

# Heavy reliance on coal has eroded a KY economic advantage

BY LIAM NIEMEYER  
Kentucky Lantern

At the beginning of this century Kentucky and other states that relied on burning coal for electricity enjoyed an economic edge, but competition from cheaper energy sources has dulled that advantage.

On Tuesday, some prominent Kentuckians looked on as President Donald Trump signed executive orders aimed at reviving demand for coal. Coal company executive Joe Craft, a Republican megadonor, and Senate President Robert Stivers were in the East Room for the signing ceremony. And one of the orders Trump signed resembles a 2023 Kentucky law making it harder for utilities to retire coal-fired power plants, reports the nonprofit newsroom NOTUS.

Trump promised in his first term to bring back coal. Whether the president's actions this time can reverse energy market trends that have spurred the coal industry's decline — and at what cost to consumers — remains to be seen. The questions are important in Kentucky not just because it's a coal-producing state but also because cheap power has been one of Kentucky's top economic advantages.

In the last 25 years, however, Kentucky has fallen from producing the country's cheapest power to the 12th cheapest. It's a gradual trend of rising electricity costs that some experts say is likely to continue unless the state diversifies its power sources beyond coal.

Kentucky had the cheapest power. Not anymore.

In 2001, Kentucky generated about 95% of its electricity from coal. Other coal-reliant states that year including Indiana, West Virginia and Wyoming were also among the top 10 states boasting the cheapest electricity.

Coal was relatively cheap then, and the state's power plants that burned coal were "largely paid for," according to a former spokesperson for Kentucky's utility regulator.

"It was a window in time when coal had some substantial advantages over other types of fuel," said

Andrew Melnykovych, who served as the public information officer for the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) from 2002 to 2020.

But a continued reliance on coal to supply aging power plants is driving up the cost of Kentucky's electricity, according to those who study the energy industry. That trend could impact the state's ability to attract economic development as well as increase the burden on Kentuckians trying to pay their utility bills.

According to the federal Energy Information Administration (EIA) as of 2023, Kentucky's average cost of electricity across industrial, commercial and residential ratepayers (9.96 cents per kilowatt-hour) is still significantly cheaper than the national average (12.63 cents per kilowatt-hour) but has fallen to the 12th cheapest state in the country.

"For decades, Kentucky had an economic advantage of building coal power plants and burning that coal and producing cheap electricity here. That economic advantage has been eroded," said Kent Chandler, the former chair of the PSC and a resident senior fellow for energy and environmental policy at the think tank R Street Institute.

Chandler said more factors than fuel source and power plant expenses account for the cost of electricity. Still, the trendline of increasing electricity costs could continue if Kentucky continues to rely on aging coal-fired power plants.

Kentucky generated about 68% of its electricity through coal in 2023, the third-highest percentage of power sourced from coal of all states that year.

Robin Hartman, a spokesperson for the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, in a statement last month said Kentucky families "enjoy some of the most competitive utility prices" because of the state's "diverse energy landscape." Hartman noted Kentucky has the lowest electricity costs east of the Mississippi River.

Yet Frank Jemley, the executive director of the Kentucky Manufacturers Association, told the Lantern the state's rising electricity costs are very concerning because the cost of electricity is a key component of job

growth.

Energy-intensive industries ranging from aluminum smelters to data centers boosting artificial intelligence services look at the cost of electricity when deciding where to expand because higher costs eat into a company's bottom line. A state report from 2012 found low electricity costs had made Kentucky the single most energy-intensive economy of any state.

Century Aluminum, which idled its aluminum smelter in Hawesville in 2022, told the Wall Street Journal last year it had no plans to restart its smelter because electricity prices in Kentucky were too high. Century Aluminum is also looking to build a new aluminum smelter with federal support, eyeing Kentucky as a potential landing spot.

"There is a clear perception in the marketplace that Kentucky has lost its long-standing position as one of the best states for low-cost energy," Jemley said. "We're convinced Kentucky must build a strategy to reestablish our top-five ranking as a low-cost, reliable energy state."

## SOME COAL-RELIANT STATES HAVE INCREASINGLY DIVERSIFIED. KENTUCKY, NOT AS MUCH

How did Kentucky lose an economic edge in the electricity marketplace? One reason is other states have adapted to a transitioning energy market while Kentucky has remained more static, according to those who focus on energy and utility policy at the Energy and Policy Institute, Energy Innovation Policy and Technology and the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University.

