

Approved: May 1, 2003 Carl Dean Holmes  
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Carl D. Holmes at 9:10 a.m. on March 13, 2003 in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Jerry Williams

Committee staff present: Mary Galligan, Legislative Research  
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research  
Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes  
Jo Cook, Administrative Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee: M. Lee Allison, Kansas Geological Survey

Others attending: See Attached List

Chairman Holmes welcomed Dr. M. Lee Allison, State Geologist and Director for the Kansas Geological Survey and the Chair of the State Energy Resources Coordination Council (SERCC). Dr. Allison spoke to the committee about the 2003 State Energy Plan (Attachment 1) and energy forecasts. He provided details on the state's energy balance with projections to 2007 and the state's consumption of energy, by fuel source. He also addressed concerns on the state's energy production potential and how it declining to the point of Kansas being a net importer of energy. Dr. Allison also explained the SERCC goals and requested legislative actions. Dr. Allison responded to questions from the committee.


Dr. Allison then addressed the committee on the issue of "Coalbed Methane in Kansas" (Attachment 2). Dr. Allison provided a power point presentation that detailed the areas of potential coalbed methane development in the state. He told the committee that the keys to success were: good petroleum transportation infrastructure, sufficient price to spur drilling, thicker coals, high gas content of coals and access to pipelines. Dr. Allison also distributed two documents to the committee: Kansas Geological Survey Public Information Circular 19 "Natural Gas from Coal in Eastern Kansas" (Attachment 3) and an article from the Oil & Gas Journal titled "Coalbed gas play emerges in eastern Kansas basins" (Attachment 4).

Dr. Allison, again, responded to questions from the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.


The next meeting will be Friday, March 14, 2003 at 9:00 a.m.





# Kansas Energy Plan

State Energy Resources Coordination Council



SERCC [www.kansasenergy.org](http://www.kansasenergy.org)

### Tasks

- Energy production and consumption forecasts
- Annual comprehensive energy plan

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DATE: 3-13-03

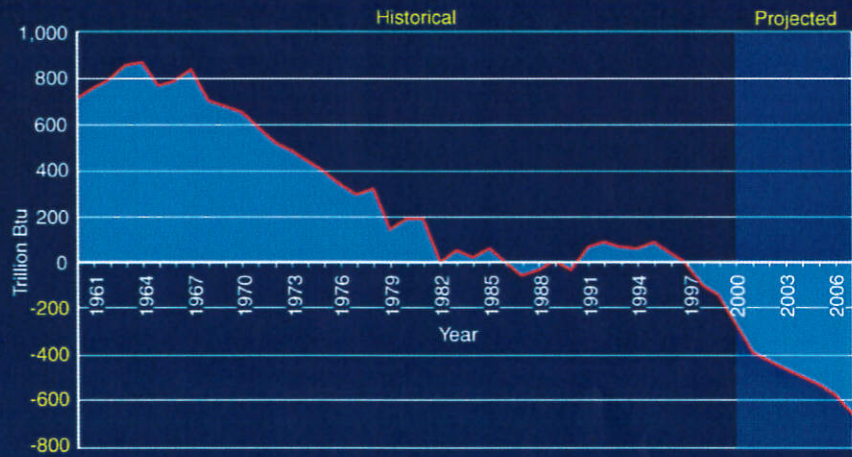
ATTACHMENT 1 ~~7~~

# SERCC

- Kansas Energy Plan (January 13, 2003)
- Kansas Energy Abstract (March, 2003)
- Kansas Energy Atlas (online)

[http://neutrino.kgs.ku.edu/website/energy\\_atlas/](http://neutrino.kgs.ku.edu/website/energy_atlas/)

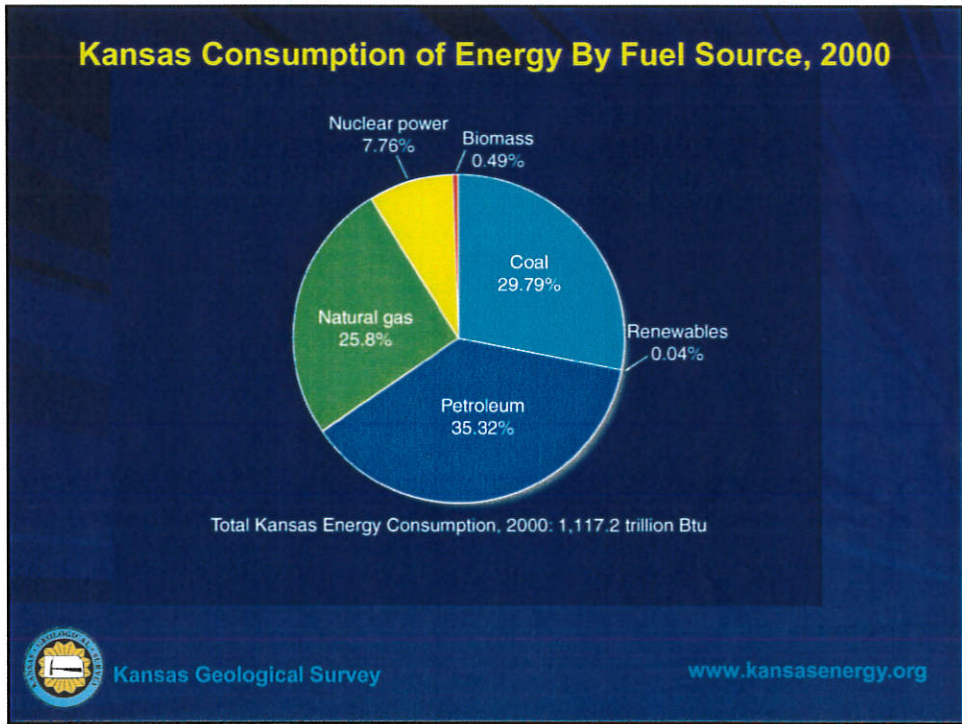
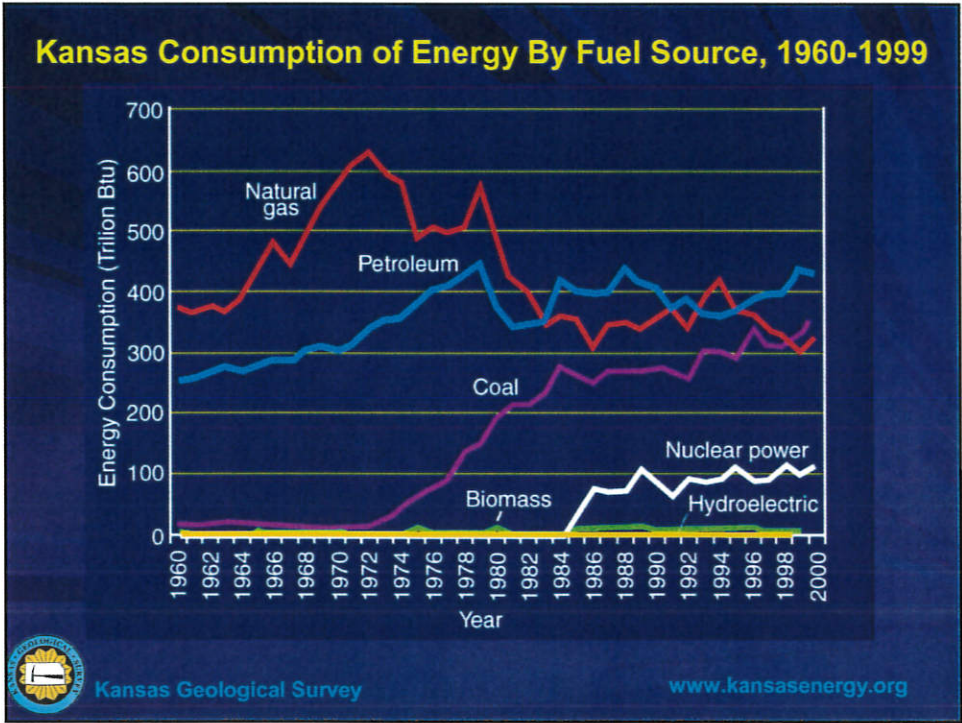
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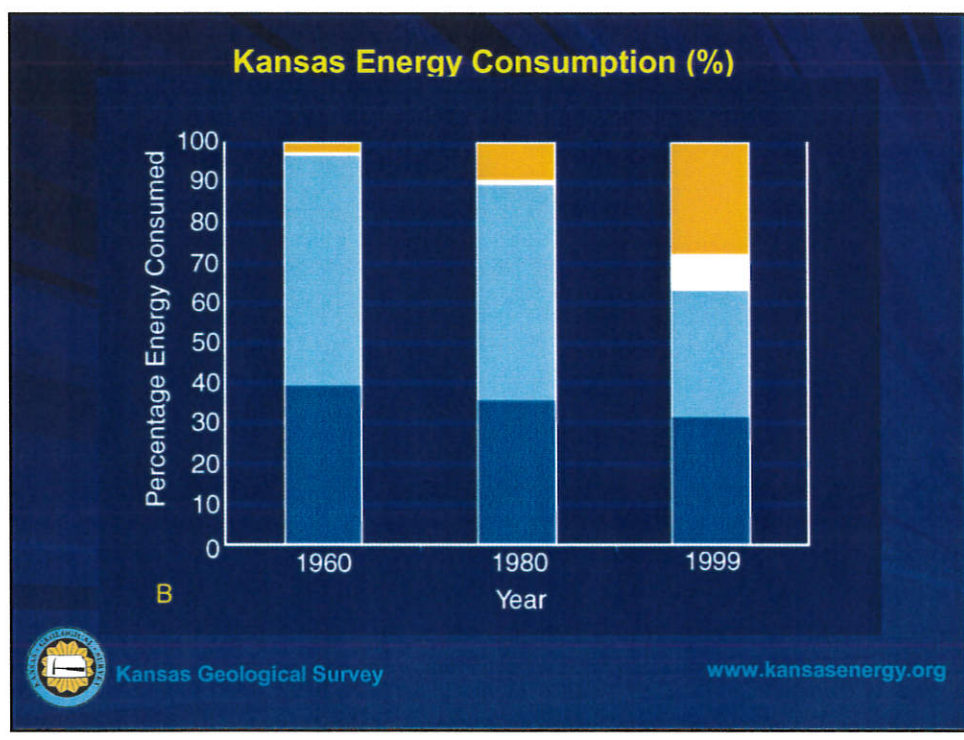
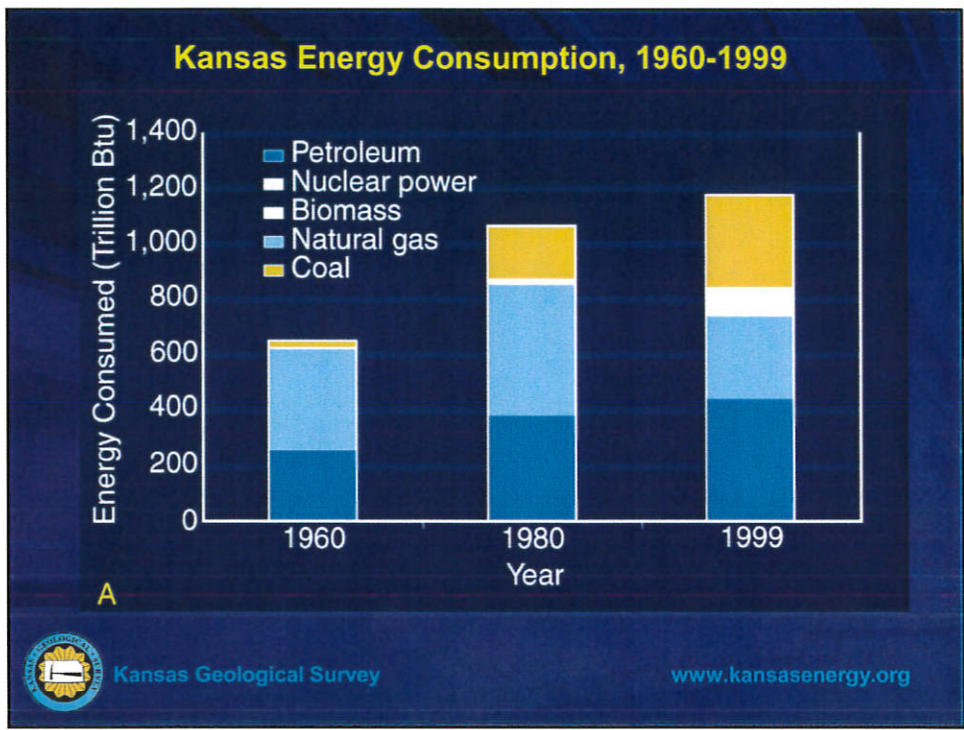
Kansas Geological Survey

[www.kansasenergy.org](http://www.kansasenergy.org)

