KENTUCKY NEWS

Kentucky PSC gives go ahead for data center in Hancock County

BY LIAM NIEMEYER
KENTUCKY LANTERN

Kentucky's utility regulator has approved an electricity service contract for a hyperscale data center wanting to set up shop at the site of former aluminum smelter in Hancock County that shuttered years ago. The order issued Friday is a key step forward before the power-intensive data center can begin operating.

The Kentucky Public Service Commission wrote the electricity service contract between investor-owned data center developer TeraWulf and utility Big Rivers Electric Corporation provides "adequate protections" for ratepayers, "appropriately allocates" financial risks and sets "fair, just and reasonable" rates.

In Monday morning posts on X, Maryland-based TeraWulf wrote the order was a "major milestone" and that it "validates how responsible large-scale data infrastructure can be developed."

TeraWulf wants to use 482 megawatts of electricity transmission infrastructure at the site of the former Century Aluminum smelter near the Ohio River to power a hyperscale data center, a project that has the backing of artificial intelligence company Anthropic.

The company, which also wants to build a hyperscale data center at an Eastern Kentucky industrial park, wrote earlier this month it was committing to Democratic Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear's requirements for data center developers.

In the 30-page order, the commission wrote the electricity contract provided a number of requirements including that TeraWulf pay for the electricity it gets from the regional power grid operator MISO and its own electricity transmission infrastructure upgrades.

The commission wrote the contract also provides protections for if the data center uses "substantially less" electricity than expected. An attorney with an environmental legal group did raise concerns about the potential for regional transmission costs to serve the data center being borne by ratepayers.

The Public Service Commission consists of a board of commissioners who weigh requests from utilities including the reasonableness of specific electricity contracts for industrial sites.

The commission also considered economic development benefits of the project, writing that TeraWulf attests the project could create at least 90 jobs at the site of the former smelter that previously employed approximately 600 people. The commission also wrote the utility could receive tens of millions of dollars from the contract, along with the potential for local tax revenue that was "not guaranteed."

"The projected financial and community benefits provide additional support for the Commission's conclusion that approval of the RESA is consistent with the public interest," the commission wrote.

The state regulator also wrote it reviewed commentary from local residents from a July public hearing held in Hancock County worried about environmental impacts and lasting economic benefits. The regulator wrote other commenters supported the potential for jobs and tax revenue the project could bring.

Gary Elder, a resident of the Hancock County town of Lewisport who worked at the former smelter for 40 years before retiring in 2015, spoke at the public hearing in Hancock County. He told the commission he was worried about the potential of data centers exacerbating rising utility bills.

In a phone interview Monday, Elder said he spoke with the Hancock County Judge-Executive Johnny Roberts, the county's top elected official who supports the project. Elder said the data center "might not be a bad thing" with the potential for local tax revenue. But he worries about the downsides of data centers, having read news reports detailing data center impacts with noise, pollution and utility bill increases.

"We know the good because they're showing it," Elder said. "We haven't seen the bad yet."

Drive sober campaign runs through Labor Day

BY TOM LATEK
KENTUCKY TODAY

FRANKFORT – The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety reminds travelers to plan ahead for a safe and sober ride home to help keep roads safe, as Kentuckians celebrate the unofficial end of summer during the upcoming Labor Day weekend.

The Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign runs through Sept. 7 as part of a broader effort the Transportation Cabinet is making along with law enforcement to improve highway safety by discouraging impaired driving.

"This Labor Day, let's all do what's right and look out for our neighbors by making smart decisions that keep everyone safe on the roadway," Gov. Andy Beshear said in a formal statement. "Do not drink and drive, put the phone down, buckle up and drive the speed limit. Too many crashes and tragedies on our roadways can be prevented by taking simple steps that ensure everyone makes it home safely."

Although impaired driving enforcement is a year-round effort, crashes tend to increase over holiday weekends. The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety is joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and law enforcement agencies across the country in the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over awareness and law enforcement safety campaign, reminding drivers to make a plan before drinking or using impairing substances and to always choose a safe and sober ride home.

During the 2025 Labor Day holiday weekend in Kentucky, there were 69 crashes involving an impaired driver, resulting in 49 injuries and three deaths.

Reminders for drivers include:

--Before the festivities begin, plan a way to get home safely at the end of the night.

–If you're impaired, use a ride-booking company or taxi, call a sober friend or family member or use public transportation to get home safely.

--If you see an impaired driver, safely pull over and contact law enforcement. You may dial the Kentucky State Police toll-free line directly at 1-800-222-5555 or call 911. Provide a vehicle description, license number, location and, if possible, direction of travel.

–If you know people who are about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to their destination safely.

