

Comments sought on Evergy rate plans

The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) held its final public hearing on Evergy’s rate increase request on Monday, June 16, in Topeka. The hearing was held at the Washburn Institute of Technology, located at 5724 SW Huntoon St.

Evergy serves more than 1.6 million customers in eastern Kansas and western Missouri and covers more than 28,000 square miles.

The utility company filed an application with the commission in January seeking a \$196.4 million (8.62 percent) rate increase.

If approved as filed, the new electric rates would take effect in September 2025, resulting in an average monthly increase of \$13.05 for each and every residential customer.

At the hearing, attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the company’s rate increase request, ask questions and make comments before the commission.

The commission will continue to accept written public comments through 5 p.m. on July 14, so if you’d like to comment now is the time.

This is how the system works and this is how you can have your voice and opinions heard.

You can send a written letter to the

Kansas Corporation Commission, Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, 1500 SW Arrowhead Rd., Topeka, KS 66604-4027. Be sure to reference the docket number associated with the case, which is 25-EKCE-294-RTS.

You can also call the commission’s public affairs office at 1-800-662-0027 or (785) 271-3140.

And to find out additional information about Evergy’s application, and to comment online, go to the commission’s website (www.kcc.ks.gov) and click on the “Your Opinion Matters” tab.

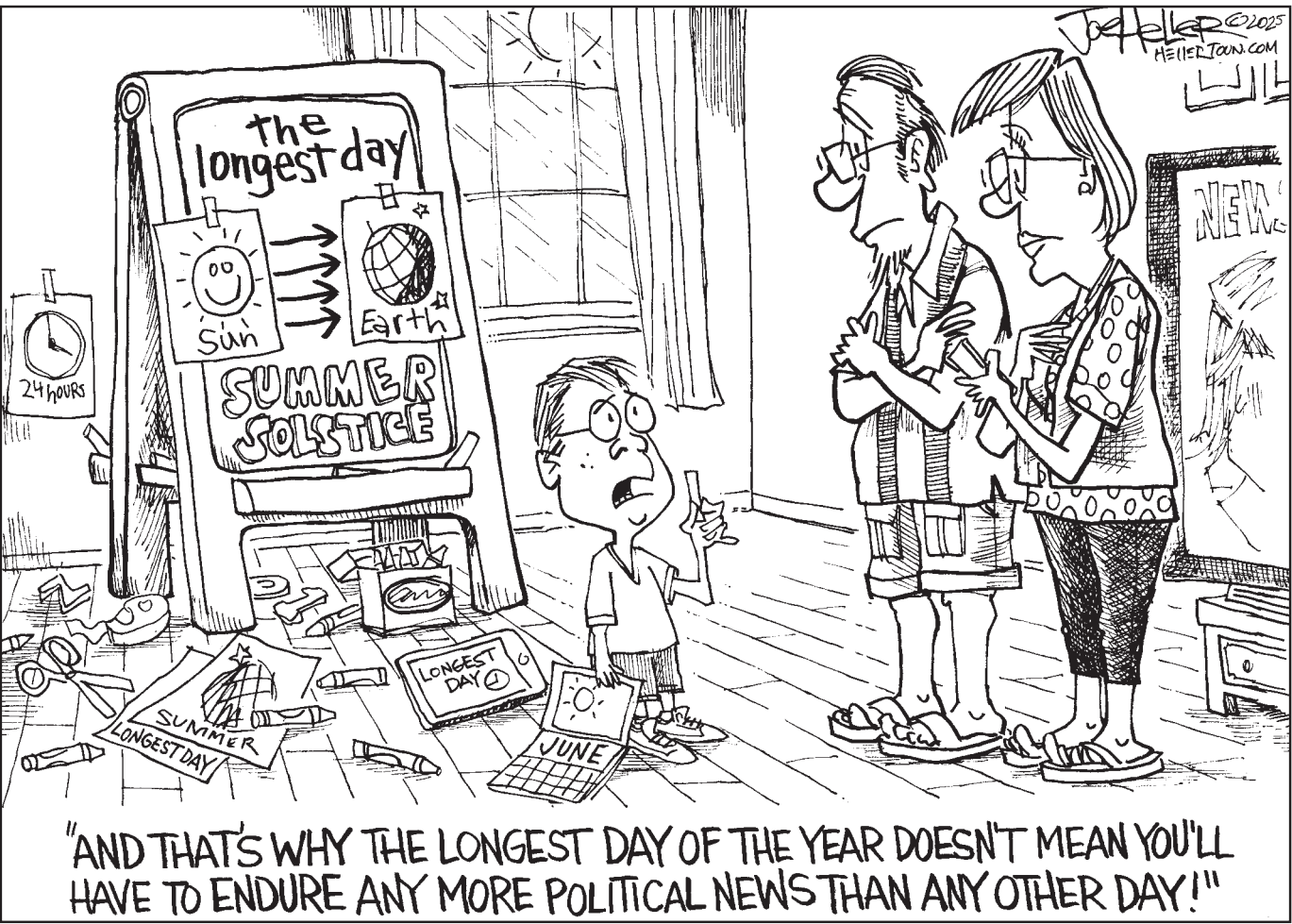
Electricity is a wonderful thing but it is not free and we can’t hardly get along without it.