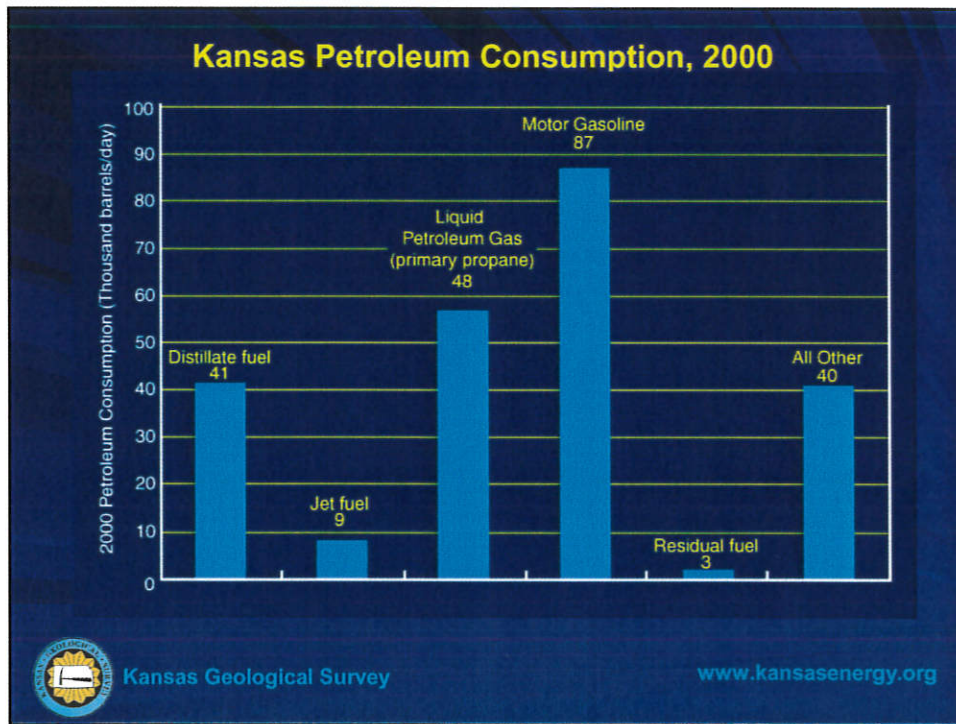
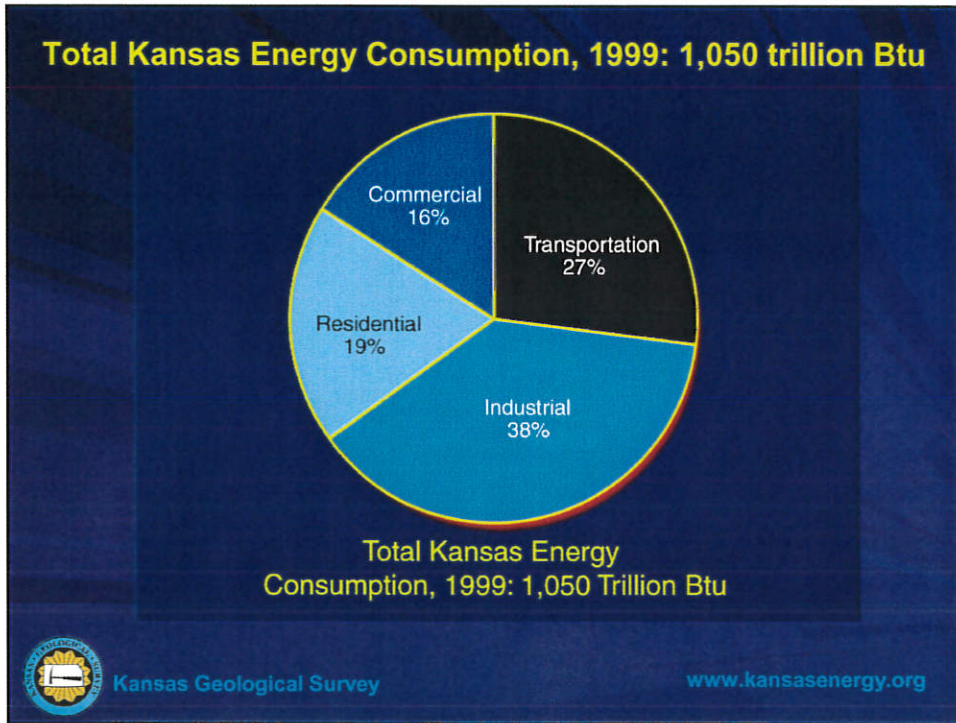
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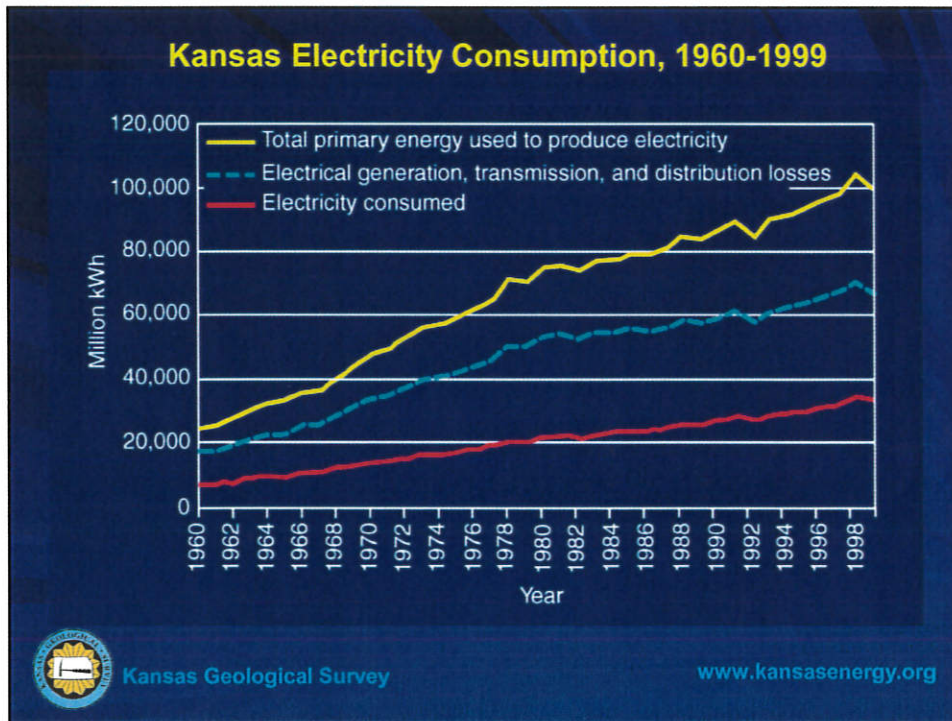
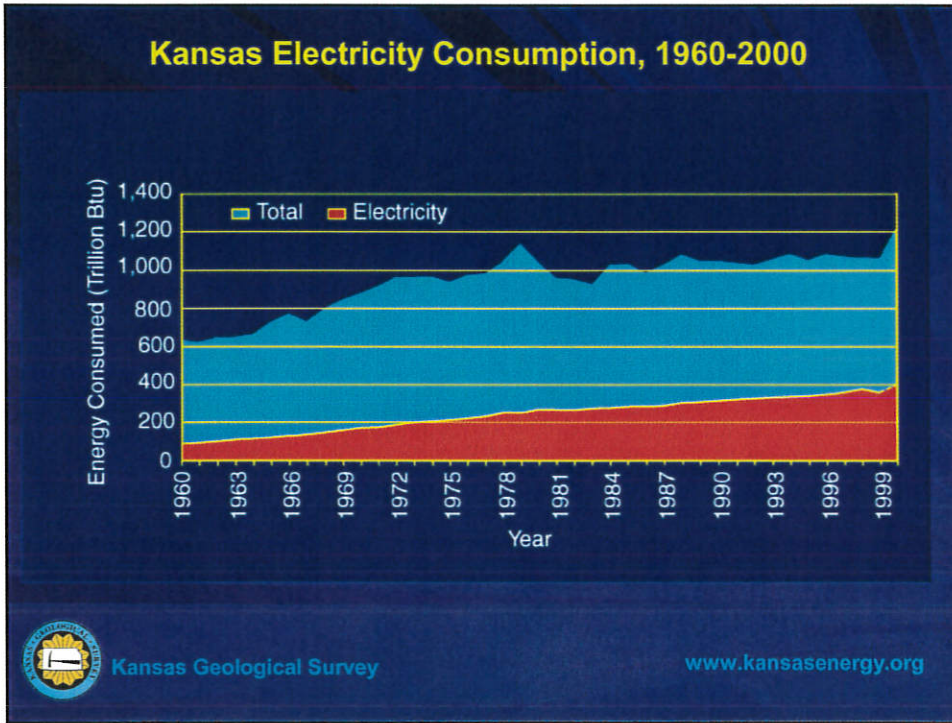
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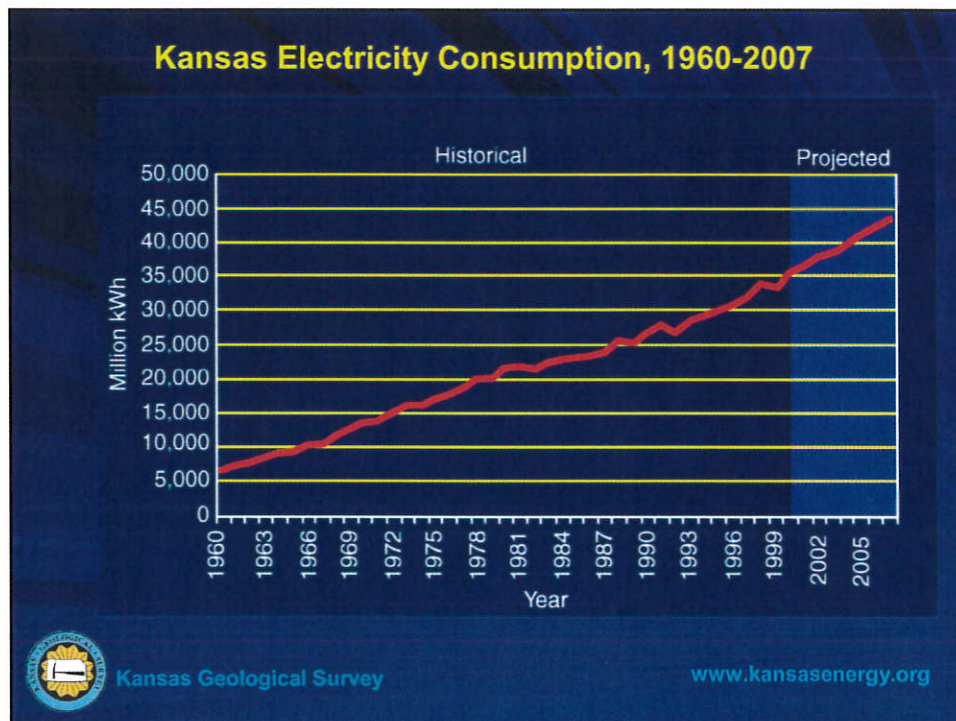
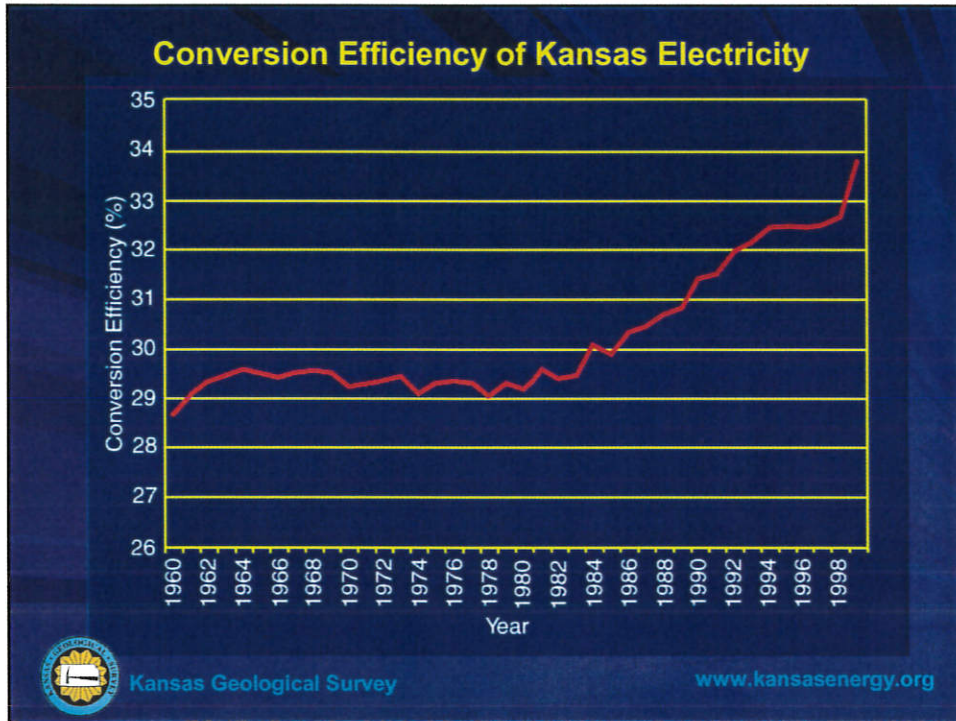


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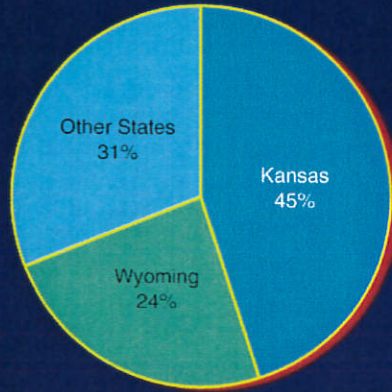
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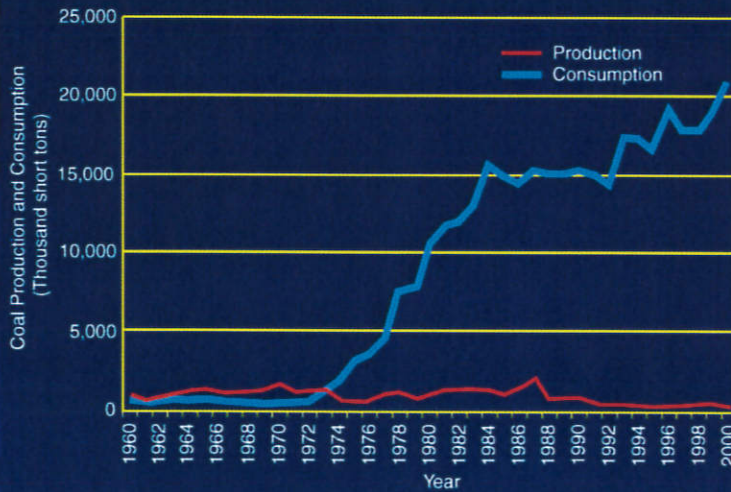
### Geographic Sources of Energy Consumed in Kansas, 2000



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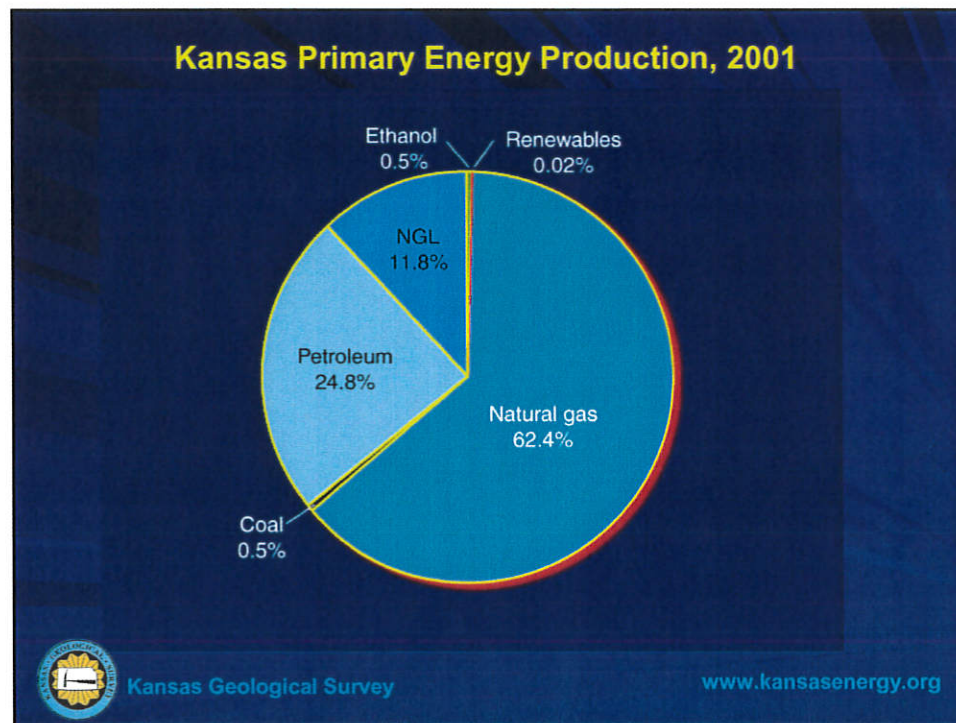
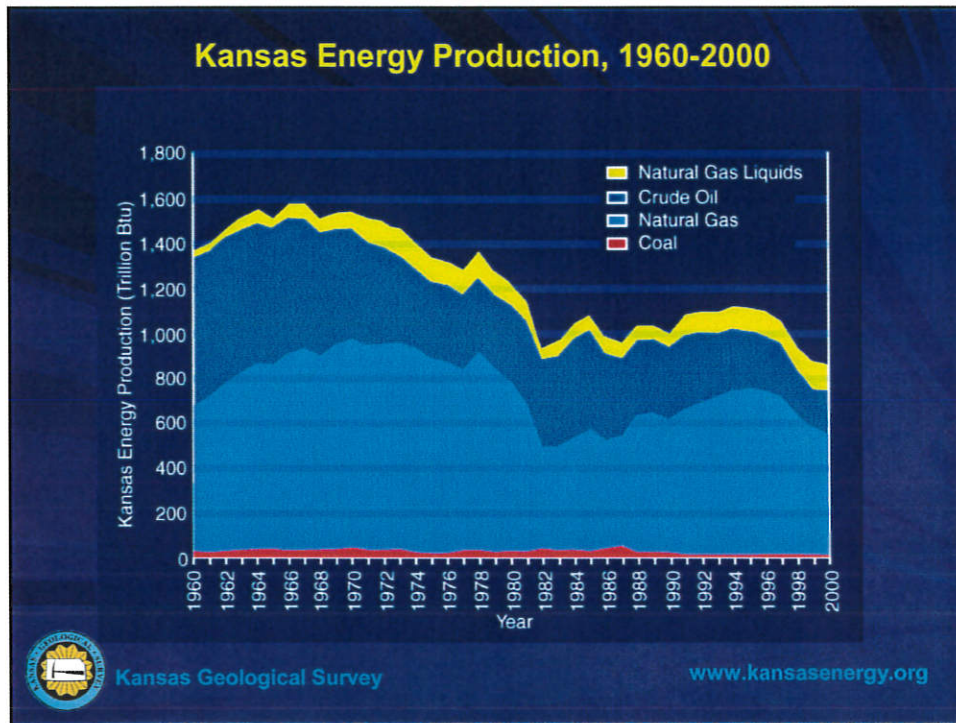
### Kansas Coal Production & Consumption, 1960-2000



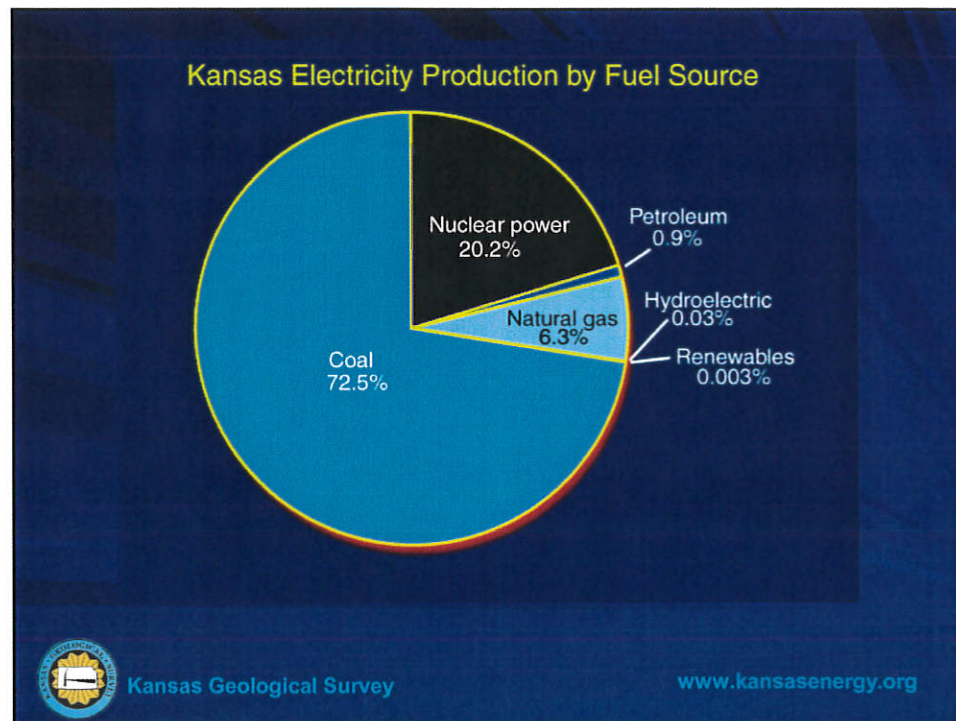
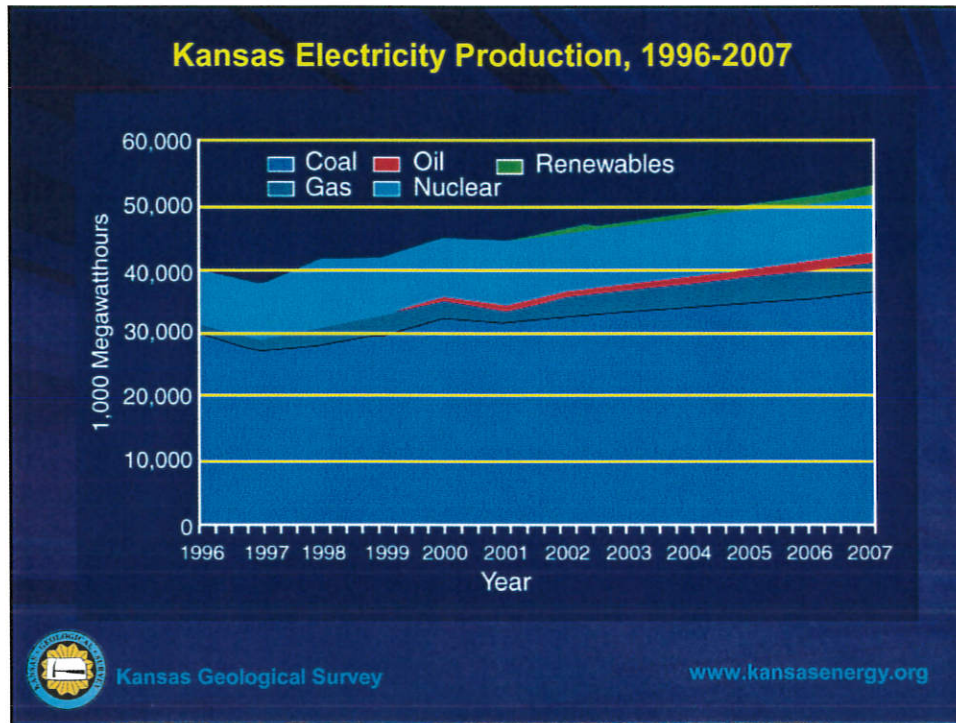
Kansas Geological Survey

