Kanza Group Award to Russell and Helen Means
By Penny Seavertson

On April 16, 2005 during the Kanza Group’s Celebration of Earth Day, Russell and Helen Means were honored with the Award of Appreciation for Outstanding Achievement (Public Lands for Future Generations).

The award was given to the Means in recognition of their devotion to protecting open space and for their generous gift of land to the people of Johnson County for Kill Creek Nature Park. Through their generosity, the public has a beautiful nature park that has grown to over 900 acres and will soon be about 3000 acres (when the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant situation is settled).

The Means Family had owned 640 acres in northwest Johnson County since 1960. It consists of rolling hills, many native tree species, buffalo wallows, pristine tall grass prairie with over 200 plant species including rare wildflowers, and Kill Creek. Through their generosity, the public has a beautiful nature park that has grown to over 900 acres and will soon be about 3000 acres (when the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant situation is settled).

Kansas Governor Signs Bill Creating Transmission Authority

On Monday, April 18, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed into law a measure (HB 2263) that will create an electric transmission authority for the Midwest state. The move follows similar efforts to set up such authorities in a number of other states, including the Dakotas (see Power Market Today, March 28), and could spur further wind power development in Kansas.

The transmission authority will have the ability to finance See Award on page 7

See Authority on page 4

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see page 20 for contact info

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Kansas Legislature: www.kslegislature.org/cgi-bin/index.cgi
Kansas Needs a New Politics

By Jake Vail,
Prairie Writers Circle

We’ve now had many months to consider the question posed by the title of Thomas Frank’s best-selling book, “What’s the Matter with Kansas?” But his investigation of why middle America votes against its own economic interests, while compelling, only scratches the surface.

As in most of the electioneering rhetoric of 2004, the environment was ignored. To get at the real root of heartland politics, we must ask, What’s the matter of Kansas?

A look at our nickname illustrates the need to delve deeper. Pop quiz: Is Kansas the Wheat State? Or is it the Sunflower State? Maybe both? You’d think that by now we would know. Our homeland would directly inform our stories, and our politics.

But our brief and challenging tenure on the prairies and plains hasn’t allowed time for real exploration and appreciation, and so we suffer a sort of geopolitical split personality.

We live torn between the sunflower and the wheat, between the prairie and the farm, the deep and the superficial. Ironically, just as the wheat seems to have won out over the sunflower, fewer and fewer Americans are farming. Consequently, agrarianism is almost a thing of the past.

More than 15 years ago, Frank and Deborah Popper reported on the long-term emigration from most of the Plains, and have since charted its continuation. We have been leaving since we arrived. So has the soil.

When the plows ripped through the prairie, the living soil changed from source to resource. The natural and social effects of this dy-
Electric Transmission Authority Bill, HB 2263, Accomplishes Two Goals
By Charles Benjamin

HB 2263, supported by the Kansas Sierra Club, would do two things:
1) Create the Kansas Electric Transmission Authority: The Transmission Authority that would build electric transmission lines, whose need has been identified by a regional electric transmission authority (i.e., the Southwest Power Pool) or for the purposes of economic development (i.e., bringing money into western Kansas). Financing for the construction of any transmission lines would be through the Kansas Development Finance Authority and the municipal bond market. Those using the lines would pay off the bonds.
2) Create incentives to build electrical transmission lines: The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) would be authorized to allow electric utilities to recover certain costs associated with the construction and upgrade of an electric transmission facility if: 1) a regional transmission organization has identified such construction or upgrade as appropriate for reliable operation of the integrated electric transmission system or 2) for economic benefits to transmission owners and customers. To exercise either option a state agency must have determined that such construction or upgrade will provide measurable economic benefits to electric consumers in all or parts of Kansas, which will exceed anticipated project costs, and that such costs are not otherwise being recovered by the utility.

The reason that the Kansas Chapter of Sierra Club supported these measures was to facilitate the development of wind powered electric generation in western Kansas - which, according to wind energy companies, has some of the best wind energy potential in the world. The biggest obstacle to the development of this potential is the lack of sufficient transmission potential. Hopefully, as the costs of wind energy come down and become more competitive with coal and nuclear generated electricity, the provisions of H.B. 2263 will help facilitate the full potential of wind power in western Kansas.

Authority, continued from page 1

or even own transmission facilities, noted Jim Ludwig, vice president of public affairs at Westar Energy, in an interview with Power Market Today on Tuesday.

Westar worked with “several other interested persons to kind of fashion the bill for Kansas,” he noted. “It was originally modeled on Wyoming legislation, where in that state they have a transmission authority.”

The types of facilities that would probably be financed or potentially owned by the Kansas authority would be those built primarily for economic development purposes, Ludwig noted. These types of projects would be for transmission facilities “that might not be absolutely necessary for reliability, but may allow [for] greater development for wind generation in the state or might allow for more wholesale business -- moving power in and out of our state.”

Prior to the bill’s signing, the legislation drew support from the Kansas chapter of the Sierra Club. The environmental group noted that the measure would help to encourage the development of wind-generated electricity in western Kansas.

Charles Benjamin, a lobbyist for the Kansas chapter of the Sierra Club, said that the group’s motivation for promoting the bill was that “the western part of the state has an enormous wind resource, but it's largely untapped because of the lack of transmission lines. We feel that the wind resource could provide additional power not only for Kansas, but could also be exported if there was a mechanism for building transmission lines.”

The problem, he said, “is that the utilities won’t build the transmission lines or have not so far, because they have their sources of power, which is from primarily coal and other sources of electric power and they are servicing their customers through the existing grid.”

“I think in part some of the supporters of the transmission authority do see it as a way to encourage the building of wind turbines,” Ludwig said. “It’s not exclusively, of course, for that.” He noted that Kansas ranks among “the very best states for our wind resources. We have particularly favorable wind for generating electricity, so we’ve got wonderful potential in the state.”