Not everyone adversely affected financially by such utility rate increases will take the time to comment but if enough people do, then the KCC - charged with regulating the utility - may listen and act to modify and/or reduce Evergy’s rate increase request.

Evergy has a monopoly on this electric utility but it still must justify its rate increases with the KCC.

The commission will issue an order on the application on or before Sept. 29, 2025.

David Powls



The big story is what Congress is not doing

By Lee H. Hamilton

As the budget process on Capitol Hill moves forward, with its heated debates over steep cuts to Medicaid, raising the debt ceiling and countless other decisions, you could be mistaken for thinking that Congress is at the center of the action in Washington these days. Sadly, it’s not.



Don’t get me wrong. Cutting \$715 billion from health care spending, mostly Medicaid, would be a momentous step, jeopardizing the health care of millions of Americans.

So would enacting big boosts to the military and to immigration enforcement efforts and extending tax cuts for mostly wealthy taxpayers while cutting not just the Medicaid rolls, but food assistance and clean energy funding.

Whatever emerges from the budget fracas on Capitol Hill – which is as much between Republican factions as it is between Republicans and Democrats – will put a congressional stamp on President Donald Trump’s plans.

Yet the big story, both in the country at large and in Washington, is what Congress is not doing. More than anything else, it’s not standing up for its place as a co-equal branch of government.

The fact that the key House committee through which the budget bill had to pass met at 1 a.m. to do its work, when pretty much no one but a hardy group of reporters was watching, is aptly symbolic. The current leaders of the governing institution that’s supposed to represent the voices of the American people prefer not to be front and center.

This is not how it’s supposed to be – indeed, it’s not how things have been within relatively recent memory. As the political scientist Yuval Levin put it recently in *The Atlantic*, “A weak Congress is not the norm in the American system, and a Congress this weak would surely have surprised the authors of the Constitution.”

Though this is an issue for this moment, it’s been a long time coming. As Levin points out,

efforts over the last quarter century to make Congress more effective by concentrating power in leaders’ hands have had the opposite effect.

“Many ambitious members of Congress have concluded that their path to prominence must run not through policy expertise and bargaining in committees but through political performance art on social media and punditry on cable news,” Levin writes, “at the same time that narrow majorities have put a premium on party loyalty and discouraged the cross-partisan bargaining that is the essence of legislative work.”

The result is a weaker Congress – one whose members appear to care more about partisanship and supporting their own party than the power of their own institution.

At the same time, presidents since well before Trump have been eager to expand their power. Or as former Assistant Attorney General Jack Goldsmith, who served under George W. Bush, put it in a recent *New York Times* op-ed, “many of Mr. Trump’s efforts to expand the powers of the office build substantially on the excesses of recent presidencies.”

These range from the use of emergency powers to executive orders to firing statutorily protected officials and intruding far onto Congress’s constitutional turf when it comes to taxes, spending, war powers and, right now, tariffs.

Yet acknowledging that Congress’ supine attitude today has roots in the past (I’m talking about the institution as a whole, not necessarily individual members) doesn’t override the importance right now of asking, “Where’s Congress?”

It has the constitutional power to call into question (or vote to approve) DOGE’s extensive cuts to federal agencies whose staff – from the National Weather Service to the CDC to the FAA – help protect Americans’ lives.

It has the right to challenge Trump’s tariff regime, and it could resist the administration’s attempts to cancel spending decisions that Congress itself has made.

Note: Lee Hamilton, a Democrat, is a distinguished scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies and senior advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

By Glenn Mollette

Elon Musk’s wealth mainly comes from his ownership stakes in two companies:

1. Tesla – about 37 percent of his wealth is from Tesla stock, although it was as high as 75 percent in 2020.
 2. SpaceX – valued contracts include a \$20 billion deal with the United States federal government.
- Musk also earned money from selling PayPal to eBay for \$1.5 billion in stock, receiving \$175.8 million personally. His net worth is estimated to be about \$424.7 billion, but this varies from week to week depending on the stock market.
- Other business ventures of Musk’s are Neuralink (brain-machine interfaces and neuro-



technology), the Boring Company (underground tunnels and infrastructure) and SolarCity, which is solar energy but was sold to Tesla in 2016.

In 1995 Musk owned Zip2, which was an online content publishing company that was sold to Compaq.

He also owns Starlink, an internet constellation company.

No doubt Musk is a true visionary, entrepreneur and one of the greatest geniuses of our era.

Musk is still a young man, born June 28, 1971. The world may be yet to see what he will achieve.

However, anyone can spread himself too thin. Obviously, Musk has a lot of great people working for him, but anyone can overdo their capabilities or overestimate themselves.

In my opinion, it was a terrible idea for Musk to become so heavily involved in government and politics. He makes billions from the government contracts with SpaceX. That is definitely a conflict of interest.