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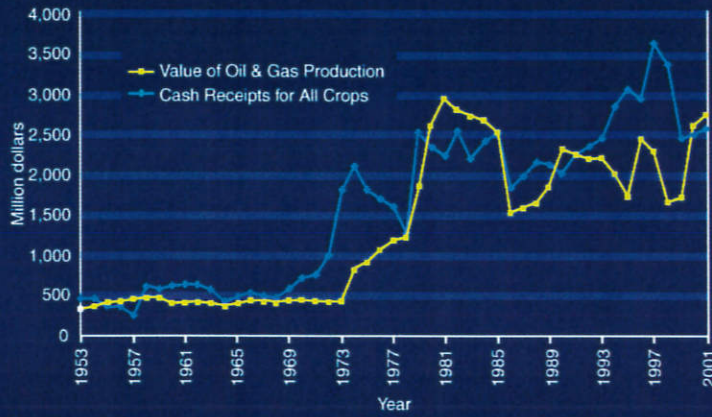
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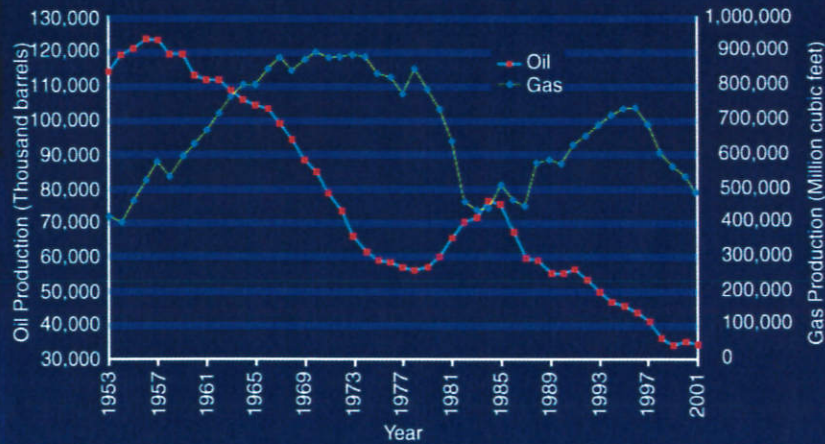
### Wellhead Value of Oil & Gas Production vs All Crop Receipts



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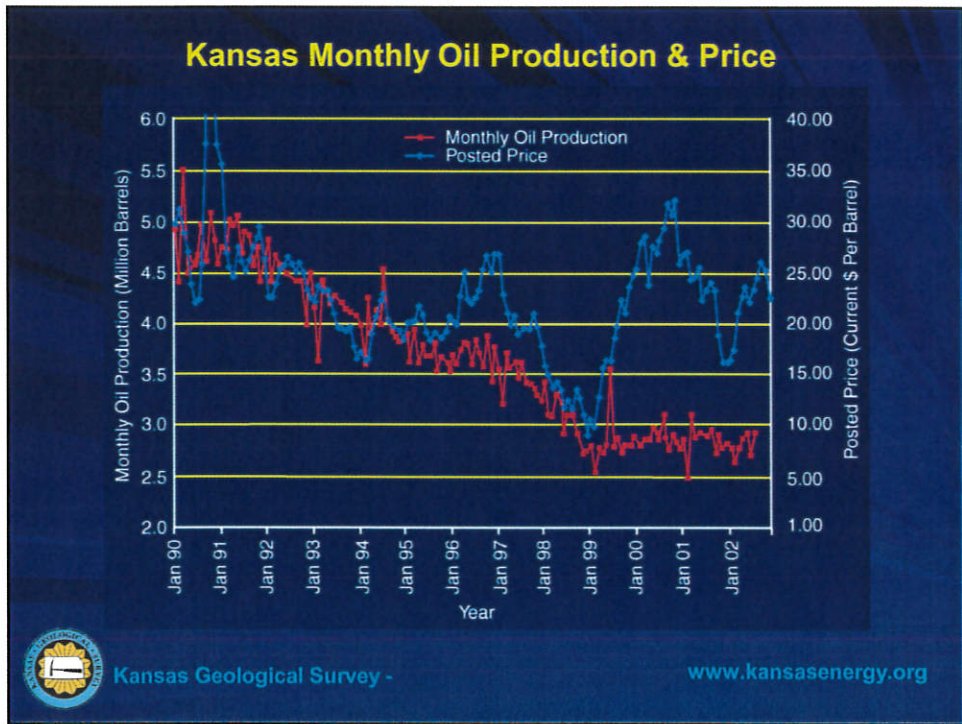
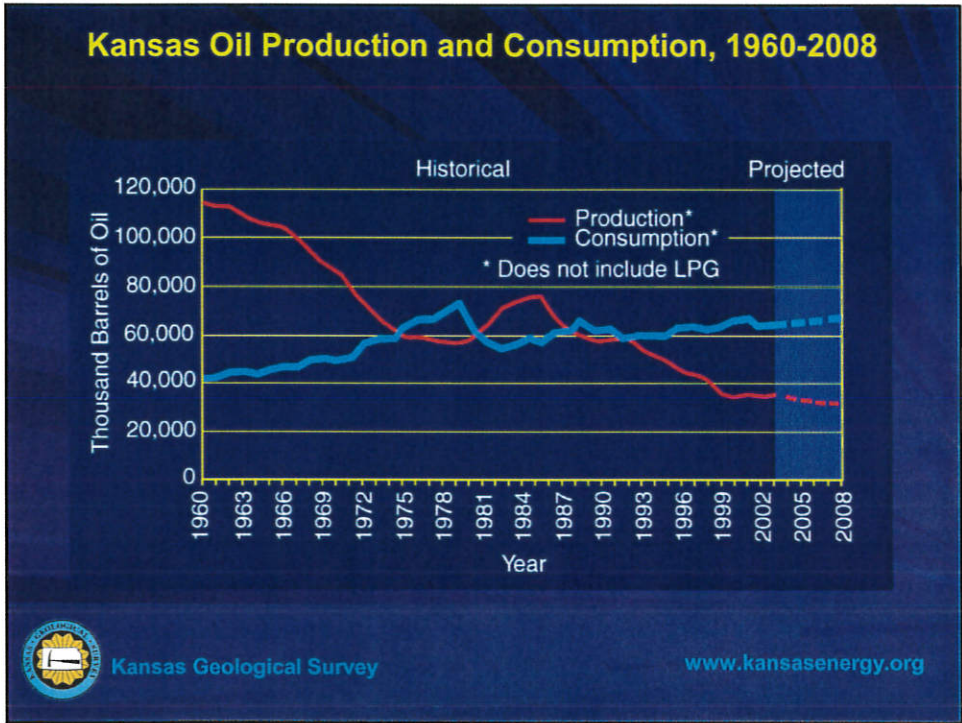
### Kansas Oil and Gas Production, 1953-2001




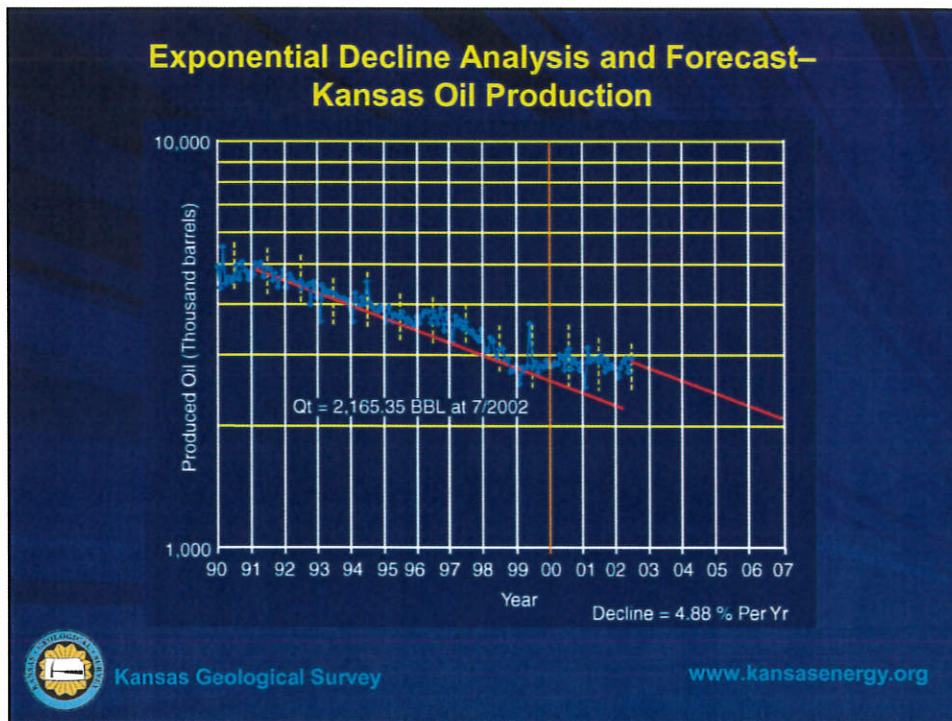
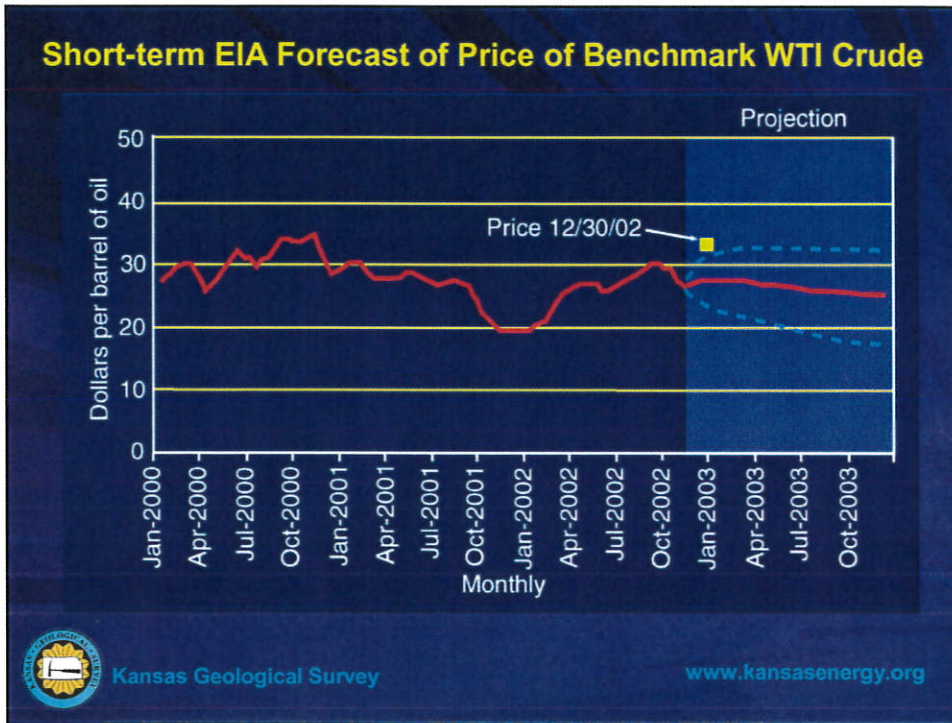
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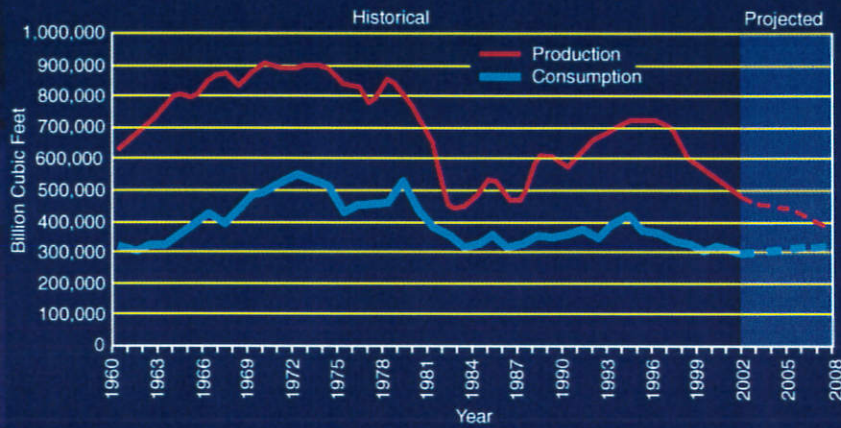


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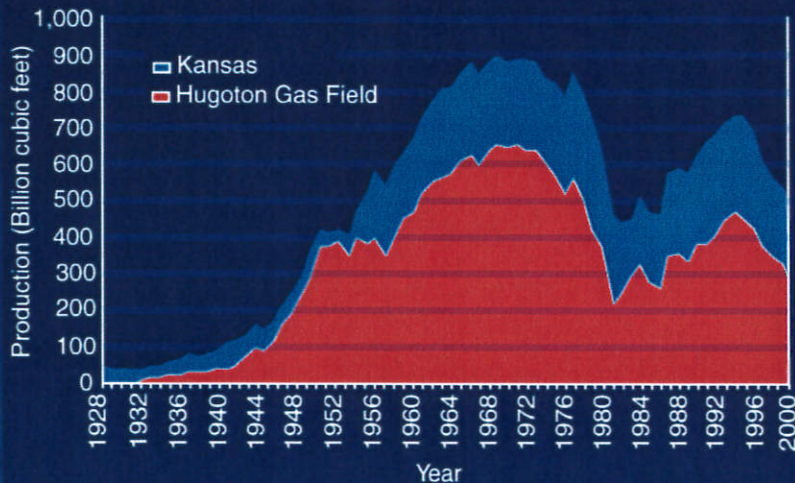
### Kansas Natural Gas Production & Consumption, 1960-2008



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[www.kansasenergy.org](http://www.kansasenergy.org)

### Kansas Natural Gas Production, 1928-2000



Kansas Geological Survey

[www.kansasenergy.org](http://www.kansasenergy.org)

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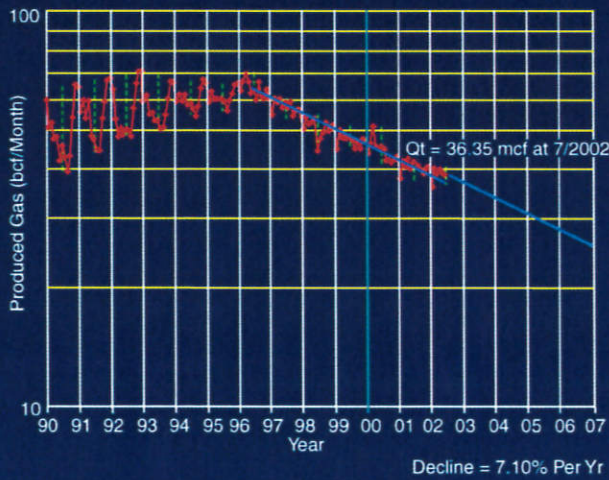
### Monthly Kansas Natural Gas Production, 1990-2002



Kansas Geological Survey

www.kansasenergy.org

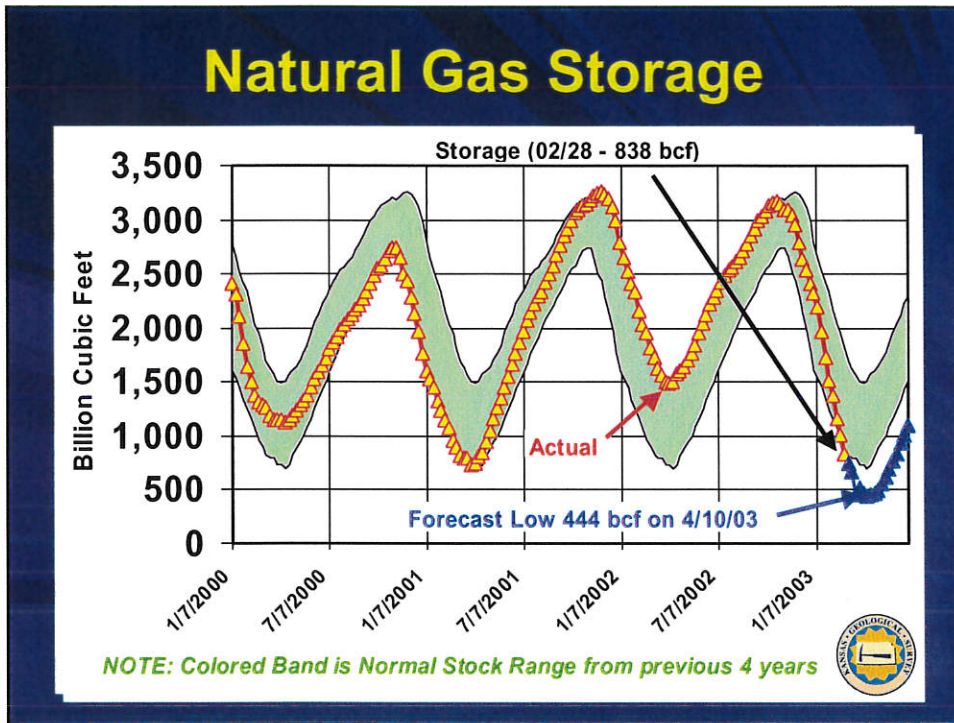
### Exponential Curve Analysis and Decline Forecast for Kansas Gas Production



