

KY's largest utilities eyeing small nuclear reactors to power data centers

BY AUSTIN R. RAMSEY
LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

Kentucky's two largest power utilities are collaborating with a prefabricated nuclear reactor manufacturer in Maryland to explore producing nuclear energy in the commonwealth for the first time.

Louisville Gas and Electric and Kentucky Utilities have begun a project feasibility study with X-energy to consider deploying small modular reactors to prop up power-hungry data centers the utilities are courting and support long-term grid stability throughout Central and Eastern Kentucky, the joint utilities said.

The companies appear motivated by new legislation Gov. Andy Beshear signed into law last month granting new nuclear ventures help clearing red tape in Washington. Lawmakers in Frankfort have been busy laying the groundwork for what they hope will be a diversified power grid strong enough to attract high-load customers like artificial-intelligence data centers and large-scale industries.

"We're proud to work with X-energy to explore bringing nuclear energy to Kentucky to support the significant pipeline of new projects in our service territories where large load customers can support the cost structure," said LG&E and KU President and CEO said John R. Crockett III in a statement.

Kentucky's newly formed Nuclear Energy Development Authority awarded American Electric Power Inc. a \$1 million grant earlier this year to cover siting costs for a small reactor

in the far-Eastern Kentucky service region covered by its subsidiary Kentucky Power. The Appalachian power provider based in Ashland is Kentucky's second-largest publicly traded utility behind LG&E/KU, which is owned by PPL Electric Utilities.

LG&E/KU have been on an aggressive new power generation spending spree as they seek to bring on board new data center customers. The companies secured state regulators' permission to build two new natural gas power plants last year. They are also negotiating with a water battery developer to convert an Eastern Kentucky coal mine into a circular pumped storage system.

But nuclear energy would join legacy coal and natural gas power plants as a base load fuel that could offer continuous, 24-hour power to meet demand minimums.

"We have an all-of-the-above approach to our power generation fleet that's among the most reliable in the nation," Crockett said. "This collaboration will explore whether nuclear energy fits into our long-term plans."

Small, prefab reactors like X-Energy's Xe-100 are an alluring entry point for Kentucky's nuclear proponents looking to stand up sites quickly without alarming Kentuckians jittery about the risk of catastrophic reactor meltdowns or long-term radioactive waste disposal.

The Xe-100 LG&E and KU say they are interested in is one of 35 advanced reactor designs in the pre-application design permitting phase with

the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. There are no small modular reactors currently operating domestically. Only two designs have secured approval, and one project has received the green light from Washington to begin construction.

X-energy's Xe-100 high-temperature, gas-cooled reactors are expected to produce up to 80 megawatts of electricity — less than a third of that produced by more traditional pressurized water reactors — with passive safety systems that can shut down and cool the reactor without human intervention. The company expects to configure them in four- or 12-unit plants capable of anywhere between 320 megawatts or up to a gigawatt of electricity, or enough to power a large city.

Lawmakers have said they envision SMRs small and versatile enough to serve individual power customers such as data centers, which have been criticized as too energy intensive and posing a risk to ratepayers whose bills could increase to cover their demand.

Legislation that would have barred utilities from passing those costs on to residential ratepayers stalled in the state Senate this year, despite easily clearing the House.

"This collaboration allows us to explore how the Xe-100 can support the Commonwealth's growing electricity demands while strengthening grid reliability and creating economic opportunity across the region," X-energy CEO J. Clay Sell said in a statement.

Kentucky overdose deaths drop for fourth straight year

BY SARAH LADD
KENTUCKY LANTERN

For the fourth year in a row, the number of Kentuckians who died from drug overdoses declined in 2025, according to the annual overdose report released Thursday.

The 2025 Drug Overdose Fatality Report shows overdose deaths are down nearly 23% from 2024.

Gov. Andy Beshear credited grants from the Office of Drug Control Policy, the nearly 183,000 doses of Narcan distributed in the state last year and other efforts in a state among the worst-hit by the opioid crisis.

Still, 1,110 Kentuckians died last year from overdoses. That's down from 1,439 in 2024, 2,020 in 2023 and 2,200 in 2022.

"In honor of those lost to addiction, we must keep working every day for the inches to become the miles of progress, because that's how we save more Kentuckians from addiction and help protect more families from the heartbreak and pain that comes with this disease," Beshear said.

The 34-page report shows methamphetamine and fentanyl were the top culprits in last year's overdose deaths, present in 50% and 45% of all deaths, respectively. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent. Methamphetamine is a synthetic stimulant that is highly addictive.

