

Cost of power to small outbuildings could rise 30%

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the company's use of a power plant in West Virginia. That rider will add \$5.19 for every 1,000 KWH of power used.

Cromer said the rates will have a greater impact on people who have the least money.

"Some of the poorest Kentuckians pay the highest power bills because their houses leak (heat)," she said.

According to figures presented at the meeting Monday night, those using 100 Kilowatt hours a month, such as outbuildings, will pay nearly 30 percent more, while those using 4,900 KWH will pay between five and 10 percent more.

A comparison of bills now and bills with under the proposed rates shows a customer using 1,200 KWH pays \$173.42 now, without riders, adjustments, taxes and other add-ons. The new bill for the same usage would be \$202.36, including the new rider that does not exist now. That's an increase of 17 percent. A customer using 3,600 KWH would pay \$480.26 now, but would see their bill increase to \$531.36 under the proposed rates, an increase of 11 percent.

Audience members spoke up against the rate increase, noting the changes in their power bills over the past several years. Perry Fowler of Whitesburg, who is currently Letcher County coroner, said the chief executive officer of American Electric Power, Kentucky Power's parent company, was paid over \$13 million last year, "and he didn't start till later in the year."

He said he understands the company has to answer to its shareholders, but asking for another one-quarter percent profit is uncalled for.

"They haven't missed a dividend since 1910," Fowler said.

Ernie Bradley, of Letcher, said Kentucky Power revenue might be declining, but it still made \$34 million in profits last year and AEP made \$27 billion in profits. Fowler said the last quarterly dividend to shareholders was 95 cents per share, with a stock value of \$2.42 cents. He noted the federal government refused last year to allow the company to be purchased by Liberty Electric.

"Federal regulators were afraid the rate would go up under Liberty," he said. "That's about comical."

District 3 Magistrate Deb Collier also spoke up against the increase, referencing the company's last attempt at an increase, in which the Public Service Commission gave it half the amount requested.

"Every time they go for a rate increase, they insult our intelligence by going for 15 percent when they probably only wanted half that," she said.

While the company is basing its rate request on population decline, the formula indicates that efforts by customers to conserve electricity and save money might cause additional increases in the future. One man said he and his wife are moving to Tennessee because they can't afford to live here anymore.

"It's not a flat increase, it's a percentage and that percentage is compounding," he said.

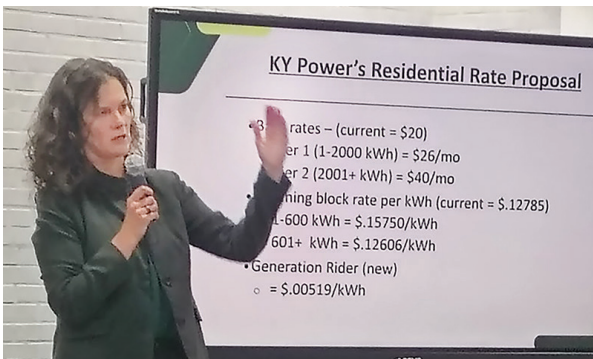
ACLC is urging people to attend public meetings this Thursday night in Pikeville, December in Hazard, and January in Ashland, as well as writing letters and emails to the PSC.

The meeting this week in Pikeville will be at 5 p.m. November 20 at the Pike County Public Library. The Hazard meeting will be at 5 p.m. December 18 at the Perry County Courthouse. The final meeting will be at 5 p.m. January 8 at the Ashland Transportation Center, 99 15th Street in Ashland.

Letters referencing Case Number 2025-00257 can be mailed to the PSC at P.O. Box 615 Frankfort,

Kentucky 40602-0615. Emails can be sent to psc.comment@ky.gov. They should also include the case number.

— By SAM ADAMS



Attorney Mary Cromer discussed the high cost of Kentucky Power's rate hike at Monday's meeting.

PSC's three commissioners will hold meetings in region

The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) this week will hold the first of three public comment meetings to accept comments from the public regarding Kentucky Power's application to increase its monthly rates by nearly 15 percent.

Kentucky Power's application asks the PSC to green light its request to increase the company's electric base rate total revenue by \$95,558,248. Residential customers would see an average monthly energy bill increase \$27.30 to \$210.67, up from an average bill of \$183.37. This represents an increase of approximately 14.62 percent.

The PSC's first public

comment will be held at 5 p.m. Thursday (Nov. 20) at the Pike County Public Library District: 126 Lee Avenue, Rooms 306-307, Pikeville.

The second public comment hearing is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 18 at the Perry County Courthouse, located at 481 Main Street, Hazard. It, too, will begin at 5 p.m. The final hearing will be held in Ashland on January 8, 2026, at the Ashland Transportation Center, 99 15th Street, in Ashland.

While no public hearing will be held in Letcher County or in any of the 16 other counties with Kentucky Power customers, customers concerned about the significant in-

crease can submit written comments by e-mail to PSC.comment@ky.gov, or mailed to 211 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort, KY 40601. All comments should include the commenter's name, address, and the case number, which is 2025-00257.

At a public informational meeting held in Neon earlier this week, attendees learned how costly the proposed rate increases would be to those who can least afford it.

Wes Addington, an attorney at the Whitesburg-

based Appalachian Citizens Law Center, said the rate increases appear to be more severe for people who use less power, and less severe on large users.

"If you're a light user or a person on fixed income, this is going to be affecting you the most," he told The Mountain Eagle before the meeting.

Hundreds of customers have already filed written comments with the PSC opposing Kentucky Power's latest request to increase rates, which comes just three (Continued on Page 6)

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'To me, potholes in eastern Kentucky are ridiculous ...'

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Martin and Lawrence counties — many being done by other companies — are still lingering after years on the books.

Blair Branch Road, a county road between Isom and Jeremiah, was awarded to Kay & Kay Construction in May of 2024, but the state still lists it as 90 percent complete. Various Federal Emergency Management Agency flood repair projects in Letcher County, awarded to NATCO Inc.

in 2023 are listed on the KYTC web site as just 58.36 percent complete. In Pike County, there are 12 projects that are zero percent complete, but all of those were awarded last month.

Residents here are complaining to local government, to the newspaper, to local business owners, and online that the bad roads are destroying their cars, and one business owner posted video of vehicles jumping the railroad crossing on KY 15 at Isom after CSX created a large hump of asphalt on each side of the tracks.

"It's constant," said 83-year-old Owen Wright, who sells tires from his Western Auto store on Main Street in Whitesburg. "To me, the potholes in eastern Kentucky are ridiculous. They ought to bring the governor and some of the legislators up here and take them for a ride in their limousines and knock the hell out of them on the potholes."

Reached by email November 13, a spokeswoman for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 12 said she was unavailable to speak, but would talk to the section engineer and get back to *The Mountain Eagle*. So far, the paper has received no other response.

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REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation of Whitesburg, Kentucky, with clinics in Whitesburg, Isom, Knott, Elkhorn City, Cumberland, Harlan, Middlesboro, Pineville, Leatherwood, Buckhorn, Owsley County and Pound, Virginia, is seeking nominations for membership to the MCHC Board of Directors' from the Whitesburg and Pineville areas. Anyone wishing to nominate someone is requested to do so in writing by December 1, 2025.

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Attention: Administration
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