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## SERCC

### Goals

- Energy self-reliance
- Restore Kansas energy exports

## SERCC Legislative actions

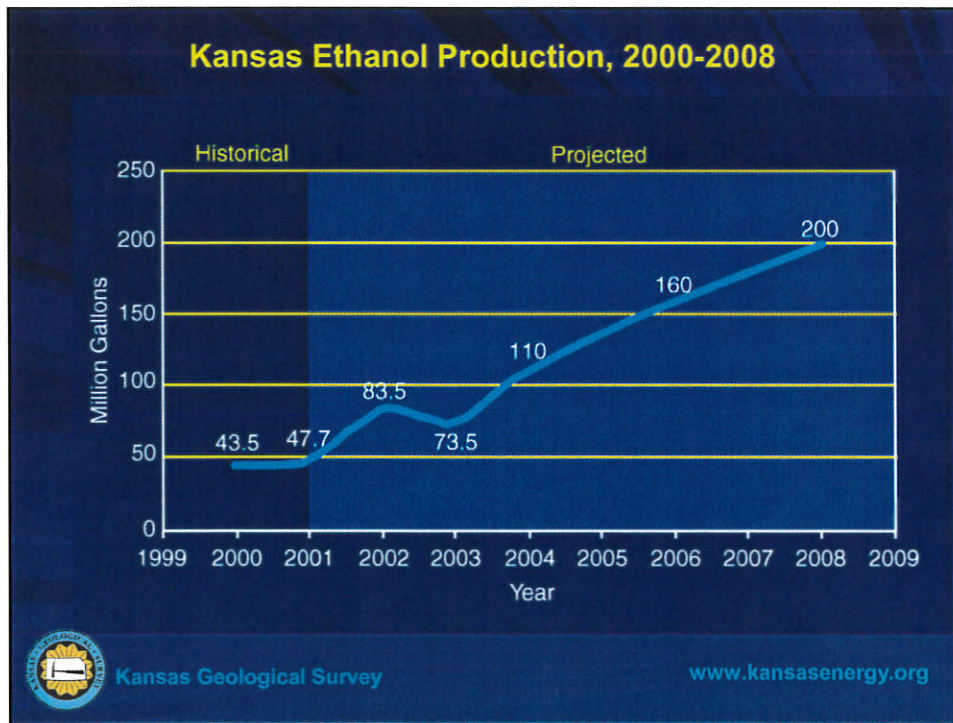
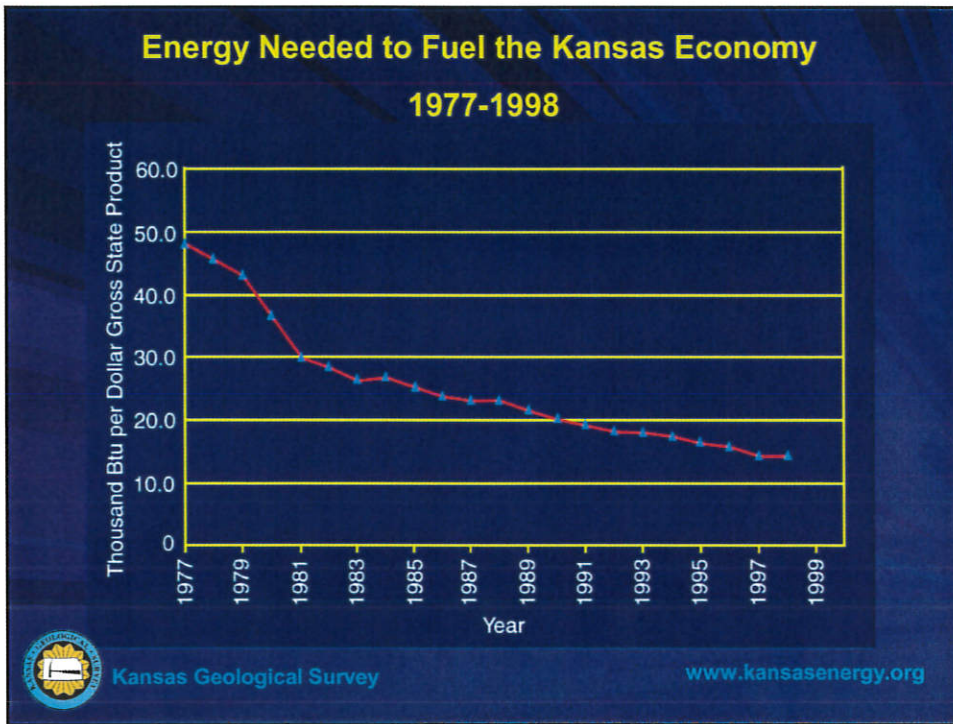
- Energy performance contracts for state buildings **HCR-5015**
- Update 1989 energy efficiency standards with ASHRAE 1999 standards **HB-2131**
- Alleviate punitive liabilities for compliance with regulations **HB-2282**

## SERCC

### Self-reliance in energy:

- Extend the life of existing energy sources (oil and gas fields)
- Increased conservation and efficiency
- Develop new energy sources (e.g. wind, ethanol, coalbed methane)





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Montezuma- Gray Co. (Aquila)

Jeffreys Energy Center (Westar)

Montezuma (Aquila)

Sunflower Electric Wind Farm - ~100 MW

Jeffrey Wind Farm - 1.2 MW

Elk River Wind Farm - 100 MW

Gray County Wind Farm - 112 MW

● Existing wind farms  
● Proposed wind farms

### Improved/Enhanced Oil Recovery Technologies to Extend and Enhance KS Oil Production

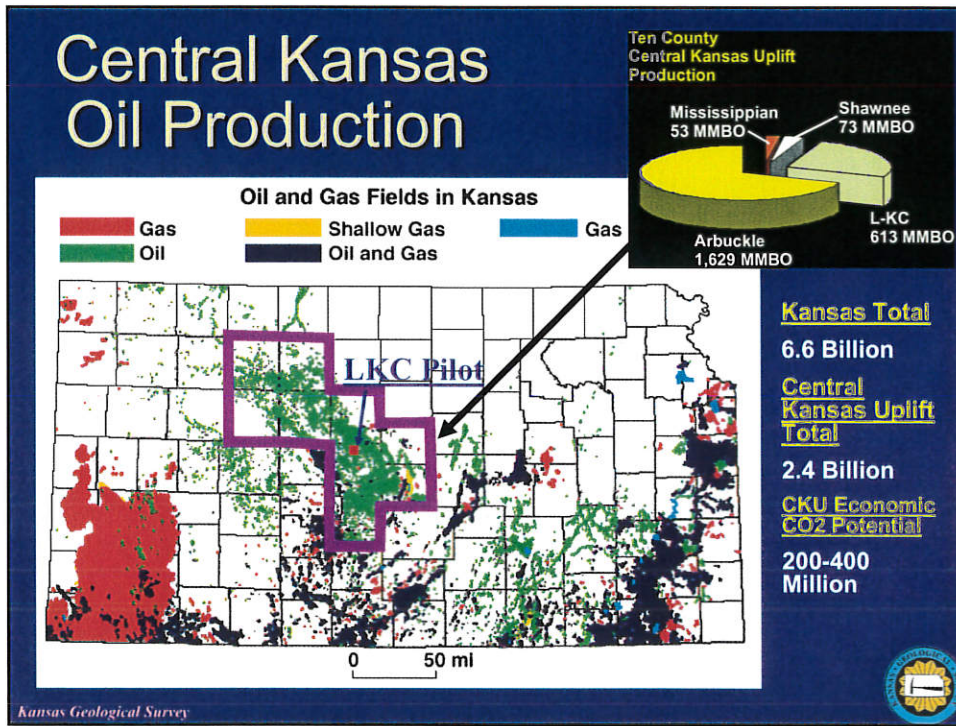
Polymer

Horizontal Drilling

Advanced Reservoir Characterization, Modeling, Management, & Infill Drilling

CO2 Flooding

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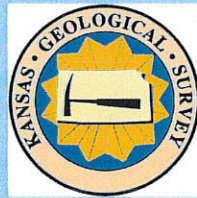
## State Energy Resources Coordination Council

**Kansas Geological Survey  
University of Kansas**

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# Kansas Coalbed Methane Potential

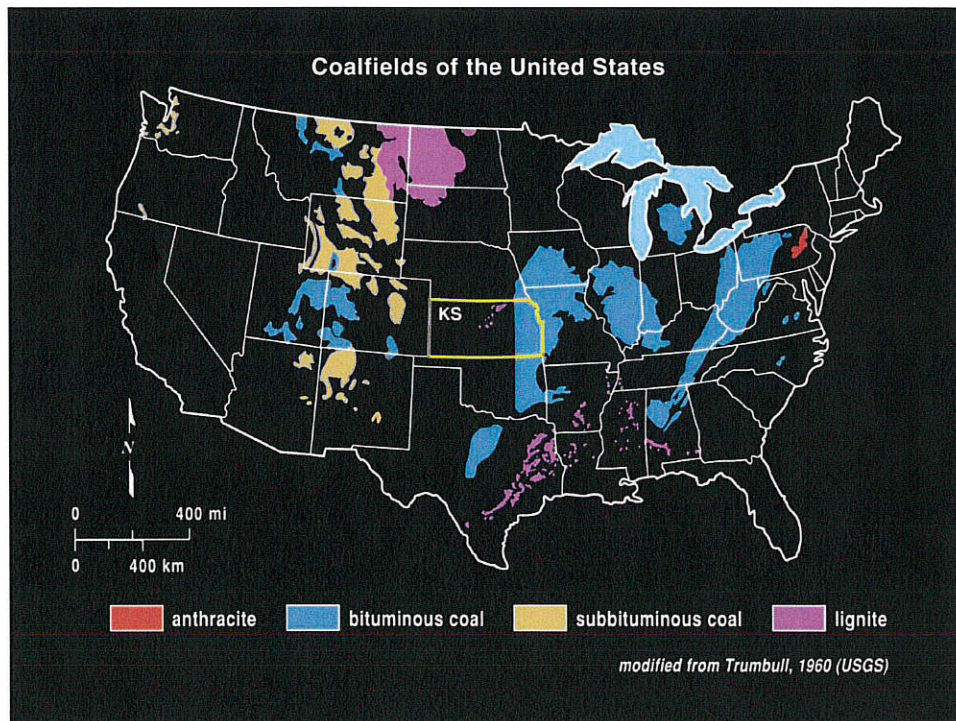
Kansas Geological Survey  
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<http://www.kgs.ku.edu>

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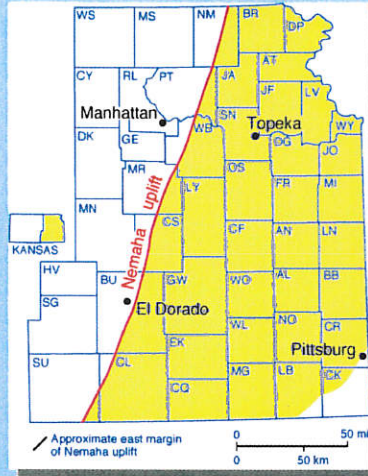


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ATTACHMENT 2

## Area of Potential Coalbed Methane Development



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## Keys to success

- Good petroleum infrastructure
- Sufficient price to spur drilling
- Thicker coals
- High gas content of coals
- Access to pipelines

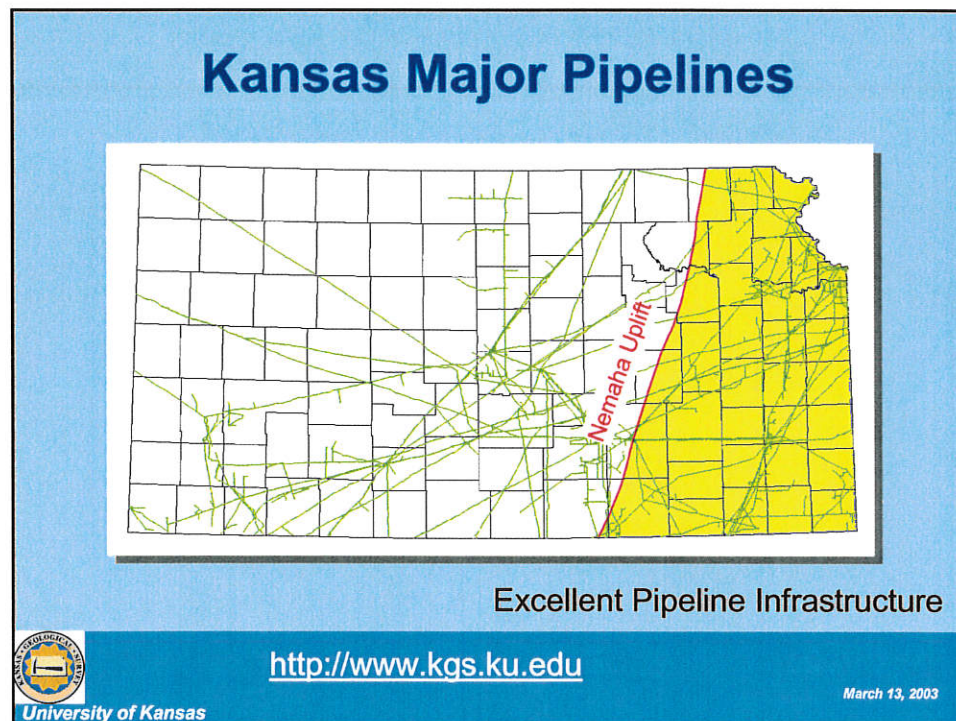
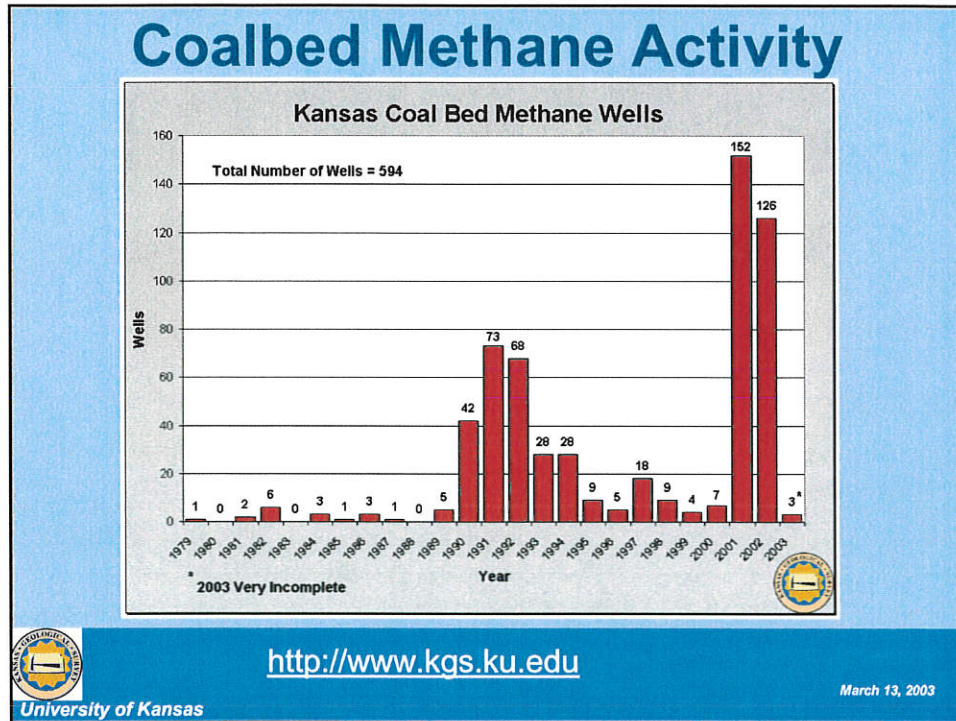


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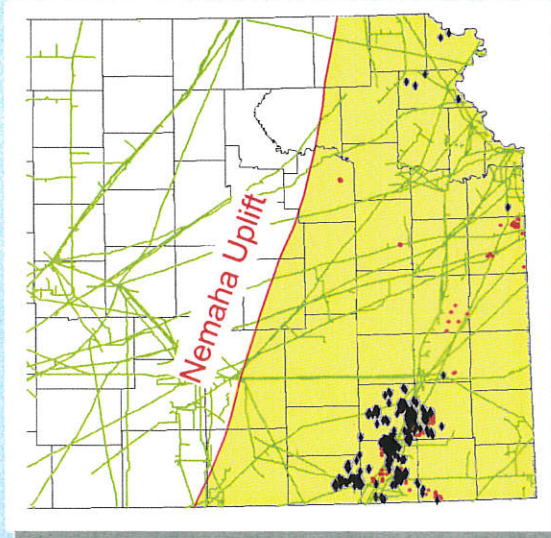
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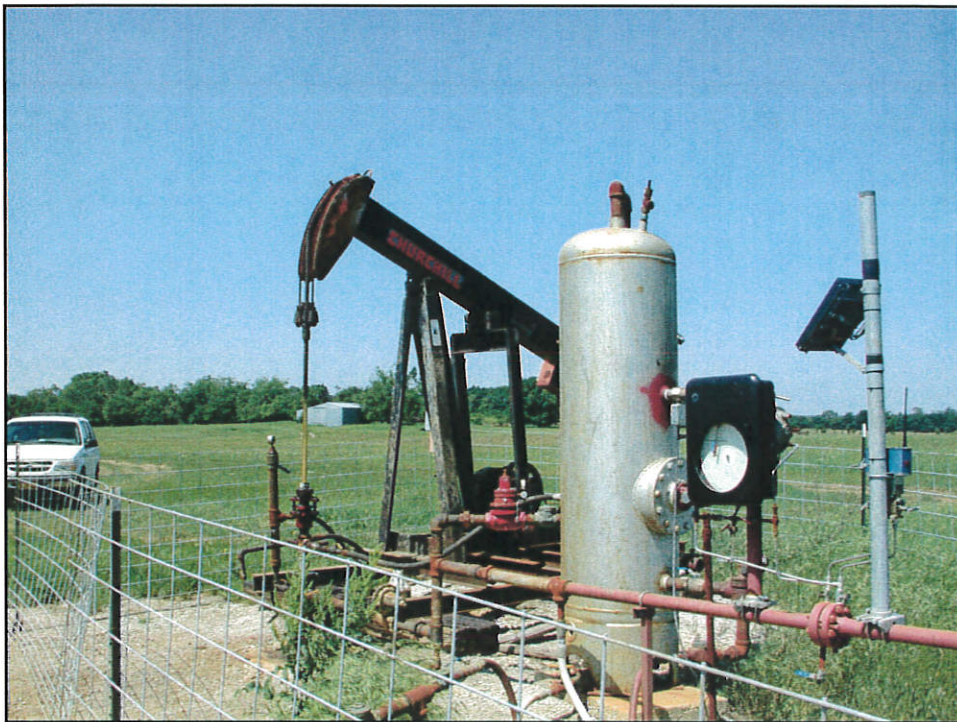
# Kansas Coalbed Methane Activity