A key federal production tax credit (PTC) promoting renewables is due to expire at the end of this year. Benjamin commented on how much of an impact there would be on wind power development in the western part of Kansas if the PTC isn’t renewed.

“Obviously, it would be helpful if it was renewed,” he noted. “But what we’re seeing is a trend toward bigger and more efficient wind turbines. There is some expectation that the next generation of wind turbines will be 3 MW machines and that they may be so efficient that they can produce electricity under two cents a kilowatt.
Authority, continued from page 4

hour, without a production tax credit.”

Benjamin noted that “these are enormous machines. They would be 450 feet high. Now, in some parts of the United States, there would be an objection to having machines that high, but in the western part of the state it’s largely unpopulated and fairly flat,” he told Power Market Today. He said that if a trend towards fewer, but bigger and more efficient wind power machines occurs in western Kansas, “it may not be dependent on the renewal of the tax credit.”

Kansas also has a property tax exemption for wind turbines. “And that’s an enormous help,” Benjamin said. “This is what the wind companies tell us. Also, the governor has proposed a state tax credit that would kick in should the federal tax expire. Right now, that is stuck in the legislature....but we think that could be helpful as well.”

Sebelius earlier this year said that electric utilities in Kansas should have a total of at least 1,000 MW of renewable energy capacity installed in the state by 2015, which would amount to about 10% of the state’s current total electric generation capacity and is more than nine times the current amount (see Power Market Today, Jan. 18).

If anyone knows the history of the Kansas transmission siting authority, it’s Benjamin. “This bill originated, actually, with me,” he said this week. He suggested the idea of a transmission authority in a conversation with the now-deceased chair of the Kansas Senate Utilities Committee -- Stan Clark -- in March 2004.

Clark was killed in an auto accident that same year. Benjamin subsequently pursued the idea of a transmission authority with Kansas State Rep. Carl Holmes, “who decided that he was going to promote this idea.”

As for next steps for the Kansas electric transmission authority, Ludwig noted that the “authority itself will have to be populated. The bill establishes people who will be appointed to the authority and there are certain qualifications that I’m sure they’ll want -- some knowledge of the industry.” He thinks that it will “probably take some time to constitute” the authority.

“With respect to owning [transmission lines], that’s a big step. I would think that would be down the road, if it ever occurred,” the Westar official said. “With respect to financing, the state has significant financing authority, but we’re like any other state -- there’s quite a line of entities who’d like to borrow money for all sorts of purposes.”

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Kansas Legislative 
Wrap Up
By Charles Benjamin

This report contains the status of various bills supported or opposed by the Kansas Chapter of Sierra Club at final adjournment of the 2005 Kansas legislative session. Many thanks to the members of the Kansas Sierra Club legislative “tree” for contacting their legislators during the 2005 Legislative session. Read any bill online at www.kslegislature.org/legsrv-legisportal/index.do.

Electric Transmission Authority.  H.B. 2263, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, creates the Kansas Electric Transmission Authority (KETA) that would build electric transmission lines, whose need has been identified by a regional electric transmission authority - as needed to enhance the reliability of the electric transmission grid - or that enhances economic development in Kansas, with financing facilitated by the Kansas Development Finance Authority and the municipal bond market, with those using the lines paying off the bonds. Kansas Sierra Club supported this bill to encourage large scale wind powered electric generation in western Kansas. See the article by Paul Ciampoli in this issue of the Planet Kansas that focuses on the creation and implications of the KETA for wind power development in western Kansas.

Incentives to build electrical transmission lines.  H.B. 2045, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, allows the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) to authorize electric utilities to recover certain costs associated with the construction and upgrade of an electric transmission facility if: 1) a regional transmission organization has identified such construction or upgrade as appropriate for reliable operation of the integrated electric transmission system or 2) for economic benefits to transmission owners and customers. To exercise either option a state agency must have determined that such construction or upgrade will provide measurable economic benefits to electric consumers in all or parts of Kansas, which will exceed anticipated project costs, and that such costs are not otherwise being recovered by the utility. Kansas Sierra Club supported this bill to encourage large scale wind powered electric generation in western Kansas.

Energy efficiency: Substitute for H.B. 2084 would have empowered the KCC to authorize electric and gas public utilities to recover their authorized rate of return on “prudent and reasonable” investments in KCC approved energy efficiency and conservation programs for residential and business customers. Substitute for H.B. 2084 was gutted by the Senate Utilities Committee on March 14 by Senators looking for a “vehicle” for other legislation.

Renewable Energy Tax Incentives:  S.B. 280 provides for a $.013 state tax credit per kilowatt-hour of electricity generated by wind, biomass, solar, hydro or geothermal sources – only if and when the current $.18 federal tax credit expires after 12/31/05 – and also provides for a $.005 tax credit for each kilowatt-hour of electricity generated by “community wind energy facilities” (rated production capacity of between 1 and 30 megawatts) - with or without renewal of federal tax credits. No state tax credits would be available for renewable energy facilities located in an area designated by Governor Sebelius as “The Heart of the Flint Hills”. On March 8 the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee heard testimony on the bill on March 8 but the Committee never worked the bill and the bill will be held over to the 2006 legislative session. Kansas Sierra Club supported this bill.

Property tax exemptions for landfill-produced meth-
June/July 2005

Wrap Up, continued from page 6

Methane gas production. S.B. 192, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, provides a property tax exemption for all personal property used to collect, refine, treat and transport landfill methane gas. The primary proponent of this bill was Las Animas Landfill Gas, a company that extracts methane gas from the Johnson County landfill. Kansas Sierra Club supported this bill.

Alternative-Fueled State Motor Vehicles. H.B. 2348 mandates that certain percentages of the state motor vehicle fleet be “alternative-fueled” by 2010. Alternative-fueled is defined by federal law at 42 U.S.C. 13211 to be “fuel that is substantially not petroleum and would yield substantial energy security benefits and substantial environmental benefits”. The bill will be held over to the 2006 legislative session. Kansas Sierra Club supported this bill.