"Mainly, it's a story of other technologies becoming cheaper over the last couple decades," said Noah Kaufman, a senior research scholar and economist with the policy center at Columbia University.

The boom of hydraulic fracking in the 2010s to reach supplies of natural gas in shale deposits significantly boosted the supply of natural gas and drove down its price. Natural gas was cheaper than coal as a power source as of last year. Utilities, including in Kentucky, have moved to gas-fired turbines as a replacement for coal-fired power

plants because of the economics and environmental considerations. Burning natural gas, which is mostly methane, emits roughly half the heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change as burning coal.

According to EIA data, the country produced about 51% of its electricity from burning coal and 17% of its electricity from burning natural gas in 2001. As of 2023, coal produced only about 16% of the country's electricity; natural gas produced 43%.

Wind and solar costs have also significantly fallen over the past 15 years, spurring an acceleration of renewable energy development across the country. Other coal-reliant states that have leapfrogged Kentucky in the competition to hold down power costs have taken advantage of the boom of both natural gas and renewables that are now generally cheaper than burning coal.

Daniel Tait, a research and communications policy director with the pro-clean energy utility watchdog organization Energy and Policy Institute, says North Dakota and Wyoming — the two states with the cheapest electricity across all types of ratepayers as of 2023 — exemplify that trend.

Tait told the Lantern that North Dakota, Wyoming and Kentucky are all big producers and consumers of coal, but Wyoming and North Dakota have been able to develop a significant amount of wind energy.

In 2001, North Dakota generated about 95% of its electricity through coal, according to the EIA. In 2023, the state still generated about 54% of its electricity through coal, but now more than a third of its power comes from wind. Wyoming has more than doubled its wind energy capacity since 2019; wind delivered about 20% of its electricity in 2023.

"They have a lot of coal in North Dakota and Wyoming, but they have so much more wind that the costs are declining because renewable energy is a very, very cheap energy source," Tait said.

Tait said that low-cost renewable energy can act as a buffer against higher coal prices or volatility of natural gas prices.

Renewable energy is among the cheapest electricity sources for a few reasons. As the industries have grown, economies of scale have driven down costs, and there aren't fuel costs associated with energy sourced from the wind and sun. A 2024 report from the financial services firm Lazard says on-shore wind and solar energy have a lower cost, on average, than fossil fuel sources. Even without government subsidies to lower the upfront costs for solar installations or wind turbines, renewables are generally still cheaper than fossil fuels, according to Lazard.

Some others among the 10 states with the cheapest electricity still have nuclear power plants contributing to the energy mix. Such traditional nuclear power plants are expensive to build but produce relatively cheap electricity once they're operating. Idaho and Washington benefit from inexpensive hydro-power contributing large shares of their electricity.

Kentucky, however, has lagged in diversifying its energy mix.

Tait likened Kentucky to Louisiana: Both rely on and are vulnerable to price increases from a fuel source they produce in large quantities — coal and natural gas, respectively.

Kentucky has reduced its reliance on coal by replacing some generation with natural gas — about 24% of the state's electricity in 2023 came from gas-fired power compared to just under 1% in 2001. But some industry and consumer rights groups warn natural gas exports could cause gas prices and electricity prices to rise in the future, concerns that the gas industry disputes.

"Almost all the other states have something that is acting as a hedge that's helping to keep prices down if coal or gas are expensive that year. And Kentucky doesn't have as much of that as the other states do," Tait said.

## WHAT KENTUCKY HAS: AGING COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS

Kentucky's reliance on coal leaves the state with aging coal-fired power plants that carry increasing maintenance costs and recurring

See **COAL**, on 9

## Kentucky

before the hurricane drives prices back up and its to late. Huge Discounts & Financing available. 800-350-0591 to learn more.

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-866-329-2415

Call LeafGuard and say goodbye to gutter cleaning for good. No cleaning. No leaking. No water damage. No more ladder accidents. Get LeafGuard today and be protected for life. FREE estimate. Financing available. 20% off total purchase (Restrictions may apply.) Call 1-866-850-6999

Safe Step. North America's #1 Walk-In Tub. Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our FREE shower package and \$1600 Off for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call Safe Step 1-888-302-4539

Jacuzzi Bath Remodel can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waiving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. (Offer ends 6/30/25.) Call 1-866-837-5986

**HOME SERVICES**  
Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-844-688-8576 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