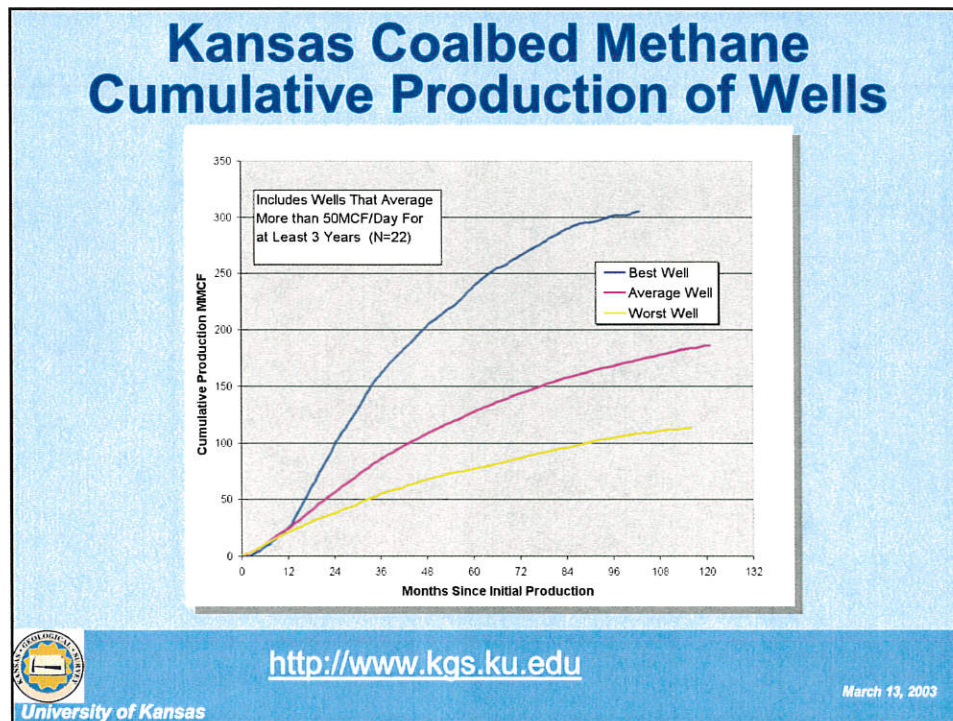
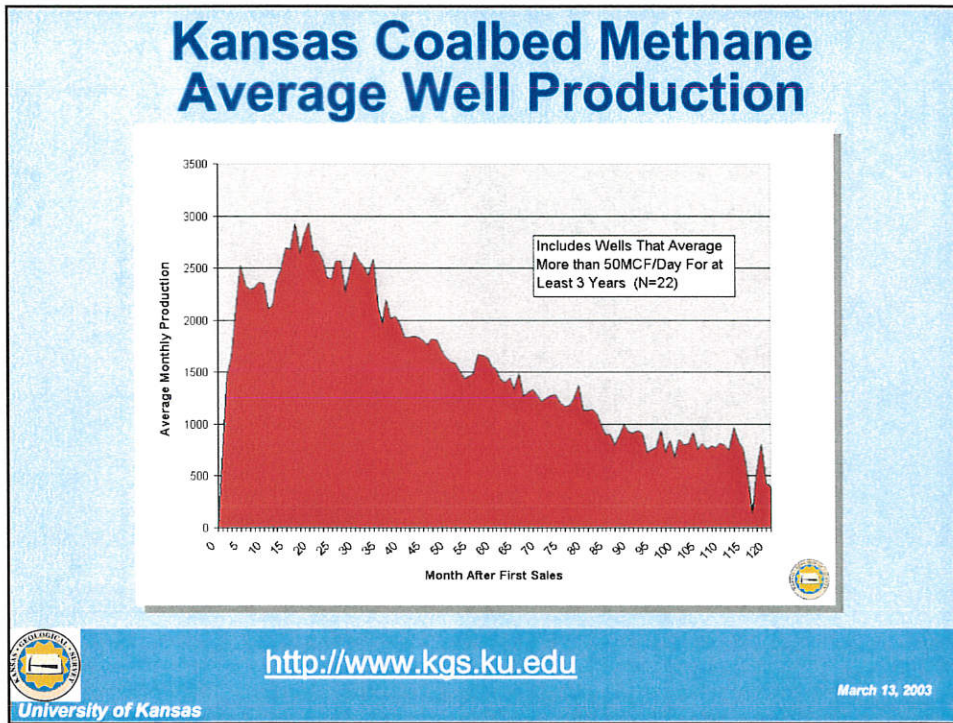


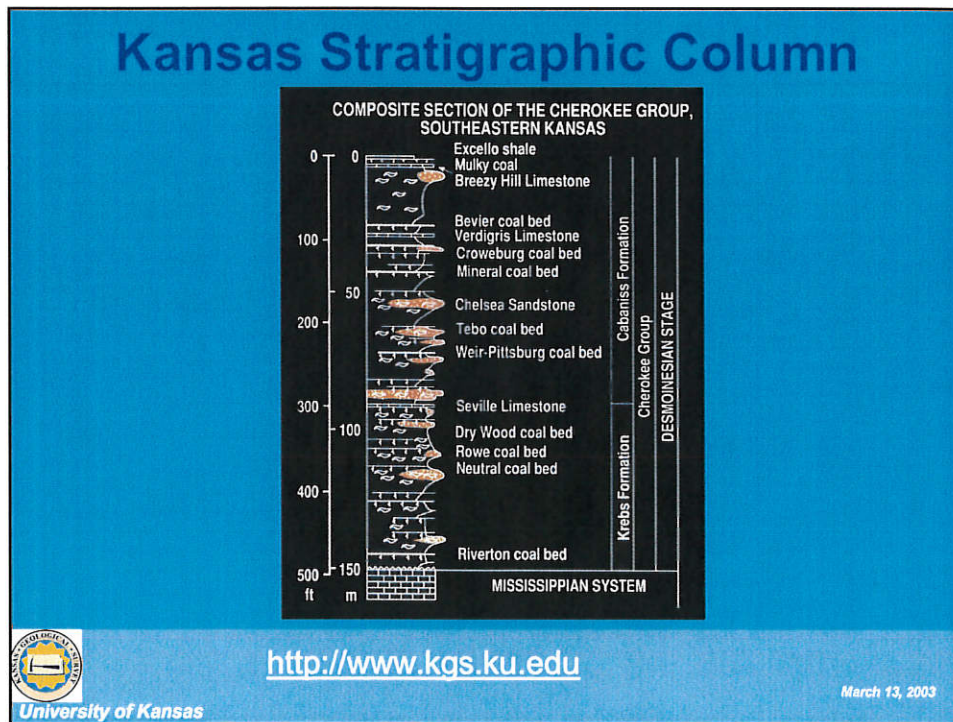
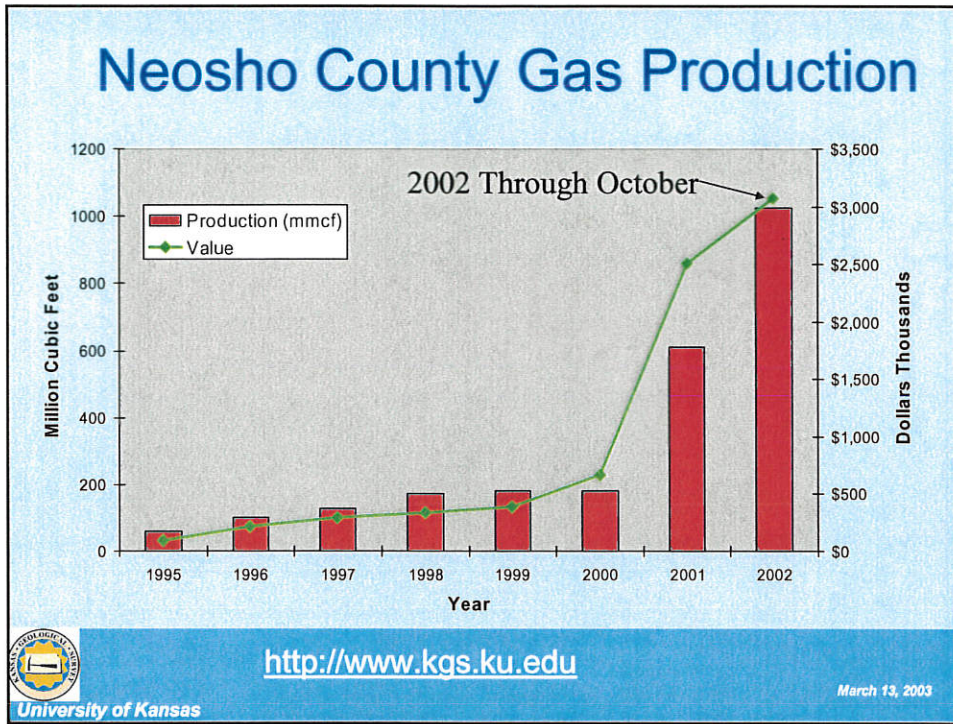
University of Kansas

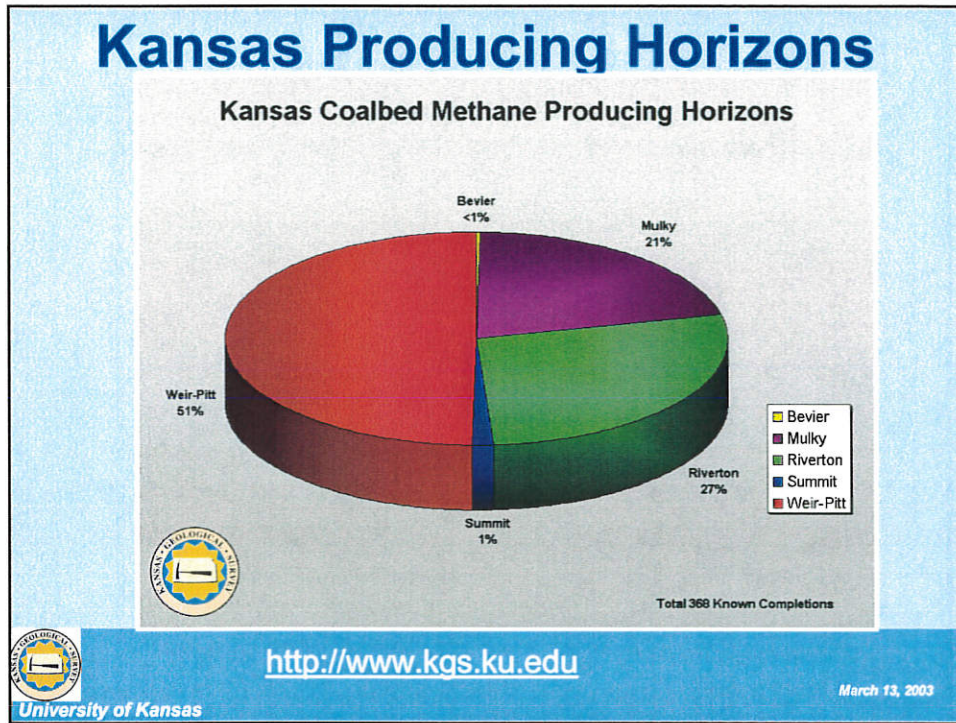
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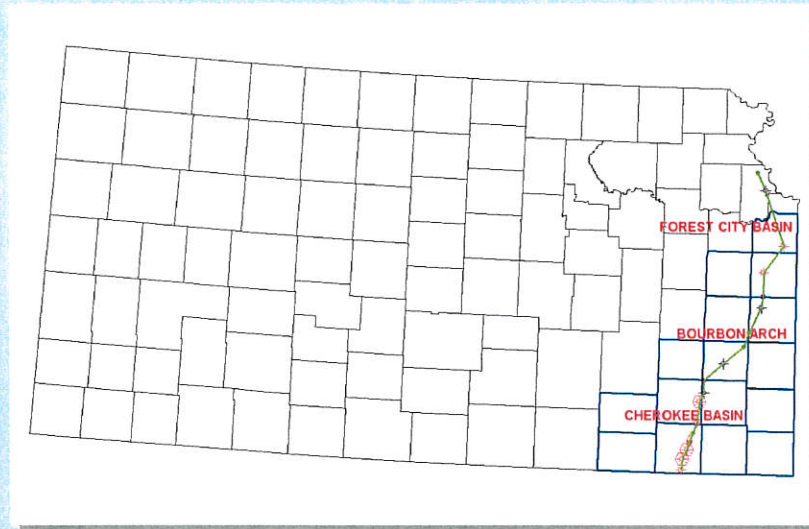