Funding for state and local parks. S.B. 87 provided for a $4 “outdoor recreation fee” on vehicle registrations with $3.20 dedicated to state parks and $.80 dedicated to local parks - while eliminating all funding for state parks from the state general fund and from park entrance fees for those with a Kansas vehicle tag. The bill was pulled from the Senate debate calendar on March 11 to obtain a ruling from the Kansas Attorney General on whether “the state may impose a tax or fee on the registration of motor vehicles to generate revenue for the purpose of supporting state or local parks”. The Attorney General issued an “informal” ruling prior to the start of the “veto session” that appeared to support the use of vehicle registration fees to support state and local parks. However, the ruling was not an official Attorney General’s ruling and came too late for action in the 2005 session. The bill will be held over to the 2006 legislative session. Kansas Sierra Club supported this bill in order to stabilize state and local park funding.

Obstacles to expanding state parks: H.B. 2226, as originally introduced, would have required the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) to seek approval from a county commission, subject to a local referendum, and the state legislature, for acquisition of any future state park land. An amended version of H.B. 2226 passed the House on March 22 that requires state legislative approval of any state park acquisition greater than 480 acres and requires a local referendum upon submission of a protest petition. The bill was referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee whose chairman did not hold any further hearings on this or any other bill in the 2004 legislative session. The bill will be held over to the 2006 legislative session. Kansas Sierra Club opposed this bill because it politicizes state park acquisition.

Award, continued from page 1

Creek running through the land. The riparian area, woods, and open prairie provide an excellent habitat for wildlife and birds.

The Means Family could have developed their 640 acres of beautiful land into hundreds of rooftops, but instead, they had the foresight and vision to protect the open space for generations to come. In 1989, the Means donated 355 acres to Johnson County Parks and Recreation District for a nature park. In addition, the Means helped with the financing of the remaining 285 acres so that the Park District could make the purchase at a reduced rate. This was the single largest private gift in Johnson County’s history!

The Means Family generosity has provided parkland as a valuable natural resource for wildlife and recreation for future generations to enjoy. Helen and Russell Means are very deserving of this prestigious award, and Johnson County residents now and in the future are the fortunate beneficiaries of the Means Family legacy.
Kansas Energy Council:
Energy Efficiency Representative
By Bruce Snead

My experience, research and knowledge of Kansas tells me that we have very significant untapped potential to use energy more efficiently, to conserve and extend the life of increasingly scarce energy resources, to reap economic and environmental benefits in the process, and provide better energy services to Kansas citizens. And that we can do so with very reasonable investments that return 2 or 3 or more dollars back in economic benefits for every program dollar spent.

Why should the utilities, or some other agency or entity conduct energy conservation and efficiency programs for customers?
• Because, there is demonstrated potential, as has been shown in many other states, to delay or avoid adding costly generation, to stabilize or reduce total utility bills for customers, to reduce demand for natural gas, to reduce pollution, and to enhance economic development.
• Because, with a few exceptions, there are virtually no programs being offered by Kansas utilities that tap into this potential.
• Because, there are numerous examples of successful and exemplary programs being conducted elsewhere, with key components and actual results identified.
• Because, the general public and citizens, when asked, have consistently expressed understanding of the logic of energy efficiency and support for efforts to invest more resources to achieve cost effective results.

Where does Kansas rank in energy efficiency investments? Several sources provide a consistent picture of where we stand. At the bottom. The LIHEAP Clearinghouse Summary of Supplements to Energy Assistance and Energy Efficiency (www.ncat.org/liheap/Supplements/2003/supplement03.htm) is a continuously updated, state-by-state compilation of the resources that supplement LIHEAP and low-income energy efficiency programs. Kansas does not contribute any state funds to weatherization. A quick comparison shows the average contribution to weatherization from state’s with public benefit funds (20 states not incl.CA) is $3.97 million. A quick comparison shows that the average contribution to weatherization from utilities sources (17 states not incl. CA) is $1.64 million.

Charts prepared by the National Association for State Community Services Program on state weatherization funding from PVE and Other sources for the years 1992 through 2002 show essentially no contributions by Kansas.

Several studies by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE at www.aceee.org/), a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing energy efficiency as a means of promoting both economic prosperity and environmental protection, show how the states rank in terms of energy efficiency investments from utilities and state benefit funds, and also in energy efficiency policies. These studies are:
• The Technical, Economic and Achievable Potential for Energy-Efficiency in the U.S. – A Meta-Analysis of Recent Studies, August 2004
• Examining the Potential for Energy Efficiency to Help Address the Natural Gas Crisis in the Midwest, January 2005
• Five Years In: An Examination of the First half-Decade of Public Benefits Energy Efficiency Policies, April 2004 (www.aceee.org/pubs/u041.pdf)
• Responding to the Natural gas Crisis: America’s Best Natural Gas Energy Efficiency Programs, December 2003 (http://www.aceee.org/pubs/u035.htm)
• Energy Efficiency’s Next Generation: Innovation at
the State Level, November 2003 (www.aceee.org/pubs/e031full.pdf)


The State Scorecard Update Report analyzed utility spending on energy efficiency programs in each state, which included scoring and ranking states based on the following parameters:

- Energy efficiency expenditures as a percentage of utility revenues;
- Energy efficiency expenditures per capita
- Electricity savings as a percentage of electricity sales

Reviewing Appendix A and Appendix B, Sections 1-3 from the State Scorecard Report, display Kansas at the bottom of the fifty states in these rankings and indicators.

How about energy efficiency policies? The ACEEE report, Energy Efficiency’s Next Generation: Innovation at the State Level - 2003, describes the major categories of energy efficiency initiatives, summarizes the actions taken in the states, and provides guidance for further action. Table ES-2, A Quick Index of State Energy Efficiency Policies shows a blank line for Kansas in the seven policy categories of:

1. Appliance and Equipment Standards
2. Building Energy Codes
3. Combined Heat and Power
4. Facility Management
5. Tax Incentives
6. Transportation
7. Utility Programs

Kansas actually has taken some significant steps in the Building Energy Code area through Department of Energy Special Project funding, and the action of the KEC and the Legislature two years ago in updating building energy codes. That action is not reflected in this report.