--Wear a seat belt. It is not only the law, but it is also the best defense against an impaired driver. Buckling up helps prevent injury and death if you are involved in a crash.

UK to research pest affecting golf courses

BY TOM LATEK
KENTUCKY TODAY

LEXINGTON – The Department on Entomology at the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, is studying a newly arrived pest affecting turfgrasses commonly found at golf courses.

The annual bluegrass weevil, a small type of beetle, is considered one of the largest threats to golf course turfgrass in the Northeastern United States. More recently, the ABW has made its way to the Southeast, causing golf course superintendents and managers to rethink how they protect their courses from damage caused by this very costly pest.

ABW adults and larvae feed on short mown turfgrasses commonly found in golf course fairways, collars, approaches and putting greens. Adults feed on individual leaf blades. However, larvae feed inside the stems of grasses and, when big enough, begin feeding on the crown of the plant, which is the growth point located at the base of grasses.

If left unchecked, ABW can kill large swards of turfgrass. This is especially problematic on golf courses where turf is valued for its aesthetic appeal and used as the playing surface for the sport.

"We know a lot about the ABW's biology and seasonal activity in the Northeast, but we don't know when the different life stages are active here in Kentucky and when populations peak in abundance," said Caleb Wilson, assistant professor of Urban Landscape Entomology at UK. "A big part of this research project is to better understand the ABW's seasonal activity in different parts of the Bluegrass region where this critter is established so that superintendents across Central

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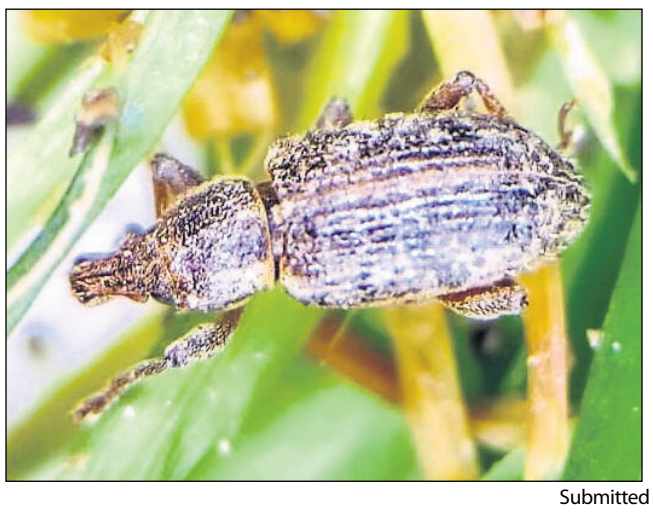

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University of Kentucky researchers are studying a newly arrived tiny pest affecting turfgrasses commonly

Valvoline Global moving headquarters to Cincinnati

BY TOM LATEK
KENTUCKY TODAY

LEXINGTON – Valvoline Global Operations announced Monday it will be leaving its offices in Lexington in favor of moving to a new global headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Valvoline says its current location in Lexington will remain a part of its global footprint, becoming the central hub for the Americas region, where more than 400 employees will continue working, focusing wholly on supporting the company's operations in the U.S., Canada and Latin America.

The company's new global headquarters will be in the heart of downtown Cincinnati at 312 Elm St., where it expects to invest in a complete revitalization of the 50,000 square feet it will occupy.

According to Valvoline, the move positions executive leadership and global functions minutes away from the company's largest production facility, while also providing the space, infrastructure and connectivity necessary for the company's continued growth.

"Today marks an important moment for our company," said Jamal Muashsher, president and chief executive officer of Valvoline Global Operations. "Expanding our presence in Cincinnati and creating our Americas Hub in Lexington provides the space for our teams to better collaborate, innovate and operate more effectively, which will ensure we continue providing top-tier support for our customers worldwide."

Established in 1866 as America's first branded motor oil, the company says Valvoline has a long history of innovation and a commitment to driving customer growth worldwide.

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PROPOSED TAX NOTIFICATION TAYLOR COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Taylor County Board of Education is proposing a general fund tax levy of 55.4 cents on real property and 57.8 cents on personal property.

The General Fund tax levied in fiscal year 2026 was 57 cents on real property and 57.7 cents on personal property and produced revenue of $7,855,330.00. The proposed General Fund tax rate of 55.4 cents on real property and 57.8 cents on personal property is expected to produce $7,849,061.00. Of this amount, $1,109,824.73 is from new and personal property. The compensating tax for 2027 is 53.3 cents on real property and 56.1 cents on personal property and is expected to produce $7,560,140.00.

The proposed rate is not expected to generate more revenue than received in the preceding year.

The General Assembly has required publication of this advertisement and information contained herein.

This information is published pursuant to KRS 160.470. The proposed tax rate is not subject to recall under KRS 132.017