# Cherokee Cross-Section

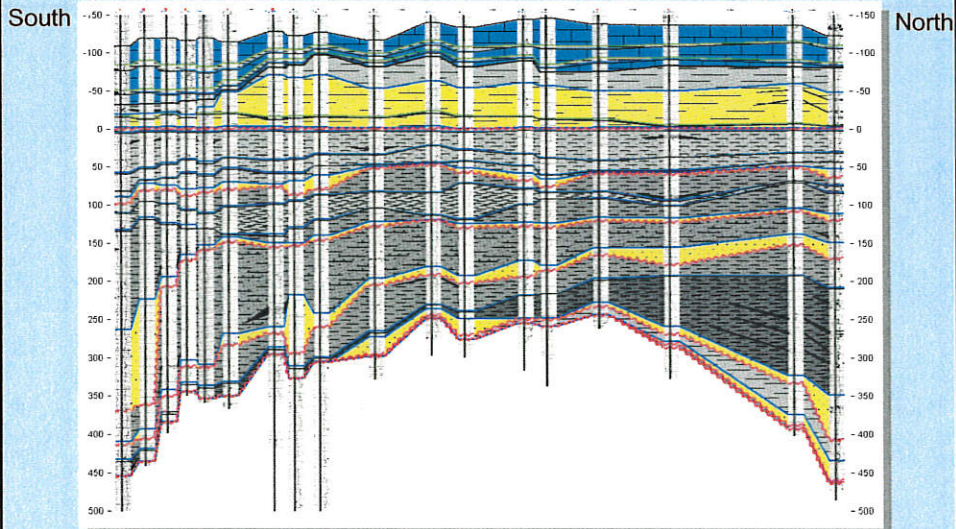


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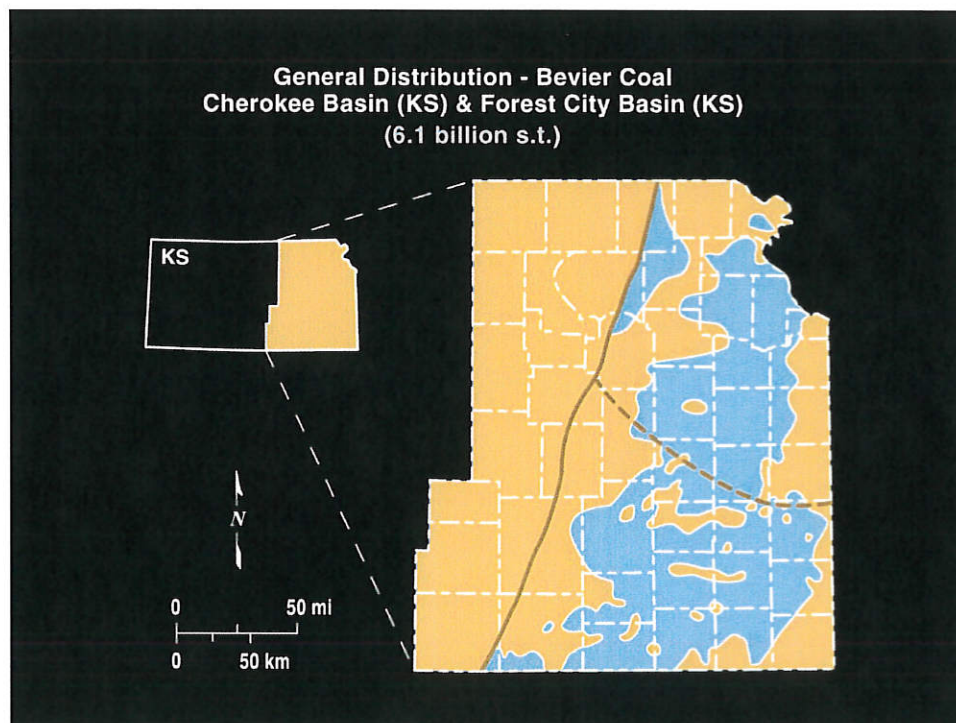
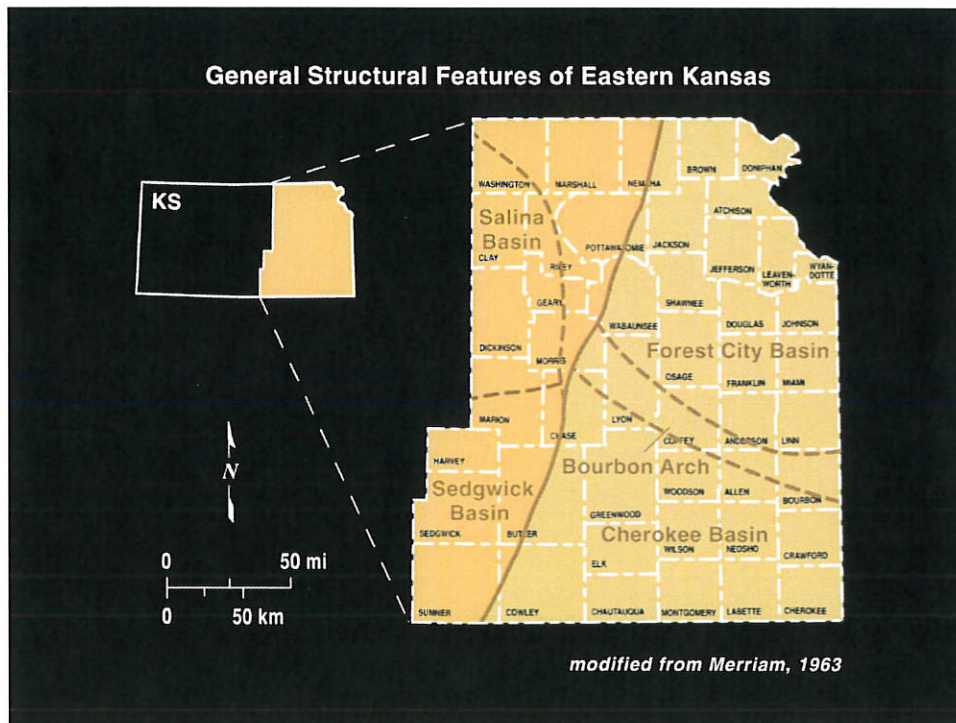
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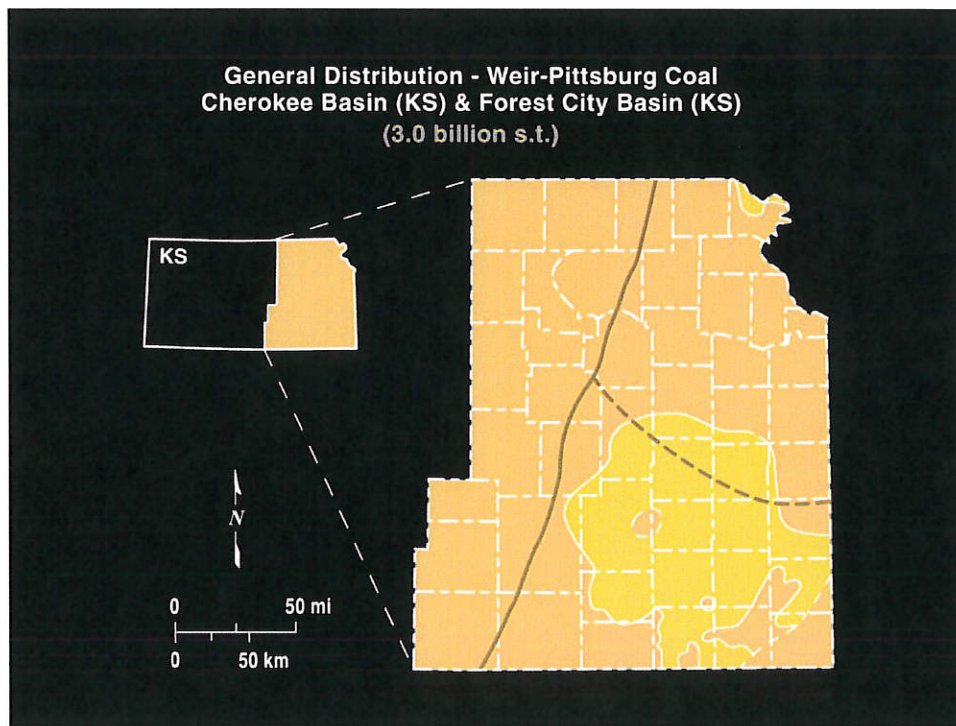
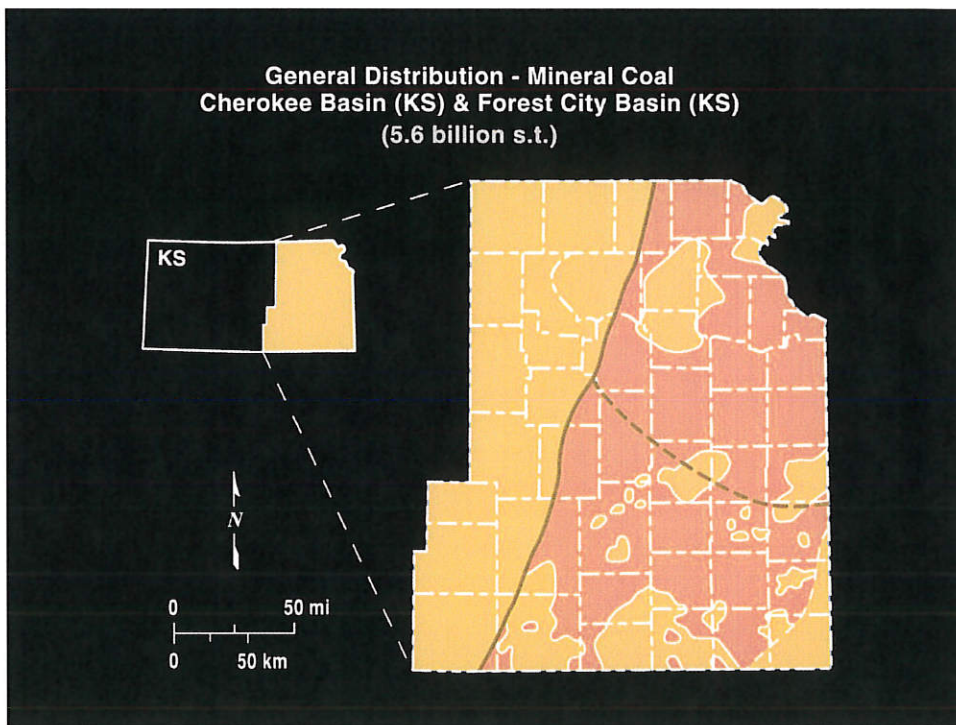


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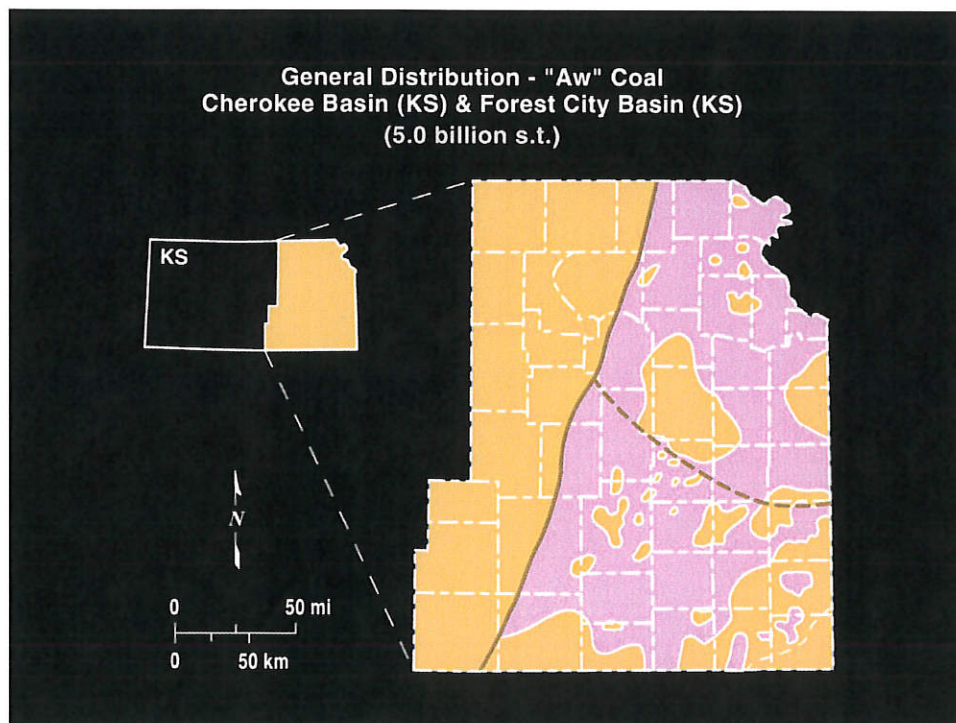
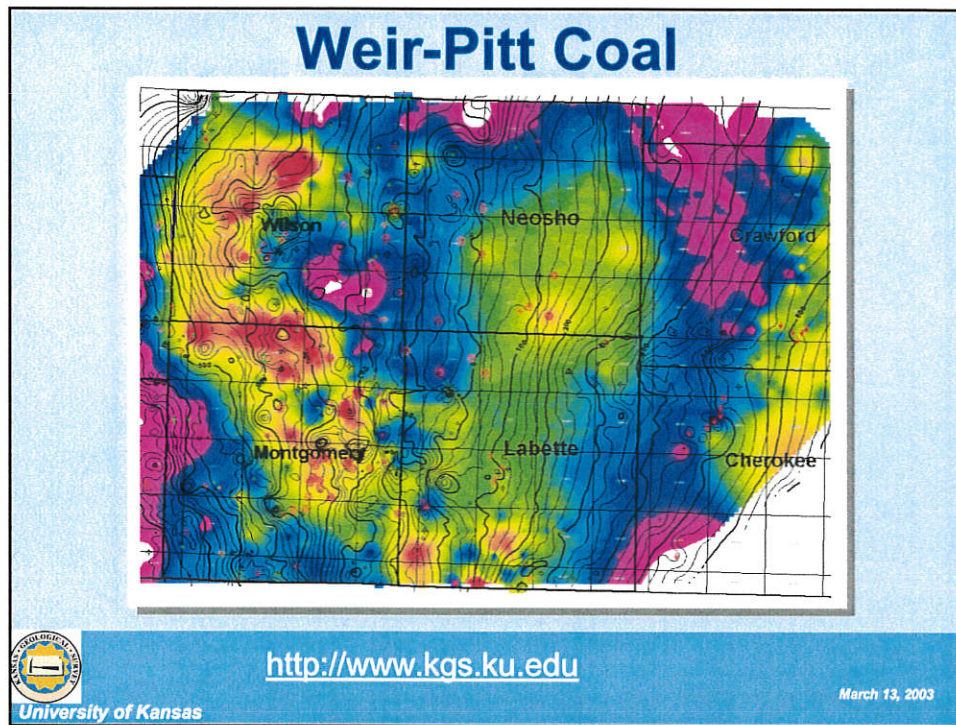
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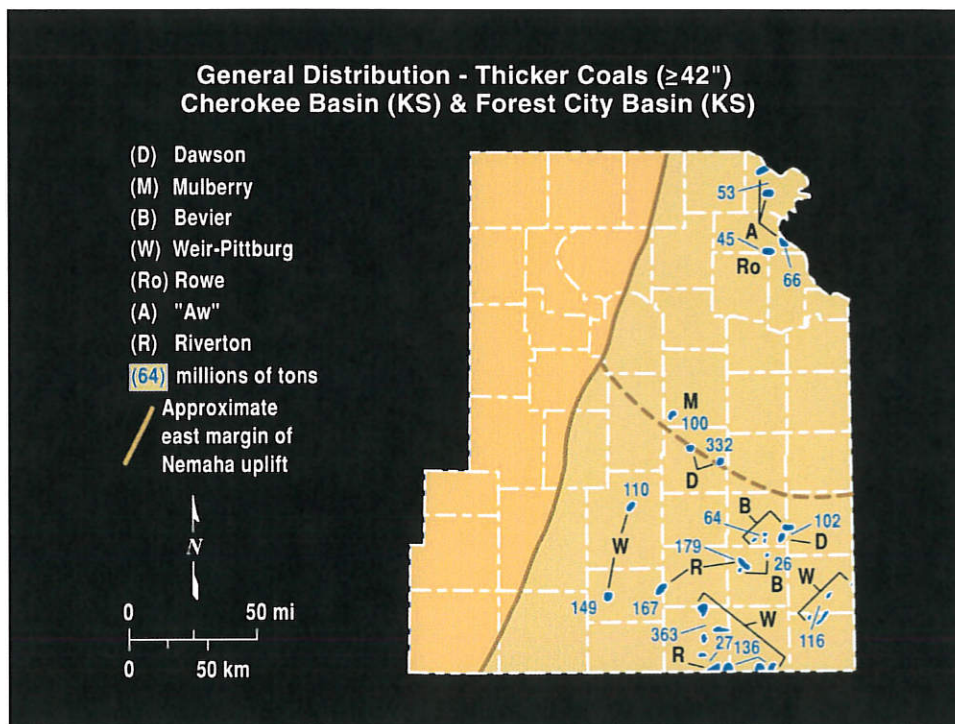
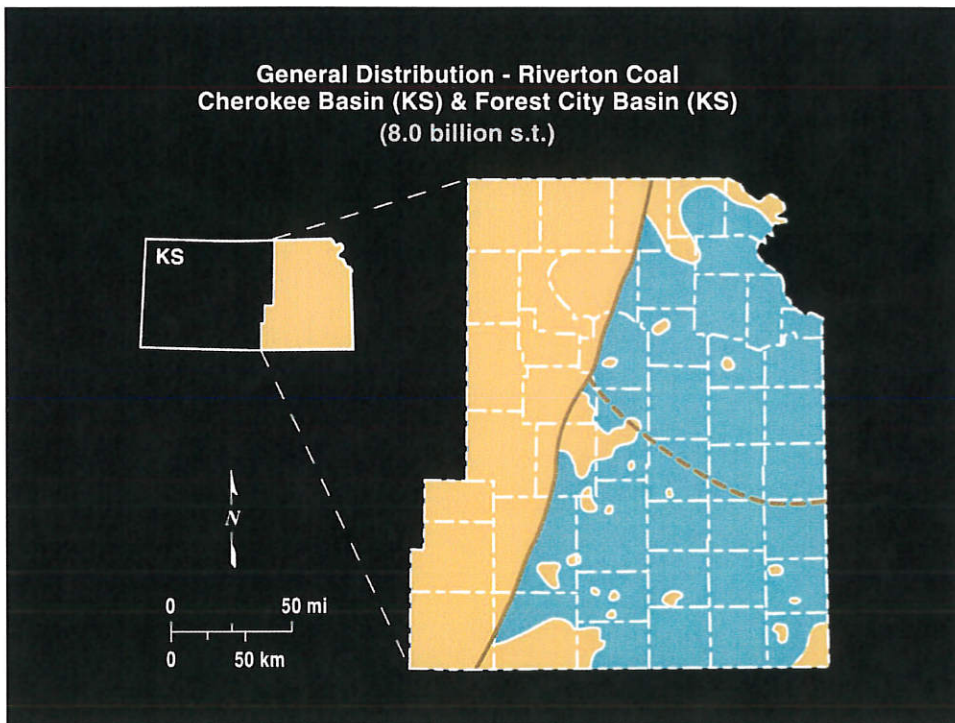
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## Coalbed Methane Program



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## Coalbed Methane Program




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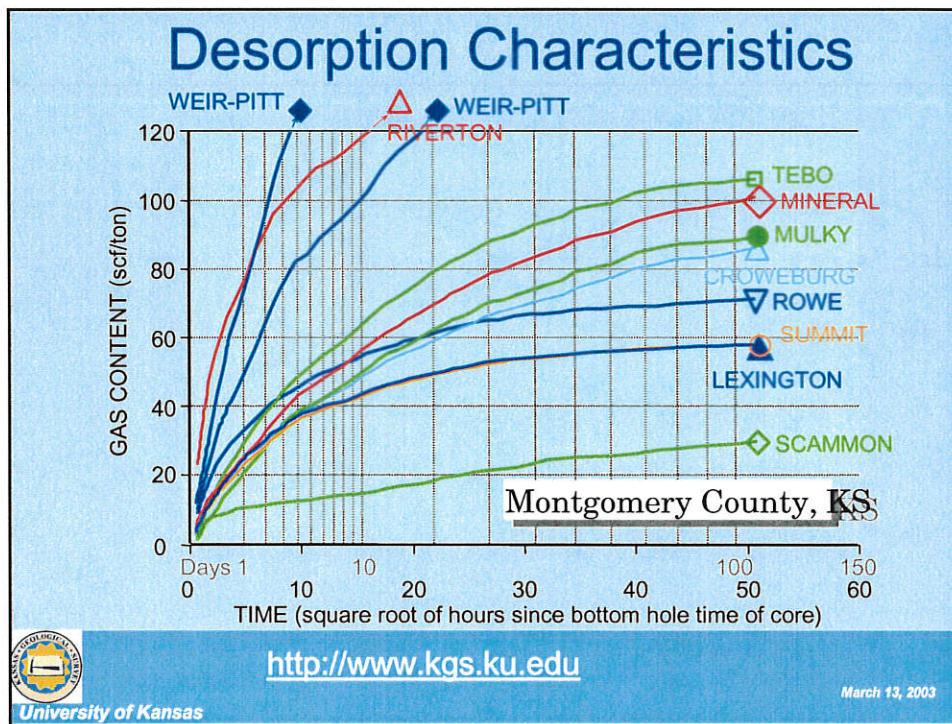
### Coalbed Methane Program

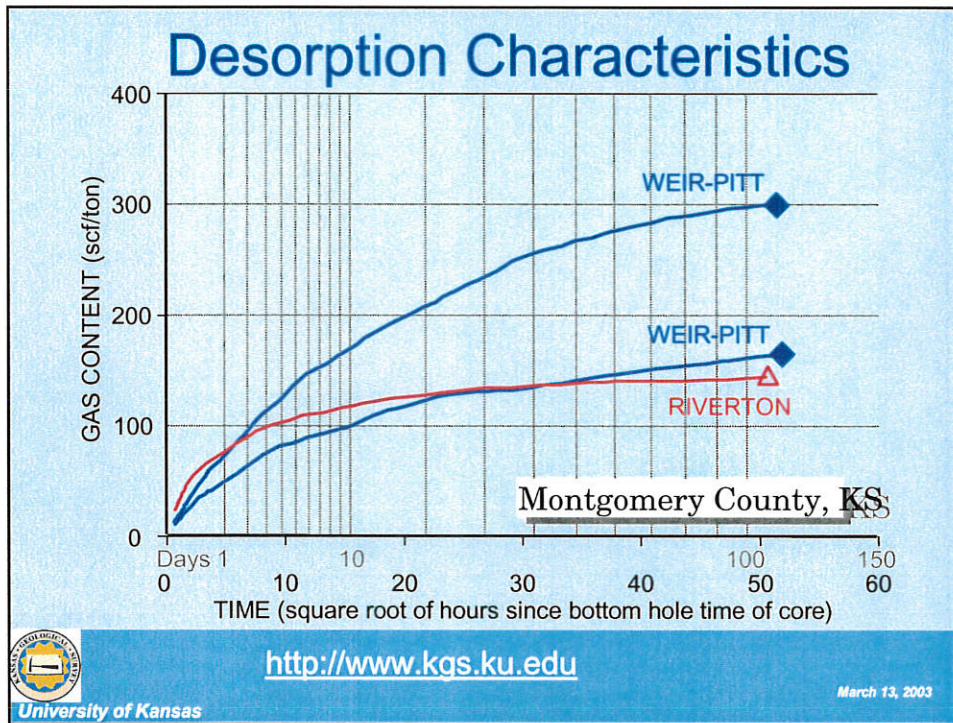


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### Coal resources in eastern Kansas

<u>Coal thickness</u>	<u>Billions of tons</u>
14-28"	45.3
28-42"	6.2
42-56"	1.9
>56"	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.5</b>

<http://www.kgs.ku.edu>

March 13, 2003

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# Well and Production Data

<http://www.kgs.ku.edu>

March 13, 2003

# Well and Production Data

WELL KID	API NUM
100295305	15-205-2383
100295089	15-205-2480
1025885832	15-205-2383
100295090	15-205-2480

**Operator:** GREAT EASTERN ENERGY & DEV  
**Field:** Neodezha  
**Lease:** MUSTAIN 'A'  
**Well:** 1

**Annual Gas Production, (mcf)**


Year	Production (mcf)
1990	99
1991	17,255
1992	14,673
1993	12,765
1994	11,598
1995	8,550
1996	8,019
1997	6,397
1998	4,806
1999	6,409
2000	3,660
2001	4,653
2002	1,020

**Cum. gas prod. MUSTAIN (mcf)**


**Ann. gas prod. MUSTAIN (mcf)**

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# Kansas Geological Survey

## Public Information Circular 19

December 2001

### Natural Gas from Coal in Eastern Kansas

**Robert S. Sawin**

Public Outreach, Kansas Geological Survey

**Lawrence L. Brady**

Geologic Investigations, Kansas Geological Survey

#### Introduction

Methane, the main component of natural gas, has been a product of the petroleum industry for years. Many of us use natural gas in our homes—in our furnaces, water heaters, and stoves. Now, a relatively new and unconventional source of natural gas—methane from coal beds—has generated interest in eastern Kansas.