**INSURANCE SERVICES**  
Up to \$15,000.00 of GUARANTEED Life Insurance! No medical exam or health questions. Cash to help pay funeral and other final expenses. Call Physicians Life Insurance Company- 844-950-2448 or visit [www.Life55plus.info/kypress](http://www.Life55plus.info/kypress)

**DENTAL INSURANCE** from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400 plus procedures. Real dental insurance - NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your FREE Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-855-900-7392 [www.dental50plus.com/26#6258](http://www.dental50plus.com/26#6258)

**INTERNET OFFERS**  
Choose EarthLink Fiber Internet for speeds up to 5 Gigs, no data caps, no throttling. Prices starting at \$54.95. Plus, a \$100 gift card when you make the switch. Call 1-833-974-4780

## Kentucky

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**  
TOP CASH PAID FOR OLD GUITARS! 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg. And Gibson Madolins/Banjoes. 1-833-641-7011

**SECURITY**  
HOME BREAK-INS take less than 60 SECONDS. Don't wait! Protect your family, your home, your assets NOW for as little as 70¢ a day! Call 1-833-360-5407

**SOCIAL SECURITY**  
YOU MAY QUALIFY for disability benefits if you have are between 52-63 years old and under a doctor's care for a health condition that prevents you from working for a year or more. Call now! 1-833-641-6772

**WATCHES**  
PAYING TOP CASH FOR MEN'S SPORT WATCHES! Rolex, Breitling, Omega, Patek Philippe, Heuer, Daytona, GMT, Submariner and Speedmaster. Call 1-833-641-6058

**WRITERS WANTED**  
Become a Published Author. We want to Read Your Book! Dorrance Publishing-Trusted by Authors Since 1920 Book manuscript submissions currently being reviewed. Comprehensive Services: Consultation, Production, Promotion and Distribution Call for Your Free Author's Guide 1-855-209-2951 or visit [dorranceinfo.com/Kentucky](http://dorranceinfo.com/Kentucky)

## Public Notices

## Public Notices

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**MASTER COMMISSIONER'S SALE FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 2025, AT 10:00 A.M.**  
**JESSAMINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, SECOND FLOOR COURTROOM 101 NORTH MAIN STREET, NICHOLASVILLE, KY**

In order to comply with the orders of the Jessamine Circuit Court, the Master Commissioner will sell the property described in actions found and described below in the Jessamine County Courthouse, Second Floor, 101 North Main Street, Nicholasville, Kentucky. Said property shall be sold to raise the amounts set forth below plus interest and other costs as stated in the actions referenced. The sale of said property will be subject to the following terms and conditions: At the time of sale the successful bidder shall either pay full cash or make a deposit of 10%

## Public Notices

of the purchase price with the balance on credit for 30 days. If the purchase price is not paid in full, the successful bidder shall be required to execute a bond at the time of sale with sufficient surety approved by the Master Commissioner prior to the sale to secure the unpaid balance of the purchase price. The bond shall be for the unpaid balance of the purchase price and bear interest at the rate the judgment bears, from the date of the sale until paid, and shall have the force and effect of a judgment. If the purchaser fails to pay the deposit or post a sufficient bond, the property will immediately be resold. The purchaser shall be required to assume and pay all taxes and assessments upon the property for the current tax year and all subsequent years. The sale of the real estate shall be made subject to such right of redemption as may exist in favor of the United States of America or the defendant(s), and all zoning and building regulations, restrictions, ordinances, easements, covenants, and rights-of-way, of record, or otherwise. The property shall be sold "As Is" "Where Is" and without warranty. Risk of loss shall pass to the purchaser upon execution of bond of sale or payment of the purchase price in full which-ever occurs first. Possession of the real property will be given to the purchaser upon confirmation of the report of sale by the Jessamine Circuit Court, full payment of the purchase price plus any interest due, and delivery of a Commissioner's Deed to the purchaser. The property addresses contained herein are for convenience only. All properties will be sold pursuant to the legal description contained in the actions referenced herein. Further information regarding these sales, past sales, upcoming sales and FAQs can be found at [www.JessamineMC.com](http://www.JessamineMC.com).

**SALE 1 – 625 John Sutherland Drive, Nicholasville, 23-CI-58,** Judgment amt. \$178,381.89, Parcel # 057-30-14-009.00

**SALE 2 – 225 Young Drive, Nicholasville, 23-CI-686,** Judgment amt. \$6,496.17, Parcel # 078-40-00-051.00

Ellen L. Miller, Master Commissioner  
102 West Maple Street  
Nicholasville, KY 40356 859-885-1550

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 10 and 17, 2025  
**APRIL 2025**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### CASE NUMBER 25-P-114

NOTICE is hereby given that Melissa Cross has qualified as Executrix, of the estate of David Allen Buckley, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on March 27, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to pres-

## Public Notices

ent the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Melissa Cross, 306 Marble Creek Rd., Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to her, attorney, Robert Gullette Jr., 940 S. Main St., Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than September 27, 2025.