Fentanyl was identified in 504 drug overdose deaths, which was a nearly 43% decrease from the 883 drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl in 2024.

Methamphetamine also declined, identified in 549 drug overdose deaths, which was a decrease of nearly 24% from the overdose deaths involving methamphetamine in 2024.

In addition to methamphetamine and fentanyl, toxicology results showed the presence of cocaine,

acetylfentanyl, oxycodone, heroin and alprazolam in deaths.

In 2025, most people who died from drug overdoses were between the ages of 45-54, followed by those 35-44 and 55-64. Fewer than five children five years old and younger died.

Jefferson County had the highest rate of fentanyl-related deaths, followed by Fayette and Kenton Counties.

Jefferson County had the highest rate of methamphetamine-related deaths, followed by Fayette and Madison Counties.

Carroll County and Trimble County were both in the group of counties with the lowest number of drug overdose deaths in the state as both counties reported less than five deaths

Speaking at Beshear's weekly news conference, Office of Drug Control Policy Executive Director Van Ingram said getting the deaths down has "been a long fight" and "there were days that it just seemed impossible."

"For the fourth year in a row, to see these numbers come down, I can't tell you what it means to folks out of the field all across this state, that toil every day, working with people in addiction, doing everything they can to help them get in recovery and stay in recovery," Ingram said.

Beshear asked people to seek help at findhelpnow.org/ky.

"We want to provide the resources to help you through it. There is no stigma," he said. "Asking for help is one of the bravest things that anyone can do. And if you have a family member that you're worried about suffering through addiction, please reach out, encourage them to get help. We want to get to a point where we end this epidemic in our lifetime and not leave it to our kids and to our grandkids."

Governor cites \$7 billion record investments

BY TOM LATEK
KENTUCKY TODAY

FRANKFORT — Gov. Andy Beshear said 2026 marked the best first four months for economic investment of any year in Kentucky history, with more than \$7 billion in announced and approved investment.

Since taking office in December 2019, Gov. Beshear has announced more than 1,300 private-sector new-location and expansion projects totaling over \$50 billion in announced investments, creating more than 70,000 jobs.

The governor also provided an update on the former BlueOval SK On facilities in Glendale. In December 2025, Ford announced it was ending its joint venture with SK On for their U.S. battery factories due to changes in public policy related to the electric vehicle industry, trade

policy issues and changing dynamics in the marketplace.

Since then, the Beshear administration has been focused on protecting taxpayers, supporting affected employees and creating new jobs.

Over the past several weeks, state officials have laid out that Ford would assume all obligations under the original transaction and confirm, as previously announced, a new \$2 billion investment in the facility, creating at least 2,100 full-time jobs to manufacture energy storage systems in Hardin County.

Beshear noted that Ford agreed to the updated terms and the company and state are moving forward together.

"This is great news for Ford, great news for Hardin County and great news for all of Kentucky," Beshear said. "Ford has been a great employer and corporate partner in our state

for more than a century, and our winning partnership will continue well into the future."

Beshear has highlighted a new project for the state's manufacturing sector in eastern Kentucky as Toothsure, a provider of oral hygiene products designed for patients who face barriers to standard dental care, announced plans to establish a new operation in Perry County with a \$7.3 million investment, creating 60 new, full-time jobs at a wage of \$55.25 per hour, including benefits.

He also pointed out a new entry in Kentucky's growing technology sector as Global Business Solutions announced plans to expand its Northern Kentucky operations. The \$6.8 million investment will allow the company to locate in a historic Covington building and retain 57 highly technical positions.



LEGAL NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP Number: TCSP-2026-01
Design/Build of Interactive Water Splash Pad Feature
for Trimble County Park

Trimble County Fiscal Court ("Owner") is requesting proposals pursuant to KRS 45A.370 for the design and construction of an interactive water splash pad feature for the Trimble County Park. This project shall be delivered as a lump sum design-build contract, and the base bid shall not exceed \$500,000. The following description outlines the scope of work for the project. The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive technicalities, and to accept the proposal deemed most advantageous to the Owner. This project is funded in part by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and is subject to applicable federal requirements. All proposals must include the required elements set forth in this RFP. Incomplete proposals may be deemed non-responsive and disqualified from consideration.

