization created to advocate for affordable, accessible and quality health care in Kansas.
HALSTEAD High School Seniors honored at the University of Kansas Banquet on Wednesday, Oct. 3, for their outstanding academic achievement were, back row, Tyler Donker, Matt Pjesky, Jake Nightingale, front row, Grace Page, Megan Ollendieck and Mandilyn Phillips.

6 Seniors Honored For Academics

By KAREN JACOBS
THE INDEPENDENT STAFF

HUTCHINSON – Halstead High School had six seniors that were honored by the University of Kansas for being in the top 10 percent of all students in Kansas and in their class.

Grace Page, Mandilyn Phillips, Megan Ollendieck, Tyler Donker, Matt Pjesky, and Jake Nightingale were invited to attend a banquet at Grand Prairie Hotel and Convention Center in Hutchinson on Wednesday, Oct. 3. Hundreds of Kansas Honor students attended the banquet in which they were served a meal of chicken, pasta and green beans and ice cream for dessert.

Students were recognized for their outstanding academic performance and achieving a 4.0 grade point average. "It's good to be recognized for all our hard work," said Megan Ollendieck.

She said sports get a lot of recognition and scholarships, and it is good to get recognition, and an offer for a scholarship from KU. All students honored are eligible for a scholarship if attending KU next fall. Ollendieck and Matt Pjesky both said they are interested in attending KU.

When asked how they felt about being honor students Ollendieck said, "Amazing". Pjesky said he was glad that their 12 years of hard work had paid off. "It's good to know I'm better than 90 percent of Kansas," Tyler Donker said.

The students attending the dinner said the dinner was good and the hotel was very nice. Three of the students from Halstead were able to attend the dinner. Phillips did not attend and said she regretted not to be able to attend.

The six students will be rewarded next week by the district with an early-day-out for their academic accomplishment. The district has started rewarding students for academic accomplishments this year and also for attendance and no tardies with early-out days...
A case of need for power

By JOHN HANNA
Associated Press Writer

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Timothy Carr delivered his message with a matter-of-fact tone: the world is going to consume more energy, little of the electricity it will need will come from renewable resources, and much of that power will come from coal.

Carr, a senior Kansas Geological Survey scientist, spoke last week at a University of Kansas conference. His remarks came a day before former Vice President Al Gore received a Nobel Prize for his campaign on global warming and a day after environmentalists had denounced Sunflower Electric Power Corp.'s plan for two coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas.

Some of the loudest criticism of Sunflower's proposal is heard from the city of Lawrence, and Carr seemed to sense that some audience members wouldn't like his assessment.

"Shoot the messenger," he said.

Sunflower's $8.6 billion proposal has put it at the center of a debate over carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. But another question is part of the discussion: whether Kansas needs as much capacity to generate electricity as Sunflower plans to build.

"When you combine the benefits of both conservation and wind and look at the current coal plants and nuclear plant that we have, my view is that there is a very limited need for additional coal plants in the future," Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson, co-chairman of an energy policy council, said during a recent interview.

Sunflower is seeking an air-quality permit from the Department of Health and Environment, and Secretary Rod Bremby has said he will decide whether to grant it by the end of this month.

Environmentalists want Bremby to reject the permit over the plants' CO2 emissions, even though the state doesn't regulate the greenhouse gas, which most scientists see as a major contributor to global warming. Many legislators, including Senate President Steve Morris and House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, are pressuring him to approve a permit, seeing the project as vital economic development.

The project would add two, 700-megawatt plants next to Sunflower's existing 360-megawatt plant outside Holcomb, in Finney County. Construction on the second plant would be finished in 2013.

How big is the project? The total generating capacity of 1,400 megawatts would be enough to supply all of the households in Denver, Oklahoma City and Albuquerque, N.M., combined. Sunflower and a sister company, Mid-Kansas Electric Co., have 400,000 customers; together, the two have 1,200 megawatts of generating capacity.

Sunflower would export much of the new power into other states and argues the new plants will lead to bigger transmission lines that could hook up to wind farms. Sunflower executives — and many legislators — have no doubt the power will be needed, both in rural Kansas and points well beyond.

"We're entering into a time frame where energy growth is phenomenal," said Sunflower spokesman Steve Miller. "It's probably going to be a once-in-a-generation time when rural Kansas is going to benefit."

The same growth in energy consumption is expected worldwide, something Carr noted in his conference presentation. The International Energy Agency projects that energy consumption will be 52 percent higher in 2030 than it was in 2004.

And, as Carr also noted, coal is expected to remain a big source, particularly as China, India and other developing nations attempt to catch up to an American or European standard of living.

Of course, that prospect raises fears about climate change. Bill Downey, president and chief executive officer of Kansas City Power & Light Co., said after his own conference speech, "We have to find a way to clean up coal."