Doug Fain  
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**EST/BUCKLEY, D.**

### Do you have available jobs?

Call 859-553-7057 to let others know about job opportunities at your business.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### CASE NUMBER 25-P-94

NOTICE is hereby given that Barbara Burns has qualified as Executrix, of the estate of Edgar Burns, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on March 27, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Barbara Burns, 1085 Durham Ln., Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than September 27, 2025.

Doug Fain  
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**EST/BURNS, E.**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### CASE NUMBER 25-P-62

NOTICE is hereby given that Nancy C. Kelley has qualified as Administratrix, of the estate of Amanda Christina Kelley, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on March 27, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Nancy C. Kelley, 341 Angela Court, Lexington, KY 40515 not later than September 27, 2025.

Doug Fain  
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**EST/KELLEY, A.**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### CASE NUMBER 25-P-100

NOTICE is hereby given that Whitney Mink has qualified as Guardian of the estate of Braxton Mink, of Jessamine County, Kentucky on March 27, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Whitney Mink, 205 Cameron Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to her, attorney, Jeffrey L. Gehring, 300 West

## Public Notices

Vine St., Suite 1700, Lexington, KY 40507 not later than September 27, 2025.

Doug Fain  
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**EST/MINK, B.**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### CASE NUMBER 25-P-99

NOTICE is hereby given that Whitney Mink has qualified as Guardian of the estate of Wyatt Mink, of Jessamine County, Kentucky on March 27, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Whitney Mink, 205 Cameron Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to her, attorney, Jeffrey L. Gehring, 300 West Vine St., Suite 1700, Lexington, KY 40507 not later than September 27, 2025.

Doug Fain  
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**EST/MINK, W.**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### CASE NUMBER 25-P-108

NOTICE is hereby given that Lucinda P. Fawcett has qualified as Executrix, of the estate of Freida B. Preston, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on March 27, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Lucinda P. Fawcett, 106 Pad-dock Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to her, attorney, Kimberly Barnard Ostroske, 310 E. Main St., Wilmore, KY 40390 not later than September 27, 2025.

Doug Fain  
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**EST/PRESTON, F.**

Put your ad here call 859-553-7057.

## Public Notices

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCE

Notice is hereby given that the Jessamine County Fiscal Court on April 1, 2025 enacted an ordinance, the full text of which is available for public inspection in the office of the Jessamine County Clerk, Jessamine County Courthouse, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40356. The Ordinance by title and summary is as follows:  
An Ordinance relating to: Recognize the Revision of Policy 3.9 Internal Employment Application Included in General Employment Section 3.0

JESSAMINE COUNTY FISCAL COURT

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**ORD. EMPLOYMENT**

Need to find the right employee?  
**WE CAN HELP.**  
Reach the Jessamine County market for less using the Jessamine Journal classifieds. Need a quick quote? Submit your ad online at [JessamineJournal.com](http://JessamineJournal.com). Call 859-553-70577.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCE

Notice is hereby given that the Jessamine County Fiscal Court on April 1, 2025 enacted an ordinance, the full text of which is available for public inspection in the office of the Jessamine County Clerk, Jessamine County Courthouse, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40356. The Ordinance by title and summary is as follows:  
An Ordinance relating to: Recognize the Addition of Policy 6.11-Leave Donation Program to Leave Policy Section 6.0

JESSAMINE COUNTY FISCAL COURT

Jessamine Journal:  
Apr. 17, 2025  
**ORD. LEAVE**



## Hale Honeybells

The once a year citrus sensation!

**ONLY \$34.99\***  
Reg. Price \$44.99  
Special Limited Time Offer!

**35% SAVINGS**  
INCLUDING SHIPPING

**Call 1-844-756-1035 to order item 2692X or Visit [HaleGroves.com/H5YT05](http://HaleGroves.com/H5YT05)**

\* Only \$34.99 (reg. \$44.99) plus \$7.99 shipping and handling per pack to 48 contiguous states. Some restrictions may apply. Limit 5 boxes per customer.

**IC: H5YT05**