Proposer shall include the required points in their proposal:

- *Splash pad is 98 feet x 52 feet, excluding sidewalks around the perimeter of the pad. The owner will add sidewalks after the splash pad has been completed and accepted by the Owner.
- *Site is anticipated to be at subgrade; however, the design/build team shall verify site conditions and include all work necessary to construct the splash pad as proposed.
- *Geotechnical investigation shall be the responsibility of the design-build team.
- *Proposer is responsible for both State and Local permits for construction and operational features from the State Department of Health.
- *The Owner will provide the necessary power source to the point of connection of the Proposer's feature. The Proposer will be responsible for all electrical connections.
- *Warranty – Proposer shall provide equipment manufacturer warranty per their standard, including all shipping of defective materials and a five (5)-year warranty on workmanship of the pad installation to include all underground plumbing and accessories, electrical, and concrete pad. No exceptions will be considered on the warranty terms.
- *Base bid shall be submitted as a pass-through spray equipment system; proposer shall submit an alternate price to include a recirculating system for the equipment package. Proposal should clearly delineate system components, costs, and operational differences.
- *All piping between play products and drain and water distribution system are to be Schedule 80 PVC or approved equal.
- *Splash pad activity deck and drain lines are to have a two percent (2%) slope to optimize drainage.
- *All line sizing must be confirmed with the spray equipment system manufacturer to ensure that the size of lines and distance are appropriate for correct flow. The manufacturer's spray effects shall be balanced and appropriately flowing.
- *Electrical requirements for the splash pad and equipment shall meet NEMA 4X Connector. All anchors shall be electrically bonded in accordance with NEC-680 and local electrical codes.
- *Systems shall have a feature that includes a remote start pedestal and automatic shut off.
- *The Owner shall provide a pre-fabricated restroom facility and will allow for space inside this housing for the equipment. Plans and specifications shall be coordinated with the Owner.
- *In regard to the type of features, the following criteria should be submitted by the Proposer. It is the Owner's desire to keep the total flow rate of the entire feature at 200 gallons per minute or less.
 - A structure
 - A combination of individual features that would be suitable for the pad size dimensions.
 - Proposer shall incorporate a cohesive design theme (e.g., nature based or sports oriented) and include conceptual renderings
 - Technical feature – program feature to send alerts to maintenance staff via smartphone, personal computer, or tablet.
 - Concrete finish shall be slip-resistant either through the finish itself or the type of coating material applied to the surface.

General Notes:
Proposer is responsible for all waste debris disposal for the project.
The proposer is responsible for arranging and coordinating the offloading of materials at the site.
Project Schedule:
Construction is planned for the Summer of 2026. The project is desired to be ready for start-up and full operation by September 2026; however, proposers shall approach this RFP with the earliest feasible completion per their proposal. A detailed CPM schedule (Primavera P6, Microsoft Project, or equivalent) shall be submitted with the proposal.
Project Coordination:
The Owner will assign a staff engineer to the project who will coordinate all site activities.
Progress Payment Schedule:

- 10% upon design approval by the Owner.
- 30% product material upon proof of either on-site storage or off-site warehouse storage. The Proposer will be responsible for all insurance coverage for stored material. No exception.
- 40% actual construction
- 10% start up
- 10% final completion and acceptance by the Owner

General Requirements

1. A current Certificate of Liability Insurance must be provided to the Finance Department with the following minimum coverage:
 - A. Broad Form Comprehensive General Liability, including Products and Completed Operations. Bodily Injury: \$1,000,000 each occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate, Property Damage: \$1,000,000 each occurrence
 - B. Automobile Liability, including any auto, hiring autos, and non-owned autos, \$300,000 combined single limit
 - C. Workers' Compensation for all employees used on the job pursuant to statute.

5. Required Proposal Content: Each proposal must include the following: (a) a completed lump sum cost proposal with itemized pricing for all components, including a separate line item for the re-circulating system, aligned with the submitted design; (b) a design concept narrative and renderings and drawings including a 20–30% conceptual design consisting of layout, feature schedule, and preliminary system approach; (c) a proposed project schedule with milestones demonstrating ability to achieve the August 2026 completion deadline—or earliest feasible completion timeline—and a detailed project schedule (Primavera P6 or equivalent); if the September 2026 timeline cannot be met, Proposers shall supply a narrative with their schedule contextualizing why it cannot be met; (d) a list of at least three (3) comparable splash pad projects completed within the past five (5) years, with owner references, letters of recommendations and contact information; (e) proof of current insurance coverage meeting the minimum requirements set forth in Section 1 above; (f) the required bid bond or certified check; and (g) a description of all warranty terms offered, consistent with a five (5) year workmanship warranty and manufacturer standard equipment warranties. (g) Design shall be prepared and stamped by a Kentucky-licensed Professional Engineer with demonstrated experience in aquatic or splash pad systems. (h) Contractor shall self-perform a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the work. (i) Proposer shall identify which portions of the work will be self performed and which will be subcontracted.