Even though this is substantial evidence of where Kansas stands, I further researched and reviewed Kansas’ utilities through world wide web searches and visits to their web sites, including IOU’s, rural cooperatives and several municipal energy agencies. A search through the Federal Energy Management Program of the US Department of Energy found no public purpose energy or utility programs available in Kansas. The Residential Energy Efficiency Database maintained by the National Center for Appropriate Technology for the US Department of Health and Human Services is designed to display what energy efficiency programs your utility and/or state offers to help you save energy and money. The search for Kansas reveals 25 listings for programs in 11 Rural Electric Cooperatives, Kansas City Board of Public Utilities, and Kansas City Power and Light. The programs are primarily rebates for electric water heaters, heat pumps or ground source heat pumps. A few offer in home energy audits. Midwest Energy has a fine program of home and business energy services, most for fees, which help customers identify energy efficiency opportunities. Kansas City Power and Light’s only entry is for on-line home energy audits. Aquila’s website for Kansas energy efficiency programs lists only scholarships for high school seniors whose parents are customers as its only effort. Kansas Gas Service’ web site simply lists some energy savings tips. WESTAR makes energy efficiency booklets, videos and DVDs available free to its customers upon request. You heard from WESTAR recently on its need for costly new generation. Was energy efficiency’s role even mentioned?

What could Kansans save and how could they benefit from investments in energy efficiency?

The US DOE website on states with public benefits funds shows the following table (based on an ACEEE report), with annual amounts spent for energy efficiency and also cents/KWh. This gives some idea of the range of spending in 23 states as of the end of 2002.

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http://www.eere.energy.gov/state_energy/policy_content.cfm?policyid=64

See Energy on page 10
ACEEE’s Five Years In: An Examination of the First half-Decade of Public Benefits Energy Efficiency Policies, indicates that for states with comprehensive statewide PBF energy efficiency programs, funding tends to be in the range of 1-3% of total utility revenues.

In dollar amounts, state evaluations and other studies have generated specific amounts that follow policy and goal recommendations. A study by the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project for six states (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming) in that region show a range from $2 million to $12 million per year in 2001-2002, with significant benefits obtainable with ramping up to nine times that amount through a surcharge of .02 cents per kWh.

The state governments of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, northwest electric utilities, public benefits fund administrators and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) have committed $100 million over the next five years to continue regional energy efficiency efforts through their partnership with the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance.

The money will be pooled and used to pay for market-based, energy efficiency programs throughout the region. Since the Alliance began in late 1996, its programs as well as related utility, public benefits, and state efforts have saved the region an estimated 130 average megawatts of electricity through 2003. The cost of the savings is about a penny per kilowatt-hour—one-quarter of the cost of generating electricity from a gas-fired power plant—and was valued at $57 million in 2003 alone.

Iowa’s utilities are presently spending about $36 million per year on electric efficiency programs and $12 million per year on natural gas programs. Wisconsin’s program indicates about $62 million from all sources.

ACEEE’s report, Natural Gas Crisis in the Midwest, indicates there is considerable research from leading states that a broad group of energy efficiency programs can save electricity at a cost of .3 cents per kWh and natural gas at a cost of $1.50 per Mcf. These costs of conserved energy are much cheaper than the corresponding costs to obtain supply side energy resources, thus they are cost effective just for the energy resource they provide.

A National Best Practices Study just completed for California has produced a comprehensive and comparative understanding of energy efficiency program efforts throughout the United States. It offers a database of energy efficiency (EE) best practices that can be used as a resource to enhance the design, implementation, and management of energy efficiency programs for Kansas.

States have several core decisions to make when designing their efficiency funding programs. First, what are the goals for the programs. Second, who will conduct and evaluate the programs. Third, how will performance be measured and evaluated. Fourth, what is a suitable time frame for the programs to start and achieve results, and fifth, what funding amounts should be invested from what sources.

Kansas can take advantage of the wealth of existing information and exemplary program evaluations to move quickly. It is essential that we take advantage of the knowledge gained by other states and programs to appropriately ramp up a program that is tailored for Kansas and its conditions.

Bruce Snead is a State Extension Specialist in energy and indoor air quality with Engineering Extension at Kansas State University. He is also the energy efficiency representative on the Kansas Energy Council.

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Chapter Intervenes In Utility Rate Cases
By Bill Griffith, Chapter Chair

The Kansas Chapter has formally intervened in three dockets before the Kansas Corporation Commission. Two of these are rate increase requests from Aquila and KCPL. The other is a generic docket which is considering energy efficiency and the role of utilities and the KCC in regards to it. The Club will also be requesting intervention in another rate case concerning Westar and its proposed rate increase.

Why intervene in rate cases? This is the place to advocate for energy efficiency, more low-income weatherization funding, and renewable energy. The Kansas Corporation Commission has broad authority to require utilities to invest in new technology—if the Commission believes it is in the best interest of Kansas. That’s where the Club comes in to present a case for energy efficiency and renewables.

Right now, Kansas utilities rank 50th in conservation programs offered to their customers. Energy efficiency is the quickest and least expensive way to cut air pollution and greenhouse gases. The Chapter has made energy a priority campaign and these actions fall within the strategy we have outlined.

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Sierra Club Asks KCC to Open Data on KCP&L Rate Hike

The following is a press release from the Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club, May 11, 2005

The Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club filed yesterday a challenge to the Kansas Corporation Commission’s grant of confidentiality for certain key data submitted with KCP&L’s large rate hike plan. The data in question covers KCP&L’s cost comparisons for generating power by burning coal or natural gas, and by using wind turbines.

As an official intervener in the proceedings, the Sierra Club has the right to see this data, but its attorney and consultants must sign an agreement not to disclose this information to the public. In March, KCP&L concluded an agreement with the staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission calling for a hike in electricity rates of up to 20%. The Sierra Club expects a request of similar magnitude for Kansas.