Coalbed methane is natural gas that occurs in coal beds. The geological process that turns plant material into coal generates methane gas. This gas was a deadly nuisance that produced explosions in underground coal mines, so the mines had to be ventilated to remove the gas. In the early 1980's, the mining industry began to capture and sell this gas rather than release it to the atmosphere. Thus, a new industry was created—the commercial production of methane from subsurface coal beds.

Coalbed methane now accounts for about 7 percent of the total annual gas production in the United States. In areas of the San Juan basin in New Mexico and Colorado, parts of the Black Warrior basin in Alabama, and basins in the central Appalachians, large quantities of methane are being developed from coal beds. This gas is now being exploited in other areas of thick, coal-bearing rocks such as the Powder River basin in Wyoming and Montana.

In Kansas, most of the activity has been in the southeastern part of the state, primarily Montgomery, Wilson, western Labette, and eastern Chautauqua counties; however, other parts of eastern Kansas that are underlain by coal beds also have potential for coalbed methane production (fig. 1). Coal beds that have potential to produce methane occur in eastern

Kansas east of the Nemaha uplift, a subsurface geologic structure that runs from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, north through El Dorado, Kansas, and just east of Manhattan, Kansas.

This circular describes coal and coalbed methane, gas production from coal, leasing and landowner mineral rights, and the potential for coalbed methane production in Kansas.

**Coalbed methane now accounts for about 7 percent of the total annual gas production in the United States**

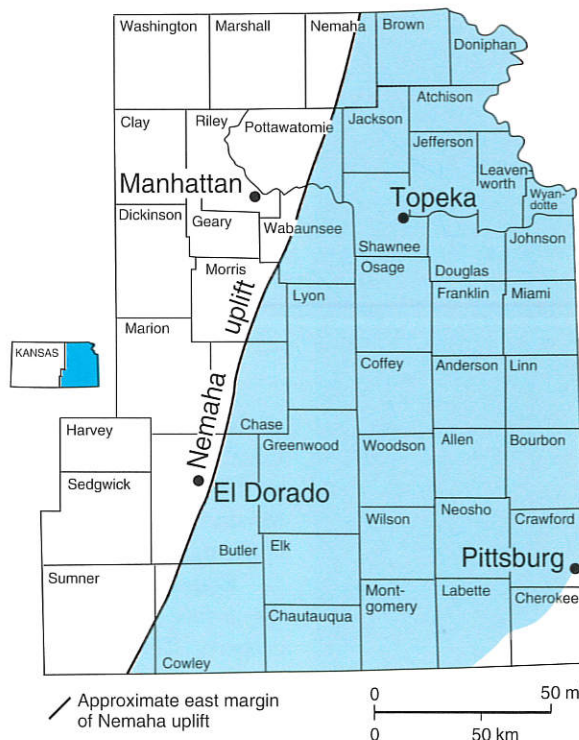


Figure 1—Portion of Kansas with potential for coalbed methane development.

#### Coal and Coal Gas

Coal is the most abundant energy source in the world. Coal deposits have been mined in Kansas for nearly 150 years, mostly in southeastern Kansas, where surface and subsurface mines have produced over 300 million tons of coal. Bituminous (soft grade) coal resources of Pennsylvanian age, depos-

ited about 300 million years ago, are widespread in eastern Kansas and constitute nearly all the coal resources in the state. Coal production in Kansas peaked during World Wars I and II. Today, however, only one small mine operates in Kansas near Prescott, in Linn County

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DATE: 3-13-03 1

ATTACHMENT 3



**An increasing level of interest in coalbed methane has spurred activity in eastern Kansas**

Coal forms from plant material that was accumulated in ancient swamps and bogs at rates fast enough to prevent decay. Upon burial, the material is first converted to peat. Through time, as temperature and pressure increase with further burial, peat is converted to coal (it takes about 10 feet of peat to make 1 foot of coal). During this process, large quantities of methane-rich gas are generated and stored within the coal. Coal can store surprisingly large volumes of gas, up to six or seven times as much gas as a conventional gas reservoir (typically sandstone or

limestone) of equal rock volume. The amount of gas in coal depends on the degree of alteration the coal has undergone in the burial process, the depth below the surface, and the pressure of the reservoir.

Coalbed gas is mainly composed of methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ ), the principal constituent of natural gas. Coalbed methane is what geologists call a sweet gas because it typically contains very few impurities such as hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen, or carbon dioxide, all normally found in natural gas. Coalbed methane, when burned, generates as much heat as petroleum-based natural gas.

## Producing Gas from Coal

Coal contains gas and large amounts of water. Once the confining pressure on the coal is relieved (for example, by drilling and pumping), the gas is slowly released from the coal. Naturally occurring fractures, called cleats, provide the plumbing system within the coal that allows water and gas to travel through the coal to the well. For gas to be released from the coal, the pressure must be reduced by removing water from the coalbed, a process called dewatering. Dewatering brings large quantities of water (usually saltwater in Kansas) to the surface, which is reinjected deep underground.

Initial development of coalbed methane wells can take several months because of the large quantities of water that need to be pumped from the coal bed. In general, coalbed methane wells go through three stages during their production history (fig. 2). During the dewatering stage, water production initially exceeds that of methane, but as production continues, the volume of water decreases as the

volume of methane increases. A stable production stage is reached when methane production reaches its maximum and water production levels off. During the decline stage, water production remains low and the amount of methane declines until methane becomes uneconomical to produce.

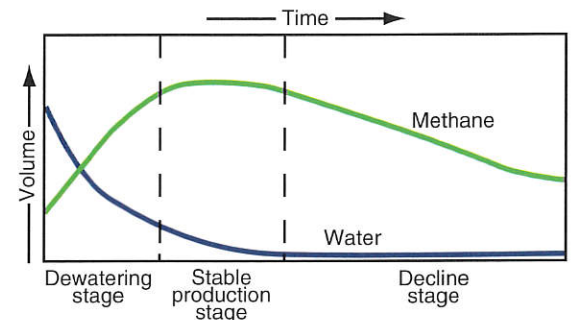


Figure 2—Production stages of a coalbed methane well (adapted from Rice, 1997).

## Mineral Rights and Leases

An increasing level of interest in coalbed methane has spurred activity in eastern Kansas. Local landowners may benefit economically if they own the mineral rights beneath their property. Mineral rights are defined as the right of ownership of the mineral resources that underlie a tract of land.

Both the land surface and the resources below the surface can be owned and are considered property. The mineral rights can be owned in total or can be owned by the specific mineral commodity; for example, one company can own the mineral rights to the coal, while another company owns the oil and gas rights. Coalbed methane is natural gas and is considered part of the oil and gas minerals.

The owner of the mineral rights can be different than the surface owner. In Kansas, the landowner usually owns the subsurface rights, but sometimes these rights have been severed, or separated from the

surface ownership. Severance of mineral rights occurs when the owner of both the surface and mineral rights sells or grants by deed the mineral rights underlying their property. The landowner may also reserve, or retain, all or a portion of the mineral rights upon sale of the property. Mineral deeds and mineral reservations are recorded with the county register of deeds and are included in any abstract of title to the land involved.

Mineral owners have the right to access and develop their minerals. Landowner rights are preserved, whether or not they participate in development of the mineral rights. Regulations are in place to stop operators if their activities are irresponsible or damaging to the surface. Landowners are entitled to compensation for loss of use or damage to their land. Most operators are willing to work with the landowner to reach a fair settlement for damages, but if this fails, state and federal regulations protect the landowner.

32

Before companies can begin an exploration and development program, they must obtain a lease to the mineral rights (in the case of coalbed methane, an oil and gas lease). An oil and gas lease is a legal agreement between the mineral-rights owner (the lessor) and the oil and gas operator (the lessee) that grants the operator the right to explore and develop the oil and gas resources which may underlie the area described in the lease. Some general stipulations that are usually part of a lease agreement are listed below:

- A legal description of the area and the number of acres.
- The primary term of the lease. This can be for any period of time, but is usually five or ten years.

- A provision for lease rental payments (usually annual) by the operator to the mineral-rights owner. Rental payments maintain the lease in effect throughout the primary term. If oil or gas is found, the lease will remain in effect as long as production continues, even beyond the primary term of the lease.
- A royalty clause that stipulates the mineral-rights owner's share of the oil or gas production. The royalty may be any amount mutually agreed to by the operator and the mineral rights owner, but is usually one-eighth (12.5 percent) of the oil or gas produced from the lease. Usually the operator sells the oil or gas to a refiner and the mineral-rights owners receive payment for their share from the operator.

### Coalbed Methane Potential in Kansas

The bituminous coals of eastern Kansas have great potential for large quantities of methane. In areas where the coals are deeper than 500 feet, and the gas has been trapped in the coals by thick overlying shales, economic quantities of methane gas may exist. Many other factors, such as the market price for natural gas, also determine the economic feasibility of exploring for coalbed methane in eastern Kansas.

Although the coal beds in eastern Kansas tend to be widely distributed, and several beds (up to 14) could be encountered in a well, the primary concern is the thinness of most of the coal beds and the correspondingly smaller volumes of gas. Evaluation of approximately 600 geophysical logs in eastern

Kansas indicates that about 96 percent of the coal occurs in beds 14 to 42 inches thick (fig. 3) and only about 4 percent occurs in beds greater than 42 inches. The main strategy for exploring for coalbed methane in eastern Kansas will be to locate thicker coals or multiple coal beds to warrant viable economic development (fig. 4).

Most of the coals in eastern Kansas are less than 2,500 feet deep, so drilling costs should be relatively low. Many gas pipeline networks already exist, and Kansas has recognized disposal zones for the water that is produced with the methane. All these factors suggest that eastern Kansas is an important area for potential development of coalbed methane.



Photo: Robert S. Sawin

Figure 3—Outcrop of a thin coal bed in Cherokee County.

*The bituminous coals of eastern Kansas have great potential for large quantities of methane*

37

# Agencies to Contact About Coalbed Methane

## Kansas Corporation Commission

Conservation Division  
Finney State Office Building  
130 S. Market, Room 2078  
Wichita, KS 67202-3802  
316-337-6200  
[www.kcc.state.ks.us](http://www.kcc.state.ks.us)

## Kansas Geological Survey

1930 Constant Ave.  
Lawrence, KS 66047-3726  
785-864-3965  
[www.kgs.ku.edu](http://www.kgs.ku.edu)

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The mission of the Kansas Geological Survey, operated by the University of Kansas in connection with its research and service program, is to conduct geological studies and research and to collect, correlate, preserve, and disseminate information leading to a better understanding of the geology of Kansas, with special emphasis on natural resources of economic value, water quality and quantity, and geologic hazards.

The Geology Extension program furthers the mission of the KGS by developing materials, projects, and services that communicate information about the geology of Kansas, the state's earth resources, and the products of the Kansas Geological Survey to the people of the state.



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Figure 4—Coalbed methane well in Montgomery County, Kansas.

Photo: Robert S. Savin

3-4



The Cherokee and Forest City basins in eastern Kansas and western Missouri, which comprise part of the Western region of the Interior Coal Province, are venerable energy-producing basins (Fig. 1). Coalbed gas represents a new potential resource that could revitalize this region.

Higher gas prices, increasing demand for natural gas, and new technologies have turned coalbed gas into an active energy play. Coalbed gas represents approximately 7% of total dry gas production and 9% of dry-gas proved reserves of the US.<sup>1,2</sup> These values are expected to increase in the future.

In the last two decades, the total coalbed methane gas production in the US is in excess of 7 tcf, a value of \$156.1 billion, at a price of \$2.23/Mcf.<sup>3</sup>

## Brief history

The history of petroleum production in eastern Kansas started over a century ago.

In 1860, as soon as one year after Col. Drake's historic well first produced oil near Titusville, Pa., drilling for petroleum reportedly commenced near the town of Paola, in eastern Kansas.<sup>4</sup> Oil and gas production started in the late 1800s and most of the larger fields were discovered and delineated by 1930.

Conventional petroleum production continues to the present, but it has been in decline for several decades. Virtually all of it is now stripper production.

Most drilling activity for both conventional reserves and coalbed gas is in the Cherokee basin and Bourbon arch (Fig. 1A), with considerably less activity in the Forest City basin.

Coals also have been produced from surface and subsurface mines in eastern Kansas since the mid-1800s. Peak production was during World War I and production from only strip mines continues to present time, but these operations are very small and are carried out by only local companies. Surface and subsurface mines have produced over 300 million tons of coal in Kansas.<sup>5</sup>

Coalbed gas production began in Kansas in the mid-1980s. No systemat-

ic compilation of coalbed gas fields in Kansas exists, but a regional map is presented (Fig. 1A). At least 232 wells were completed for coalbed gas in Kansas by 1993,<sup>6</sup> and total completions have more than doubled since then, with a virtual explosion in drilling in 2001 and 2002 (Table 1). The Cherokee basin in the southeastern part of the state hosts the majority of these wells.

## Present resource

Coal beds in eastern Kansas tend to be widely distributed, but the primary concerns are their thinness and their correspondingly smaller volumes of gas.

Evaluation of 600 geophysical logs from eastern Kansas indicates that 85% of the coal occurs in beds 14-28 in. thick, 11% occurs in beds 28-42 in. thick, and 4% occurs in beds thicker than 42 in.<sup>7</sup> The main strategy for exploring for coalbed gas will thus be to locate thicker coals or multiple coal beds.

Thirty-two coal beds, with thickness in excess of 14 in., are identified in the Middle Pennsylvanian stratigraphic column in eastern Kansas (Fig. 2). Most of these are in the Desmoinesian Cherokee Group, which is a cyclothem unit mostly composed of marine and terrestrial sandstones and shales, marine carbonates, and minor coals.

Up to 14 coal beds can be encountered in a typical well,<sup>7</sup> so a strategy for production from several zones in a single well may be a good option for economically viable resource development.

Resource assessment places the amount of deep coal in eastern Kansas (i.e., >100 ft depth) at 53 billion tons.<sup>5,7</sup> This assessment includes all the coals in the Cherokee Group and six Pennsylvanian coals stratigraphically higher.

Of this deep coal, approximately 70% resides in the Cherokee basin and Bourbon arch and 30% in the Forest City basin. Coals having the largest deep resources include the Bevier, Min-

# Coalbed gas play emerges in eastern Kansas basins

K. David Newell  
Lawrence L. Brady  
Jonathan P. Lange  
Timothy R. Carr  
Kansas Geological Survey  
Lawrence, Kan.

## COALBED GAS WELL COMPLETIONS, EASTERN KANSAS

Table 1

Completions	
1981	2
1982	5
1983	0
1984	0
1985	1
1986	2
1987	0
1988	0
1989	5
1990	28
1991	69
1992	63
1993	27
1994	25
1995	9
1996	4
1997	18
1998	4
1999	3
2000	1
2001	89
2002	*33

\*Through March.

HOUSE UTILITIES

## THE EASTERN KANSAS COALBED METHANE SCENE

Fig. 1

Fig. 1a  
Coalbed methane project sites and wells

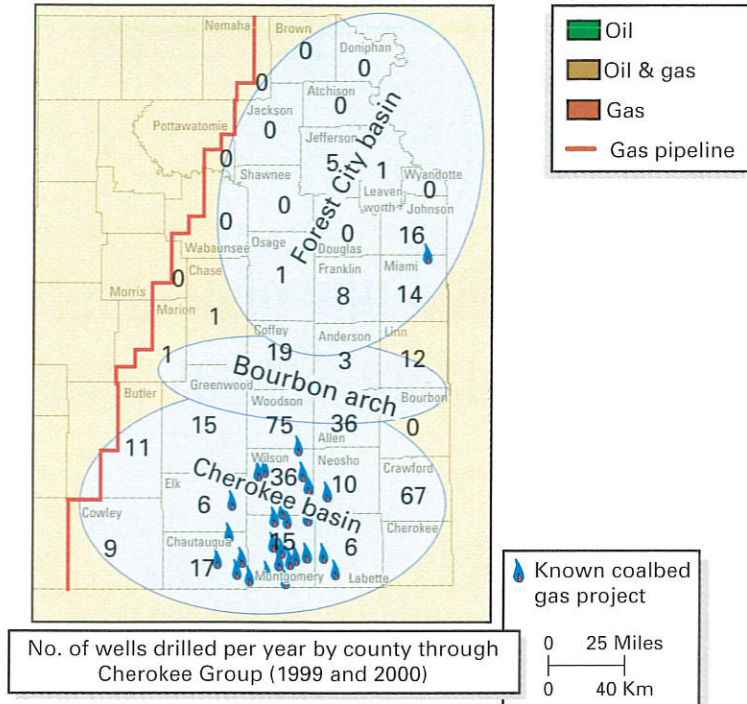
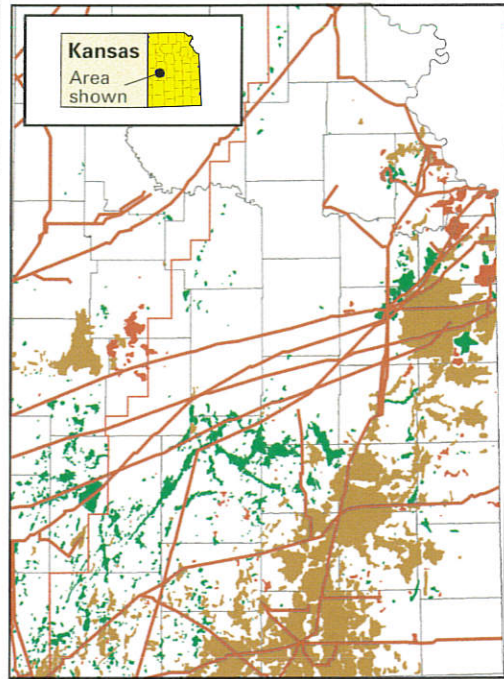


Fig. 1b  
Oil and gas fields and main gas pipelines\*



\*8 in. or larger in diameter.

eral, Weir-Pittsburg, Rowe, Riverton, and two informally named coals ("Aw" and "Cw") between the Rowe and Riverton (Fig. 2 and 3).