6. Federal Grant Compliance Requirements: (a) This project is subject to the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act. All iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project shall comply with BABA requirements unless a waiver is granted. Proposers shall include all costs associated with compliance in their proposal. (b) Contractor shall comply with all applicable federal grant requirements, including but not limited to 2 CFR Part 200 and all Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) requirements. (c) Contractor shall maintain all project records, including payroll, invoices, and procurement documentation, in accordance with federal grant requirements and shall make such records available for audit upon request. (d) All procurement and subcontracting shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local procurement regulations associated with federally funded projects. (e) Contractor shall comply with all applicable nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity requirements associated with federally funded projects. (f) Contractor shall coordinate with the Owner regarding installation of required signage acknowledging Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) participation. (g) This project shall comply with all applicable federal and state labor standards, including prevailing wage requirements if applicable.

2. Contractor must hold all required licenses and registrations to perform work in Trimble County, Kentucky, including any applicable state contractor's license.
3. A bid bond or certified check in the amount of five percent (5%) of the total proposed price shall be included with the submitted proposal. The bid bond shall be forfeited to the Owner if the selected Proposer fails to execute the contract.

A one hundred percent (100%) performance bond and a one hundred percent (100%) payment bond, each in the amount of the awarded contract price, shall be required of the successful Proposer prior to execution of the contract, pursuant to KRS 45A.190.

4. Technical questions may be directed to John D. Ogburn Jr., Judge Executive, at (502-255-7196) Email: john.ogburn@trimblecountyky.gov

Scoring Guideline - Evaluation Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria. The maximum total score is 100 points:

1. Cost Proposal (50 Points): The firm with the lowest price will be awarded. 40 Points. All others will be calculated as: (Lowest Total Price Submitted / Total Cost Submitted) x 40 = Cost Points.

2. Technical Approach and Design Quality (20points): Proposer's design concept, creativity, appropriateness for the pad dimensions, compliance with technical specifications, and flow rate requirements.

3. Experience and Qualifications (15Points) Demonstrated experience with comparable splash pad projects, references, and relevant certifications or licensure. Evaluation of contractor experience, key personnel, and demonstrated ability to successfully deliver similar projects.

4. Project Schedule and Ability to Meet Completion Deadline (10 Points) Demonstrated ability to achieve the earliest feasible Substantial Completion following Notice to Proceed, including a detailed project schedule with milestones.

5. Warranty Terms (5 points): Quality and scope of warranty coverage offered, including any terms that exceed the minimum warranty requirements set forth in this RFP.

** Scoring note: Cost Proposal points will be calculated as set forth in item 1 above. Proposals must address each evaluation criterion identified above. Failure to provide sufficient information for scoring any criterion may result in a reduced score for that criterion.

The Owner may conduct written or oral discussions with all responsible offerors who submit proposals that are reasonably susceptible of being selected for award. Discussions shall not disclose any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors. However, an award may be made without discussions based on initial offers.

The Owner reserves the right to request Best and Final Offers (BAFOs) from offerors in the competitive range before award.

Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope, clearly marked "RFP - Trimble County Park Splash Pad - DO NOT OPEN," and delivered to the Trimble County Judge Executive's Office, 123 Church Street, P.O. Box 251, Bedford, Kentucky 40006.

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 PM, prevailing local time, on May 29th, 2026. Proposals received after the stated deadline will not be accepted or evaluated, regardless of post-mark date.

This RFP shall be publicly advertised for a minimum of twenty-one (21) days prior to the proposal submission deadline, by posting on the Trimble County Fiscal Court website and/or publication in a newspaper of general circulation in Trimble County, Kentucky.

Proposal openings will not be public. The Owner reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to award, pursuant to KRS 45A.105, if cancellation is determined to be in the best interests of Trimble County Fiscal Court.

This solicitation is issued pursuant to KRS 45A.370 (Competitive Negotiation), as adopted by Trimble County Fiscal Court pursuant to KRS 45A.343.

Compliance Requirements: The awarded Proposer shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to: (a) workers' compensation and unemployment insurance requirements pursuant to KRS 45A.480; (b) the requirement to disclose any final determinations of violations of applicable KRS chapters as required by KRS 45A.485; and (c) all applicable Kentucky resident bidder preference provisions under KRS 45A.494. The awarded contract shall incorporate these compliance requirements as material terms.

123 Church St. P.O. Box 251, on or before 4:00 PM, prevailing local time, on May 29th, 2026. The proposal opening will not be public.

The proposals are being solicited pursuant to KRS 45A. 370