“This data is fundamental to the public’s ability to assess the justification for such a large rate hike as well as KCP&L’s choice of power generation techniques, said Brooks Albery, Chair of the Kansas Chapter Energy Committee, “We are not asking for anything more than what Westar, Inc. disclosed, for their service area, to the Kansas State Senate Utility Committee on Feb. 1 of this year.” The Chapter also asserts that the disclosure of this information is not likely to harm the economic interests of KCP&L.

This week Westar announced its own request for a (smaller) rate hike. While they are not proposing any new generating capacity for their service area, their analysis of bids from 13 wind power developers yielded a cost of only 2.5 to 3.0 cents per KWH. (See Westar website, rate review section, Q&A on environment.) This compares to their estimate of 4.65 cents per KWH for a new coal-fired power plant contained in their presentation to the Kansas Senate committee.

For more information contact Charles Benjamin, Chapter Attorney and Legislative Director at 1-785-841-5902 or chasbenjamin@sbcglobal.net. The Sierra Club, with 800,000 members nationwide, is the largest grassroots environmental organization in the US.

Biting the Land That Feeds Us

By Jim Scharplaz, Prairie Writers Circle

I am a rancher. I live on the land I grew up on, in the house my father built for us. For more than 25 years, I have tended descendants of the same cows my parents bought when they married 64 years ago.

I am also a licensed professional engineer. I hold an advanced degree in agricultural engineering. I have done university agricultural research, and I have designed and built specialized machinery to farm research plots.

I think I have a pretty wide view of agriculture. What I see are wonderful people doing their best to care for creation and produce healthful food. And I see practices that pollute the soil, water and air, and destroy our long-term ability to feed ourselves.

It’s easy to blame lazy, greedy farmers for destructive agricultural practices. But I believe that the economy within which farmers must operate is responsible. This economy aims only for cheap food and a quick bottom line. It forces farmers to cut corners with our soil and water, to use practices that harm the land on which agriculture depends.

As our source of food suffers, so eventually do we all. For about 15 years I have been involved in various efforts to change the things in agriculture that, if not stopped, will lead to hunger in the future. Others have worked far longer and harder than I have.

Have things changed? Certainly. They have gotten worse. More fertilizer has polluted the rivers, more topsoil has washed away to the ocean, and more pesticides have polluted the groundwater. Noxious odors and dust have fouled the air. Bioengineered “Frankenfoods” have infiltrated the supermarket and corrupted the gene pool. Multinational corporations have commandeered the marketplace. And many more of those wonderful people have had to leave their farms forever.

That’s not to say efforts have been wasted in promoting an agriculture that can furnish abundant food and also protect our soil and water. The situation would be far worse without this work. But I no longer believe that farmers alone can change agriculture for the better.

Agriculture is the basis of civilization, and the two are inseparably linked. No wonder, then, that our agriculture reflects the rest of our economy, in which everything is simply a resource to use, profit from and discard. Our economy’s lust for resources has become so rapacious that its relationship to the agriculture that feeds us has become like that of a drug addict who is willing to rob his own mother for another fix.

See Biting the Land on page 13
Many non-farmers are as concerned as anyone else about this. And now that more than 98 percent of Americans don’t farm, the decisions these non-farmers make about what to buy, what kind of work to do, what kind of public policy choices are made, and what to value have far more influence than the decisions farmers can make about how to farm. When our economy is driven by consumption, the cheapest possible price and immediate profit, it is not realistic to think that farmer’ decisions about how to farm will be based on feeding generations to come.

Our future food security depends on redirecting our society and its economy. I am not about to prescribe the form this should take. But I hope that once we realize our headlong race to the bottom of the resource barrel is madness, our combined good will and intellect will be sufficient for a new path.

Farmers and ranchers are a small minority of our population. They cannot keep feeding us in an economy determined to extract every penny from every resource as fast as possible. Whether our grandchildren will eat is up to non-farmers.

Jim Scharplaz raises cattle in Ottawa County, Kan., and serves on the board of the Kansas Rural Center. He wrote this essay for the Land Institute’s Prairie Writers Circle, Salina, KS.
Kanza Group Earth Day Festival a Financial Success
by Craig Wolfe, Kanza Group Chair

The Kanza Group has been needing a successful fundraising formula for several years, and it appears it was right under their nose. Thanks to the organizational acumen of Mary Thompson, the Earth Day Celebration Silent Auction grossed over $4,000. Check out our highlights for award winners and other fun. (Award winners not present were Brooks Albery for his work with wind power and Dave Patton for his work coordinating outings with the Kanza Group and Thomas Hart Benton Group.)
Thank you to the Stores, Shops, and Businesses who made the Kanza Earth Day Festival’s success possible

Martie Buchanan
Owner
7915 Sante Fe Drive
Overland Park, KS 66204
913-385-5456

7609 W. Prairie View Road
Kansas City, MO 64151
816-584-0060

GARMIN
1200 E. 151st Street
Olathe, KS 66062
Thank you to the Stores, Shops, and Businesses who made the Kanza Earth Day Festival’s success possible.
Thanks to Kanza Volunteers!
By Elaine Giessel, Kanza Group Volunteer Chair

As part of the Kansas Chapter’s efforts to promote energy conservation and the development of renewable energy in Kansas, more than a dozen Kanza volunteers helped educate thousands of Kansas City area residents this spring. By distributing newly printed wind energy fact sheets and custom-made handheld fans (“Personal Wind Generators”) printed with energy efficiency tips, our members helped spread the word at a number of local events.

In March, we tabled at the annual Farmers Exhibition 2005 hosted by the KC Food Circle and co-sponsored by Sierra Club. Early in April, our outreach efforts started with the fifth annual Earth Fair hosted by the Prairie Village Environmental Committee and the Shawnee Mission East Environmental Club.