However, he is now out of his

leadership role in Washington. After his recent temper tantrum and saying all kinds of dumb stuff about President Donald Trump, he probably will not be returning to any leadership roles. He further over-elevated himself and his role in Trump’s election.

This reminds us again of this truth: Intelligent geniuses can do and say stupid things. Throwing mud at President Trump on social media has made Musk look like a spoiled brat who has seemingly always gotten his way. Again, we are reminded that no one always gets their way in this life.

Is Musk too rich to go broke? Probably, but anyone can fail financially. Musk’s wealth is mostly tied up in stocks, making him “cash poor” or having low liquidity.

But with SpaceX capturing 70 percent of the global launch market, his financial downfall is unlikely. Unless he continues to hurl ill-will at President Trump, which could potentially cost Musk a lot.

The problem is that if the U.S. canceled its contracts with SpaceX, it could impact our manned missions to the International Space Station.

New space projects like NASA’s Artemis moon program could be impacted. Dozens of NASA science programs would be affected, plus the impact on national security as SpaceX provides critical space launch and communication services to the U.S. military.

These and other consequences could significantly affect the U.S. space program and national security.

Trump, Musk and all the others on Capitol Hill need to work together for the common good of our nation.

Musk has proven his genius and capabilities. However, his temper tantrum and verbiage make me wonder a bit as to just what he is really capable of doing in a moment of rage.

Note: Glenn Mollette is an American author and columnist read in all 50 states.

Ag people finding better ways to cope with stress

By Will Stutterheim

Fort Hays State University

Born and raised on a farm in Northwest Kansas, I’ve seen firsthand the challenges the agricultural community faces.

As a child, my parents had to fight to keep our farm, and I saw the mental and emotional toll these challenges placed on our family.

Years later, I took a job as a therapist in a rural community just miles from my parents’ farm. I saw the need for education on the effects of stress in agriculture, but I also saw the stigma associated with talking about mental health.

Kansas was hit hard by drought, and the effect of the stressors could be seen on our farms and in our rural communities.

I saw the community struggling and decided to give my first presentation on the effects of stress in agriculture. The stigma surrounding mental health was very strong 20 years ago and only three people ended up attending that first presentation.

Stigma has always surrounded mental health; however, in agriculture, it’s almost ingrained in the profession.

“Rub some dirt on it,” “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” and “tough it out” are some well-known phrases in farming communities. While “toughing it out” might work on a minor physical injury, it isn’t the best

way to recognize, understand and manage your stressors during times of uncertainty.

In the past 20 years, I have seen significant improvements in the stigma surrounding mental health. Instead of getting lost in the stigma and ignoring mental health needs, people are starting to recognize the symptoms of stress earlier and how that can affect mood and anxiety.

This is critically important, because like any challenge, the quicker you are to respond to your mental health needs, the more likely you will be successful.

They also recognize and understand that much of their stress is from challenges they have little to no control over.

Instead of blaming themselves for challenges outside of their control, hardworking farmers and ranchers are finding better ways and resources to manage their stress, anxiety, depression and overall mental health.

The stigma is still there, but it doesn’t have the same grip that it used to, and this allows people to think about mental health differently.

It’s not just the agricultural community that is getting better; the people and resources supporting the community are changing as well. I have seen so many great people and organizations take on the stigma surrounding mental health in

agriculture.

The next generation of farmers is taking the time to talk about and prioritize mental health. Small communities and agricultural organizations are working tirelessly to spread information and resources to those who are struggling.

Families that were once reluctant to discuss the effects of stress now come together to talk and support each other through challenging times. Rural communities are full of amazing people and resources working to overcome the mental health stigma and finding ways to support those in need.

While I worked as a therapist, I was always fond of saying that stress and mental health issues are not an excuse or a weakness like the stigma suggests. They are a challenge.

Improvements are still needed regarding mental health and the stigma surrounding mental health – I’ve seen firsthand the substantial steps that have already been taken to improve mental health in agriculture.

My first crowd may have consisted of only three people, but since then, I have given similar speeches to thousands of farmers and ranchers in numerous towns across Kansas.

Amazing people are working tirelessly to break down this stigma every day, and there’s a way to honor their advocacy: Kansas Farm Bureau’s Rural

Minds Matter Advocate of the Year Award.

It was humbling to receive the inaugural award last year, and I am excited to see the program continue to celebrate the impact of mental health advocates in rural communities. Their dedication can be truly life changing.

To learn more about the awards or to nominate an advocate, please visit www.kfb.org/ruralmindsmatter

Farmers and ranchers are recognizing the need for bootstraps while also recognizing the toll these stressful times are having on them.

If we work on this challenge in the next 20 years like we have in the last 20 years, I can’t wait to see the advancements the next generation of farmers and ranchers make to further break down the stigma surrounding mental health.

Note: “Insight” is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state’s largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

Will Stutterheim has more than 20 years of experience helping individuals and families cope with the pressures of agriculture through mental health therapy and education.



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