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Russell extends data center moratorium

BY MARY JANE EPLING
THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

RUSSELL Russell City Council voted Thursday to extend its existing data center moratorium by 90 days in order to complete the necessary steps to properly zone the property of interest.

One of these procedural necessities involves the Greenup County Joint Planning Commission holding a public hearing on the city's proposed amendment to designate the currently unzoned property into a heavy industrial zone.

The former AK Steel Ashland Works property, which includes a total of 255 acres in Russell, 115 in unincorporated Boyd County and 149 acres in Ashland, is in the process of acquisition from Cleveland-Cliffs to Rubix, a privately held company who intend to construct and operate a 2-gigawatt facility.

The property has sat vacant since AK Steel's closure in 2019.

The City of Russell drafted a 17-page resolution last month and voted at its previous meeting to present it to the planning commission as required by KRS statute to designate the brownfield site as a heavy industrial district.

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Retired teacher continues to serve through business

BY MEGAN SMEDLEY
THE WRITE TOUCH STUDIO

OLIVE HILL After 27 years in the classroom, including 25 years at Olive Hill Elementary School, Pam Kinney undoubtedly knows a thing or two about making a difference in the lives of others.

Even after her 2022 retirement, she continues to pour into her community, now through BrickHouse Consignment, her locally owned consignment shop.

"Retirement was a transition," Kinney said. "It felt odd not going to work or not getting my classroom ready during summer. I constantly felt like there was something I was forgetting to do. It took several years of being retired for that feeling to go away."

She says the idea for BrickHouse Consignment came about somewhat unexpectedly.

After remarrying shortly before retirement, Kinney and her husband found themselves combining two households, each with plenty of belongings of its own. With her husband's farm becoming their new home, Kinney began working to downsize.

"My husband asked, 'What are we gonna do with all this?' I made a joke and said, 'We have so much stuff, I could start a thrift store,'" she said.

What began as a joke quickly turned into an idea worth pursuing, and Kinney decided to open the store.

BrickHouse Consignment opened in the summer of 2022, just a few months before Kinney's official retirement on Sept. 1 of that year.

The business now has approximately 120 consignors.

For Kinney, consignment was a natural fit. She says she had previously helped a friend who operated a consignment store in downtown Olive Hill, so she recognized a need for that type of business and saw an opportunity to start a business with manageable overhead.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Pam Kinney is pictured at Brickhouse Consignment in Olive Hill.

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Ky. Power asks state to build $2.8B gas-fired power plant

BY LIAM NIEMEYER
KENTUCKY LANTERN

An investor-owned electric utility serving Eastern Kentucky is asking permission from the state's utility regulator to build a natural gas-fired power plant providing electricity for a proposed hyperscale data center.

The proposal to build the $2.81 billion power plant would be the first major power plant Kentucky Power has built in decades. Kentucky Power serves about 162,000 customers across 20 Eastern Kentucky counties and is a subsidiary of Ohio-based American Electric Power.

In a provided statement, Kentucky Power president and chief operating officer Cindy Wiseman said the utility's commitment to Eastern Kentucky "goes beyond providing reliable electricity."

"We've served these communities for generations, and we want our customers and communities to share directly in the benefits when new investment comes to the region," Wiseman said. "Eastern Kentucky has a tremendous opportunity ahead, and thoughtful growth can strengthen our electric system, support good jobs and attract new investment."

In its application to the state's utility regulator, the Kentucky Public Service Commission, Kentucky Power argues the combined cycle natural gas turbine, generating up to 769 megawatts of electricity, is needed to meet the demands of a hyperscale data center planned by the investor-owned company TeraWulf with an electricity demand of 1 gigawatt, or 1,000 megawatts.

The electric utility wrote it had compared other options including a smaller gas-fired turbine and renewable energy but needed a "a more energy dense resource" for near-constant demand of the data center. The cost of building combined cycle turbines has surged this year because of electricity demand from data centers. The utility is seeking to buy fossil fuel-fired power from elsewhere until the new power plant is put into service in 2031.

The utility is also asking the regulator to approve a contract to serve TeraWulf, which would have TeraWulf agree to pay approximately $100 million over 10 years to offset residential utility bills in the winter — estimated to be about $26 a month for each ratepayer during the winter.

Ratepayer concerns, protections

Elected officials in Boyd County and Greenup County unveiled the Terawulf proposal this summer to build the data center at the EastPark industrial park, the same location where the state had to claw back a $15 million investment for a failed

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