But at least a few environmentalists don't accept Carr's assessment of energy needs over the next few decades and believe conservation efforts can significantly slow any growth in energy demand.

Dan Nagengast, executive director of the Kansas Rural Center, said Americans shouldn't assume that other nations will emulate the "gluttonous" U.S. lifestyle.

"Everybody's defending a system," Nagengast said. "There's no thought in there that there's other ways to be, other than, you know, a giant utility with giant coal plants and giant wind-turbine arrays."

Even participants in the debate who aren't contemplating such a future question Sunflower's desire to build so much coal-fired generating capacity and sell most of the electricity outside the state.

"Do we want western Kansas to be the place where every other state builds their coal-fired plants?" Parkinson said.

Miller said such arguments make him "almost livid," adding that Sunflower wants to export power for the same reason Kansans export other products, such as aircraft.

And Jim Owen, a spokesman for the Edison Electric Institute, a trade group for investor-owned utilities, said assuming that a company will generate power only for customers within an assigned territory is an old business model.

"Increasingly, we're moving to regional electricity markets," he said. "Distinctions of this nature will become less important."

Owen, Sunflower and others accept projections that Americans' demand for electricity will grow enough that new coal-fired power plants must be built to keep up with it. Environmentalists aren't likely to concede the point.
Kansas' future energy needs outlined

KCP&L chief sees coal still in mix; climate discussed

LAWRENCE (AP) — A regional utility's top executive acknowledged the dangers of global warming and promoted conservation Thursday, but he said coal-fired power plants still will be necessary to satisfy rising demands for energy.

Bill Downey, president and chief executive officer of Kansas City Power & Light Co., spoke during a conference where two Kansas scientists also outlined potential problems that climate change could cause. They include hotter summers and shorter crop-growing seasons in western Kansas, they said.

"Coal, oil and natural gas will remain indispensable."

— Bill Downey, KCP&L president and CEO

Discussions at the University of Kansas conference were timely because of a debate over proposed coal-fired power plants in Kansas and Missouri. Environmentalists worry about coal plants' potential emissions of carbon dioxide, which most scientists see as a major contributor to global warming.

In Kansas, Sunflower Electric Power Corp. is seeking an air-quality permit from the state for its $3.6 billion plan to build two coal-fired plants in southwest Kansas. In Missouri, KCP&L is building a coal-fired plant north-
Energy

Continued from page 1A

west of Kansas City but promised environmentalists in March to develop wind power and energy conservation programs.

Downey said helping consumers reduce their energy use shows great promise but demand will still require higher energy production, including electricity from coal-fired plants.

Technology to make coal burn cleaner and to capture and store carbon dioxide is an important part of reducing CO2 emissions, he said.

“Coal, oil and natural gas will remain indispensable,” he said. “It’s a hard truth that a rapidly growing world economy will require large increases in energy supplies over the next quarter-century.”

About 130 people attended the conference, including utility officials, legislative staff, university scientists, and federal, state and local officials. Organizers wanted the event to touch on issues involving energy, the environment and the economy because they viewed them as intertwined.

But the mix of messages about the need for higher energy production and the potential problems from global warming troubled conference attendee Dan Nagengast, executive director of the Kansas Rural Center.

“It adds up to doom,” he said, chuckling over the clashing themes. “I don’t know where this goes, but it doesn’t look good.”

According to federal statistics, the U.S. generates almost half of its electricity from coal-fired plants, and Kansas and Missouri rely even more heavily on them. Three-quarters of Kansas’ electricity comes from coal-fired plants, while the figure is 85 percent for Missouri.

The federal government expects Americans’ demand for energy to grow over the next several decades, and Downey said KCP&L’s experiences back up that assumption.

It’s a global trend as well. Timothy Carr, a senior scientist with the Kansas Geological Survey, said the worldwide demand for energy will increase as China and other developing nations seek to improve their standards of living.

“It’s not going to come from renewables,” Carr said. “It’s going to come from coal.”

Nagengast questioned what he saw as an assumption that citizens of developing nations will want to emulate westerners’ over-consumption of goods and services.

“I think to draw these charts out, assuming that the whole world is going to be sort of as gluttonous as we are and ever-increasingly so, probably underestimates just how people perceive the world,” he said.

But even in forecasting higher energy demands and use of coal, Downey and Carr said the potential environmental issues must be addressed.

Johannes Feddema, a University of Kansas geology professor, said computer models suggest西部 Kansas would become drier with a rise in temperatures.

And Charles Rice, a professor of soil microbiology at Kansas State University, said rains could become less frequent but more intense.

Because of concerns about CO2 emissions, Nagengast and other environmentalists want utilities to promote conservation and develop wind power.

Downey described efficiency programs as “the best near-term option” but said that over the next decade, “The reality is we need everything that we have.”

“What I get concerned about is when people say, ‘Well, we’ll do it all with one thing or another,’” he said. “We can’t be placing one bet in this future.”