Most of the coals in eastern Kansas are less than 2,500 ft deep, so drilling and development expenditures are relatively modest. Major pipelines traverse the region (Fig. 1B), and large urban markets are nearby. Because a local petroleum industry exists, infrastructure necessary for energy development is largely in place, and landowners have a relatively benign rapport with this industry.

Water disposal is no great problem, with most brines being readily pumped into permeable zones at the top of the Cambrian-Ordovician Arbuckle limestone, present 200 to 400 ft below the base of Pennsylvanian strata in the Cherokee basin. This zone is deeper in the Forest City basin (up to 1,300 ft below the Pennsylvanian), but other lower Paleozoic limestones can also be utilized for this purpose.

### Development considerations

Although several coalbed gas operations have been started in the last 15 years in southeastern Kansas (Fig. 1A), exploration and development programs for coalbed gas in this region are hindered by limited data. Large areas remain unevaluated.

More detailed work on the extent and thickness of the coals is required for better resource evaluations. The gas quality and gas content of individual coals also remain largely untested. In general, coals in the Cherokee Group in the Cherokee basin are of high-volatile A bituminous rank. Shallow coals in the Forest City basin have been rated as slightly less-mature high-volatile B bituminous in rank,<sup>7-10</sup> but deeper coals are high-volatile A bituminous in rank.<sup>11</sup>

The gas storage capacity of a coal is a complex function of reservoir temperature and pressure, composition, micropore structure, and molecular properties of its adsorbed gas. In addition to these parameters, the geology of the coal deposit and the surrounding

strata also can affect gas content.

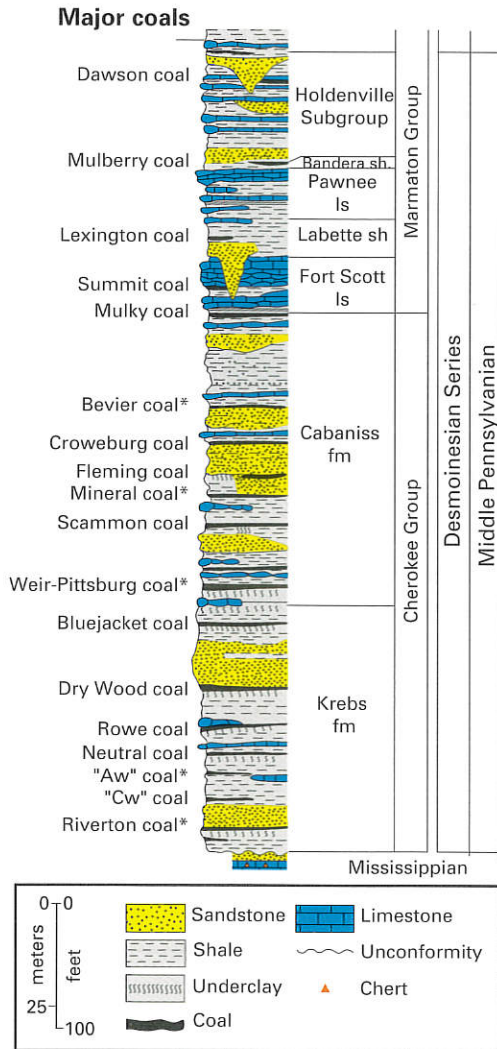
Desorption tests published for the Cherokee basin<sup>8,12</sup> report gas contents from a core sample of Weir-Pittsburg coal in Montgomery County as being as high as 220 scf/ton and Riverton coal as high as 239 scf/ton. Gas contents reported for a cored well in the Forest City basin are less—94 scf/ton for Riverton coal in Leavenworth County and lower volumes for coals higher in the section.<sup>11</sup> Additional desorption work is necessary to more fully understand the potential of both basins.

Even though coalbed gas is often termed "coalbed methane," other gases are produced such as nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and other hydrocarbon gases. Coalbed hydrocarbon gases have been attributed to both biogenic and thermogenic processes.<sup>13</sup>

Biogenic gas is generated by bacterial degradation of the coal. This gas largely is composed of methane that typically is isotopically light (i.e., relatively enriched in C<sub>12</sub>). Thermogenic gas can contain greater proportions of higher-molecular-weight hydrocarbons

4-2

## DESMOINESIAN SERIES IN EASTERN KANSAS

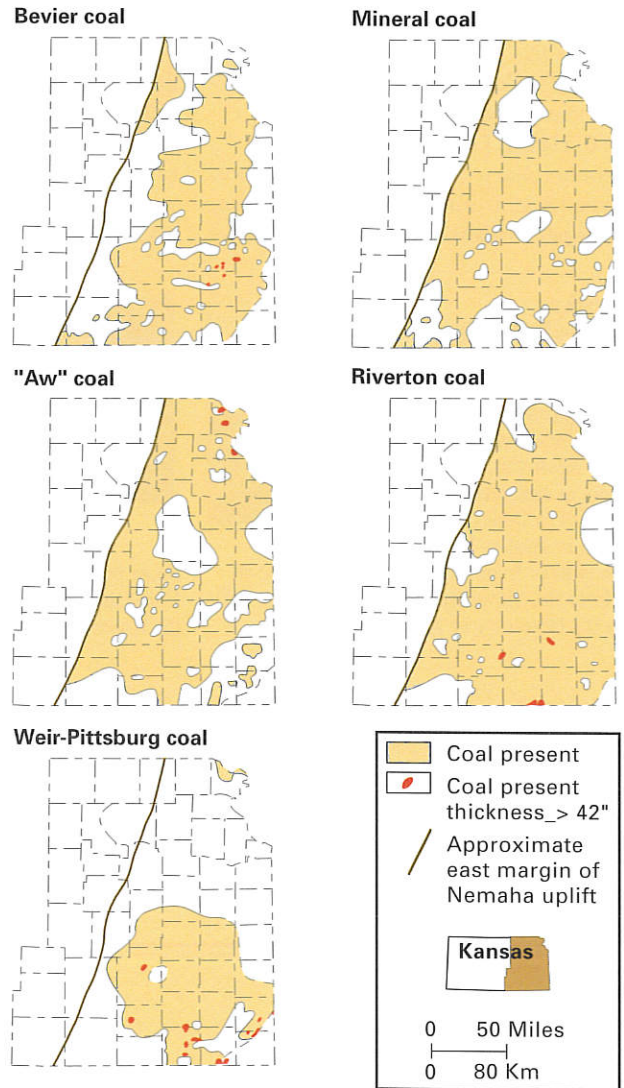


\*Distribution shown in Fig. 4

Fig. 2

## FIVE IMPORTANT DEEP COALS IN EASTERN KANSAS

Fig. 3



and its methane carbon is isotopically heavier than biogenic gas. Thermogenic gas is generated from the high temperature and pressure of deep burial over time, a process that roughly begins at a rank of high-volatile C bituminous and increases at higher ranks.

Kansas coals are slightly higher rank than this (i.e., high-volatile A and B bituminous) and thus may have both biogenic and thermogenic contributions. Both biogenic and thermogenic methane have been documented in Pennsylvanian sandstone reservoirs in eastern Kansas,<sup>14</sup> but differentiation of these gas sources in Kansas coals is yet to be determined.

Coalbed gases desorbed from a well

in the southern end of the Forest City basin in eastern Kansas<sup>11</sup> yield calculated heating values ranging from 860 to 1,079 BTU/scf. This range is comparable to that produced by traditional Cherokee Group gas wells (Fig. 4).

Whether coal gases will also mimic the regional trends in BTU content for nearby conventional gas reservoirs has yet to be determined, but at least some of the gas in conventional gas fields has been sourced by coals. Recent work by Stoeckinger<sup>15</sup> documented that channel sandstones truncating coals in southeastern Kansas can be charged with gas generated by these coals, and vice versa.

A group of relatively higher-BTU

gases in the tier of counties along the Oklahoma state line (Fig. 4) indicates these gases have a greater proportion of heavier hydrocarbon gases (i.e., wet gas), such as ethane, propane, and butane. This may be caused by greater thermal maturity of Pennsylvanian strata in this area<sup>16</sup> and also possibly by wet gases that may have migrated northward out of deeper strata in Oklahoma.

Coalbed gases, because they are also subject to these geological conditions in this region, may also have greater BTU content relative to production farther north. Coals farther upsection from the Cherokee Group may contain gases having lower BTU content, for this pattern appears to be the case for

43

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Jonathan Lange is a graduate research assistant with the KGS, where he is working towards an MS in geology from the University of Kansas. He is researching the stratigraphy and depositional environments of the Cherokee Group coals in southeastern Kansas. He has a BS in geology from Kansas State University.



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4-4

conventional reservoirs (Fig. 4).

Detailed mapping and stratigraphic interpretations of individual coals will be critical in any exploration program. The Weir-Pittsburg coal, for example (Fig. 5), markedly changes thickness over distances of just a few miles, whereas Riverton coal in the same area is thinner but more consistent. Through such detailed mapping, depositional trends and related production fairways can be determined and factored into leasing and resource evaluation.

Variations in coal quality, thickness, and lateral distribution will be better understood by placing Cherokee Group coals within a sequence-stratigraphic framework. Lange<sup>17</sup> (in progress) notes that these coals accumulated in a variety of depositional settings such as marsh, back-barrier marine, fluvial floodbasin, and interdistributary deltaic environments.

Gas production data in Kansas for coalbed gas leases to date are only cursorily compiled, as the type of gas production (i.e., traditional or coalbed gas) for any well permit or lease was not originally required of operators.

However, monthly production figures for single-well leases (Fig. 6) reveals the presence of coalbed gas production because peak production for these wells typically occurs

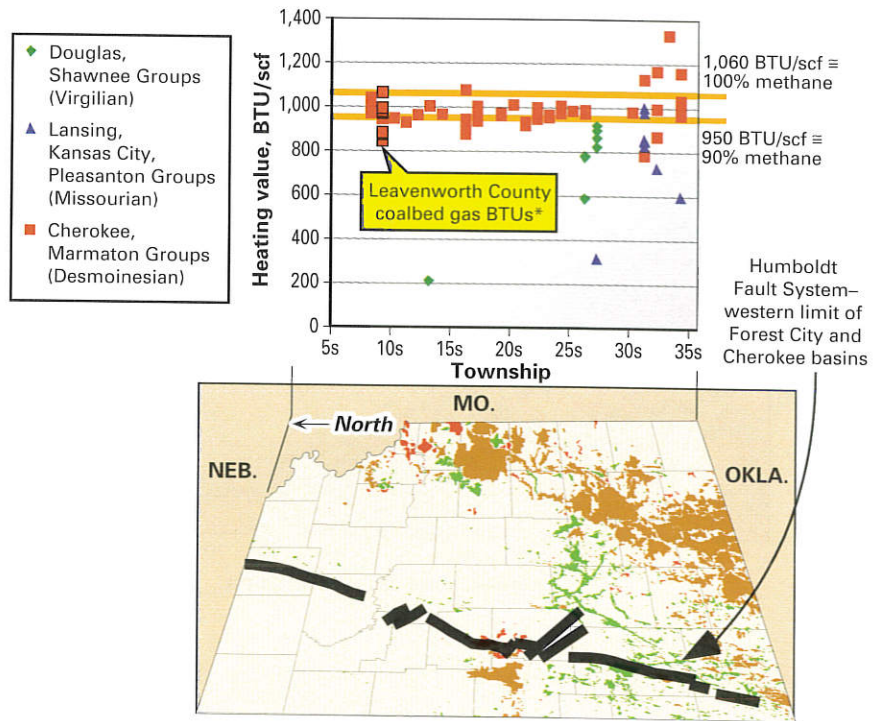
several months after initial production (as opposed to peak production with conventional wells, which occurs almost immediately after production begins).

Production in coalbed gas wells typically peaks in 1-3 years after start and slowly declines for years. The rate of production can greatly vary from well to well, but the best wells may produce 350 Mcfd at their peak. Average daily production during peak time for all

## NORTH-SOUTH DISTRIBUTION OF GAS BTU CONTENT

### Heating values for Pennsylvanian reservoirs in eastern Kansas

Fig. 4



Source: \*After Bostic and others, 1993

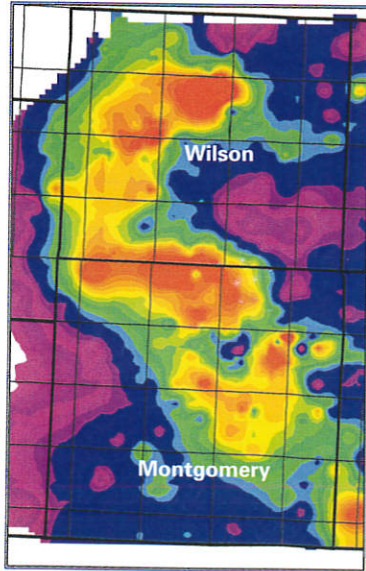
wells considered (minimum 50 Mcfd for at least 3 years) is about 90 Mcfd (Fig. 6). The systematic classification

and analysis of these data according to location, depth, and stratigraphic horizon may reveal production fairways and

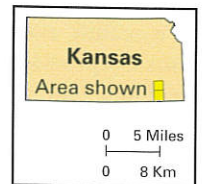
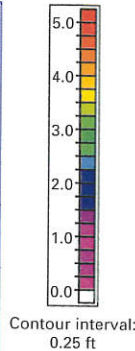
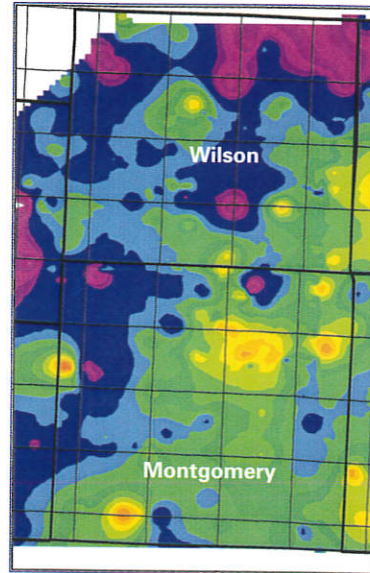
## TWO COALS IN TWO COUNTIES

Fig. 5

### A. Weir-Pittsburg coal thickness



### B. Riverton coal thickness

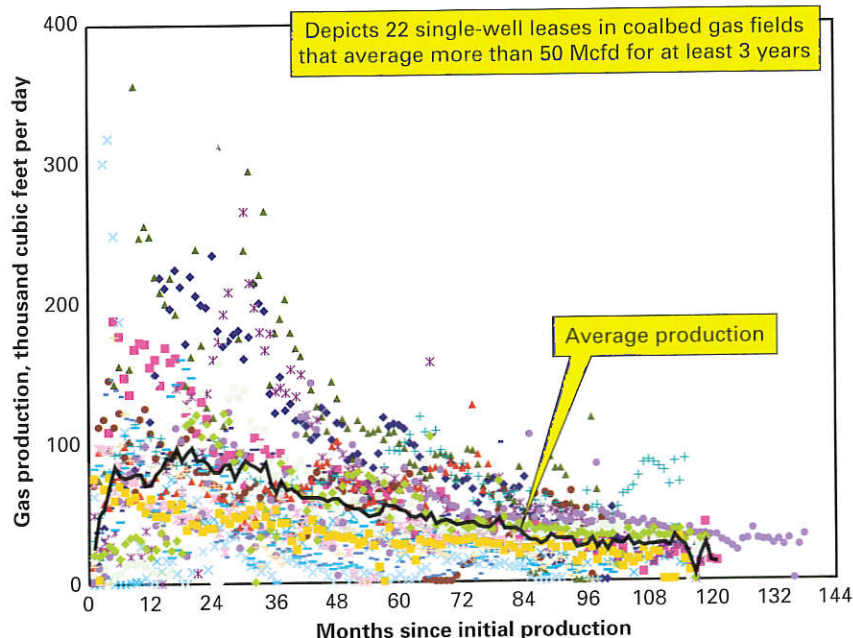


45



## EASTERN KANSAS COALBED GAS PRODUCTION

Fig. 6



sweet spots that have hitherto gone unnoticed.

### Data sources

Data available from years of oil and gas drilling can be utilized to provide reliable regional correlation of major coal beds and discern their thickness, depth, and structural deformation, as well as ancillary information on bottom-hole temperatures and pressure tests.

Wireline logs, drillers logs, and scout cards, archived at the Kansas Geological Survey in Lawrence, Kan., and Kansas Geological Society in Wichita are good data sources. Cores and well cuttings are also archived at Kansas Geological Survey facilities in Lawrence and Wichita. Drilling permit information is readily available online from the Kansas Corporation Commission. Many consultants have extensive personal data collections, born of years of local petroleum experience.

### Summary

Coalbed gas from Middle Pennsylvanian rocks in eastern Kansas is an emerging new energy play.

Many of the critical geological parameters that will prove to be the major controls on the production fairways of

this potential new resource have yet to be determined. Nevertheless, preliminary analyses indicate that recent leasing and exploration may translate into long-term production of new gas resources in what was hitherto considered a supermature petroleum province.

### Acknowledgments

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