In mid-April, our volunteers got really busy, hosting the Kanza Group’s celebration of the 35th anniversary of Earth Day (see page 16). A few days later, we were tabling again, this time at Johnson County Community College, where the JCCC Renewable Energy Society presented an Earth Day renewable energy fair and sustainable design expo.

On Earth Day (April 22), our volunteers braved drizzle, wind and cold to table over the lunch hours at Sprint Headquarters’ 2005 Earth Day Celebration. Hundreds of office workers met with representatives of the environmental community. That same afternoon, we set up our display and distributed literature and fans to shoppers at the Whole Foods Market in Overland Park.

The next morning, a team of Kanza volunteers spent over 4 hours talking to the public about our energy campaign at the Kansas City area EarthFest, organized by Bridging the Gap and held this year in Shawnee Mission Park. Close to 2500 visitors were counted at the event.

Finally, two volunteers wound up Earth Day activities the following week by presenting a program on Sierra Club activities to the Johnson County Democratic Women.

Thanks to the many volunteers who helped spread the word on the benefits of renewable energy to thousands of Metro area residents this spring! By tabling at a variety of events, we have managed to reach a wide diversity of individuals.

We will be tabling again this summer, including at the annual June 'teenth celebration in Wyandotte County and at local water festivals. We can always use more volunteers – on the job training is provided!

If you are interested in helping, please contact Elaine Giessel at elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org.
Eastern Kansas Farmer Produces Organic Whole Grain & Flours
by Craig Volland, Agriculture Committee Chair

It’s not easy being an organic row crop farmer these days with genetically engineered pollen flying around. But Lee Quaintance does it, along with his wife, Cindy and their son, Nathan, 6, on their 300 acre Soaring Eagle Farms operation near Edgerton, KS in Johnson County. To avoid contamination of his corn crop, Lee has to time his planting so his corn tassels before or after his neighbors’ who plant GMO varieties. It’s critical because his customers will test the corn he produces for genetically engineered traits, and a lot of money and hard work rides on the results.

In addition to blue and yellow varieties of corn, Lee produces red and white hard winter wheat, spelt, black turtle beans, soybeans, buckwheat, clover seed and black-eyed peas. Lee spends a lot of time on the phone to sell his bulk grains to buyers all over the country and even to the growing organic markets overseas.

Lee’s operation is certified by the USDA’s National Organic Program via the certifying agency, Indiana Certified Organic (ICO) located in Clayton, Indiana. The Quaintances practice what they preach by eating organic foods as much as possible. They also produce free-range natural beef and chickens.

Lee grinds his grains and packages flour under his own brand, Acme Grain. The Quaintances’ whole-wheat flour includes wheat germ to provide more nutrition and, unlike other whole-wheat flours, is milled fresh and has no preservatives. His flour is available from the farm and at Local Harvest, a retail store in Kansas City. The Blue Bird Bistro and Eden Alley restaurants use their whole-wheat flour in certain recipes. Bread of Life Bakery uses their grains in many of their products, available at numerous sites throughout the city. You can also buy wheat berries from Lee and grind them yourself.

Lee has farming in his blood, four generations worth. But Lee is a dedicated organic farmer because it’s healthier for his family and the right thing for the environment. In fact he’s a member of the Coordinating Committee of the Kansas City Food Circle, a not for profit organization that helps consumers connect with farmers like Lee who farm organically in the KC region. (The Sierra Club is the largest institutional contributor to the KC Food Circle.) Since 1999, he is also been a board member for the Hillsdale Water Quality Project, a 501c3 group that is focused on improving the water quality of the Hillsdale Lake watershed. Lee is available to speak, on a personal level, about the virtues of organic farming and the threat from genetically engineered crops. He can even demonstrate his skills at metal working as an 1800’s blacksmith.

I can attest to the quality of Lee’s flours, having bought a number of five pound bags over the years. Most recently I made some buckwheat pancakes with a recipe Cindy provided. Fabulous! I also learned that buckwheat isn’t actually wheat or even a grain. Rather it’s a totally different species of plant related to sorrel and rhubarb that yields a particularly high-nutrition fruit.

You can contact Lee at 913-893-6797 or email him at soaringeaglefarms@juno.com.
Your Food Choices, Your Planet

What impacts the land? What impacts the air? What impacts the water? What impacts transportation? What supports your local economy? What supports hard working earth-friendly local farmers? What helps protect your family's health? What's the one thing YOU control that can possibly do all this? This regular section of the Planet Kansas is dedicated to promoting safe and sustainable food choices for our members.

Yep, it’s time for action. It’s hard to imagine one thing that can have such a great impact on our environment and is so very doable for every family. That is why the Kansas Sierra Club is creating this section of the Planet Kansas. This area will be a include features and short articles. We hope this will be your go-to resource for how you can begin to make a difference. If you have more ideas or a particular question, email it to Craig Wolfe at info@kansas.sierraclub.org, call 913-299-4443, or mail it to 9844 Georgia Avenue, Kansas City, KS, 66109.

Organic Way Farm Tour
June 11, starting at 11 am

The Organic Way Farm is located just southeast of Nevada, Missouri near the small town of Montevallo. The 52 acre farm has a beautiful mix of cultivated land, pasture and forest with many native plants and trees. The creek that runs through the forest has the original well built for the town of Montevallo in the late 1800's.

Established in 1995, the farm has seen many changes over the years. It began as an organic operation, and was certified organic from 1998 through 2002.

The farm is one of the few family farms that is self sustaining and has been since 2000, with the introduction of heirloom tomatoes and a drip irrigation system. The Organic Way is the only place in the area you can get a tomato of every color and shape. Black, red, white, yellow, orange, pink, striped and mottled. They have monsters, some as large as 3 lbs and a wide variety of cherry tomatoes.

Dan and Denice hold a tour of the farm each year to highlight organic farming methods and showcase the latest additions to the farm. This year’s tour will take place on June 11, starting at 11 am and will feature the latest addition to the farm, wheat and the 1880 McCormick Deering grain binder, Dan found to harvest the wheat.

Grain binding is a method used for centuries before the combine was developed. It is the process of cutting the whole plant and binding it into sheaves, which are stacked in the field to dry. The grain is then harvested from the sheaves. (thus the old song bringing in the sheaves).

Mike Hilton will be attending this years tour to discuss the benefits of new OMRI certified organic products used on the farm, such as hydrolyzed fish, Hi Energy Blend and micronized minerals for soil amendments. Chilian Nitrates for early plant growth, neem oil and TKO (garlic oil, neem, cayenne pepper oil, and grapefruit peel alkaloid) for insect control. He will discuss application rates and give a demonstration of drip and foliar applications.

Stan Slaughter the eco troubadour will be there to accompany a meal prepared from locally harvested foods.

If you are interested in attending our farm tour please contact Denise or Dan at 1-417-944-2818 for directions or email us at danddmay@aicon.net. If you would like to car pool down call the Kansas City Food Circle hotline at 816-374-5899.

Where should I start?
Our website has several links on food at:
http://kansas.sierraclub.org/Issues/FoodChoices.htm

Kansas City Resources
Kansas City Food Circle Hotline 816-374-5899.
KC area stores with some organic foods, but are rarely locally grown:
Hen House, Price Chopper, Wild Oats and Whole Foods.

Lawrence Resources
Community Mercantile, (785)843-8544, 901 Iowa
Lawrence Farmer’s Market, (785)331-4445, Vermont St between 10th & 11th

State-wide Resources
Listing of 2004 KS Farmers’ Markets in many Kansas cities
http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/pr_kfmd/2004%20Kansas%20Community%20Farmers%20Markets.htm#2004%20Kansas%20Community%20Farmers%20Markets (the %20 is a space)
Statewide Food Directory: www.oznet.ksu.edu/kcaac/fooddirectory/welcome.asp
Community Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture Program at http://agebb.missouri.edu/sustain/index.htm
Chapter & Group Leaders
Groups are the local body of the Kansas State Chapter

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Bill Custer, Treasurer, (785) 379-9756, spudspa@yahoo.com
Jack Smith, Outings Chair, (785) 273-3138
Jo Ann Van Meter, Conservation Chair, (785) 234-3023, worrybeads@aol.com

**Wakarusa Group (Lawrence)**
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Carey Maynard-Moody*, Vice-Chair, Political Chair, (913) 768-1849, ram.iyer@kansas.sierraclub.org
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Frank J. Norman*, Treasurer, (913) 887-6775, frank.norman@appliedeco.com
General Meetings

General public is welcome to attend

Flint Hills Group
(Manhattan)

General Information
For information please call Scott Smith at 785-539-1973 anytime or email wizard13@cox.net.

Kanza Group
(Kansas City)

General Information
Come early at 7:00 pm, share some snacks, and enjoy meeting your Kanza Group leaders and members. Watch for our postcards in your mailbox for our upcoming General Meetings. Our meetings are at the Overland Park Lutheran Church, 7810 W. 79th Street. Directions map at www.kansas.sierraclub.org/kanzadirections.htm, Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org

Southwind Group
(Wichita)

General Information
No meetings in June or July
For information, call Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Topeka Section.

General Information
The Topeka Section is currently in an organizing mode.
If you are interested in learning more, contact Paul Post.
(785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Topeka Section.

June 28. 7:00 pm
The Kansas River: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
Laura Calwell, Riverkeeper with Friends of the Kaw, will be presenting a program on the Kansas River titled “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.”
Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th Avenue. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Topeka Section.

July 26. 7:00 pm
Topic: To Be Announced
For information, call Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Topeka Section.

Aug 23. 7:00 pm
Topic: To Be Announced
For information, call Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Wakarusa Group
(Lawrence)

General Information
The Wakarusa Group has decided to forego regular general meetings in order to concentrate its energies on special events. For further information contact, Mike Campbell, (785) 542-3885, mikes.campbell@kansas.sierraclub.org.
Below is the combined list of all outings by the Kansas Chapter and Groups. The number in [brackets] indicates the area of the outing as shown on the map. Please contact the outing leader listed after the description by phone or e-mail before attending any of these activities. For trips requiring physical exertion, leaders need to know your ability and condition. Sierra Club policy also requires participants to sign a liability waiver or acknowledgement of risk prior to departing the trailhead.

[2] Jun 10. 7:00 pm. Southwind Group’s Annual Picnic
Spend a leisure evening with your fellow Sierrans. Bring your favorite side dish. The main dish and drinks will be provided. We will meet at Chisolm Creek Park, 29th and Oliver – just off Oliver. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 685-3492, stuartbolt@earthlink.net

Day hiking at nearby Ha Ha Tonka State Park. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Ginger Kohler, 660-886-8870, gingerk@missouri.sierraclub.org

[2] Jun 11. 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. Walk With Wildlife
Come and help educate the public about Kansas’ wildlife. Located at Great Plains Nature Center, 29th St. N and Woodlawn, Wichita. Please call and set up a shift to help. Southwind. Tom Kneil, (316) 744-1016, thomas.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] Jun 11. 12:00 pm. Trail Maintenance
Satterthwaite Wilderness Park ½ miles East of Udall on K-15. Meet at noon at Udall Restaurant. R.S.V.P. required. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Canoeists and kayakers are invited to paddle day trips on the Kaw above Lawrence. The weather and river levels will determine whether the float actually occurs. Call within 2 weeks of the float date. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Jim Fox, (816) 525-3989 or Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

[2] Jun 12. 12:00 pm. Satterthwaite Wilderness Park Hike
1 ½ miles east of Udall on K-15. Meet at noon at Udall Restaurant. R.S.V.P. required. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Meet at the Goat Ranch near Mulvane. R.S.V.P. required. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

We’ll visit walking trails, woodland gardens, environmental education center and children’s discovery garden. A great family activity. Kanza. Steve Hassler, (913) 707-3296, steve.hassler@kansas.sierraclub.org

Canoeists and kayakers are invited to paddle day trips on the Kaw above Lawrence. The weather and river levels will determine whether the float actually occurs. Call within 2 weeks of the float date. $5 donation requested. Kanza. Jim Fox, (816) 525-3989 or Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org

Hike the Dunes and Forest at the Goat Ranch Overnight at or near Patrol Cabin. Meet at 10:00 am. R.S.V.P. Required. Limit 9, 1/2 miles S. of Mulvane. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Join us for a walk alongside the Missouri River at English Landing Park and/or for dinner at Cafe Cedar. Kanza.

more outings next page
### Committee Meetings

**Kanza Group**  
(Kansas City)  
**Executive Committee**  
Jun 23, Jul 28 - 7:00 pm  
Contact: Craig Wolfe, (913)299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org  

**Joint Action Committee**  
Jun 23, Jul 28 - 7:00 pm  
Conservation, legislative, political and population. Contact: Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517, elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org

**Southwind Group**  
(Wichita)  
**Executive Committee**  
Jun 5, Jul 3 - 6:00 pm  
2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. Bill Cather (316)522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

**Conservation Committee**  
Dabe TBA - 6:00 pm  
2935 S. Seneca, Wichita. Bill Cather

**Wakarusa Group**  
(Lawrence)  
**Executive Committee**  
1st Sunday of month, 7:00 pm  
Location TBA. Mike Campbell, (785) 542-3885, mike.campbell@kansas.sierraclub.org

**Topeka Section**, Organizing Meetings, Jun 28, Jul 26 (location TBA)  
Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

**Kansas Chapter**: (State), Executive Committee, Jul 9 (location TBA)  
Bill Griffith, (913) 772-8960, bill.griffith@kansas.sierraclub.org

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### more outings

We'll take the tour and sample some beer. Maximum 8 people. Ponak's afterwards? Kanza. Dennis Gredell, (816) 444-7363, gooseman@planetkc.com

**[2] Jul 16-17. Canoe Trip on the Arkansas River**  
Meet at the Goat Ranch. RSVP Required. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org

Join us for dinner at the Blue Bird Bistro. RSVP by July 13. Kanza. Bob Sherrick, (816) 779-6708, bsherrick@missouri.sierraclub.org

We’ll Learn about non-timber products and day hike. $10 donation requested. Kanza. Doris Sherrick, (816) 779-6708, dsherrick@missouri.sierraclub.org

**[4] Jul 24. KC Food Circle Picnic and Farm Tour, near Kearny, MO**  
Picnic followed by tour at nearby Fair Share Farm. Fresh table corn and organic burgers (meat & veggie) provided. Bring your own side dishes & drinks. No charge, but we'll have a basket available to receive free will donations. RSVP by July 15. Kanza. Craig Volland, (913) 334-0556, volland@kansas.sierraclub.org

Join us at Powell Observatory in Louisburg, Kansas for a public program entitled “Our Amazing Moon.” Afterward, if the skies are clear, we will observe through public telescopes and hopefully even spot some Perseid meteors. Please bring a $3 donation for the observatory. Will cancel if dark (call first). Kanza. Ellen Brenneman, (816) 274-8062 work, 816-213-2415 mobile, ebrenn1@yahoo.com
Calendar of Events

Summary of all Kansas Chapter Events

Below is a listing of all General Meetings (GM), Outings (Out), and Committee Meetings (CM) for the Kansas Chapter and Groups. For specific information, see General Meetings page 21, Outings page 22, and Committee Meetings page 23. For the latest update on events, go to www.kansas.sierraclub.org/EventsSearch.htm.

CM Jun 5. 6:00 pm. Southwind Group’s ExCom Meeting. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 10. 7:00 pm. Southwind Group’s Annual Picnic. Southwind. Stuart Bolt, (316) 685-3492, stuartbolt@earthlink.net
Out Jun 10-12, Car camping, Camdenton, MO. Kanza. Ginger Kohler, 660-886-8870, gingerk@missouri.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 11. 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. Walk With Wildlife. Southwind. Tom Kneil, (316) 744-1016, thomas.kneil@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 11. 12:00 noon. Trail Maintenance. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 11 or 12. Canoe Outing, Kaw River, KS. Kanza. Jim Fox, (816) 525-3989 or Bob Wilshire, (913) 384-6645, bob.wilshire@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jun 11. 12:00 pm. Walk Along Missouri River. Parkville, MO. Ellen Brenneman, (816) 274-8062, ebrenn1@yahoo.com
Out Jun 12. 7:30 pm. Kansas River: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com
Out Jul 9. Boulevard Brewery Tour, Kansas City, MO. Kanza. Dennis Gredell, (816) 444-7363, gooseman@planetkc.com
CM Jul 9. 9:30 am. Kansas Chapter ExCom. Chapter. Bill Griffith, 913-772-8960, bill.griffith@kansas.sierraclub.org
GM Jul 12. 7:30 pm. Kansas River: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jul 16-17. Canoe Trip on the Arkansas River. Southwind. Bill Cather (316) 522-4741, bill.cather@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Jul 24. KC Food Circle Picnic and Farm Tour, near Kearny, MO. Kanza. Craig Volland, (913) 334-0556, volland@kansas.sierraclub.org
GM Jul 26. 7:00 pm. To Be Announced. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com
CM Jul 28. 7:00 pm. Conservation and Joint Action Committee. Kanza. Elaine Giessel, (913) 888-8517, elaine.giessel@kansas.sierraclub.org
CM Jul 28. 7:00 pm. Kansas ExCom meeting. Kanza. Craig Wolfe, (913) 299-4443, info@kansas.sierraclub.org
Out Aug 13. Dark Astronomy Outing, Louisburg, KS. Kanza. Ellen Brenneman, (816) 274-8062, ebrenn1@yahoo.com
GM Aug 23. 7:00 pm. Topeka Section Meeting. Presentation To Be Announced. Topeka. Paul Post, (785) 354-1972, paulpost@paulpost.com

Deadline for the next issue is July 1