

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ENERGY AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Rob Olson at 9:15 A.M. on January 17, 2008 in Room 783 Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Dan Johnson- excused  
Tom Hawk-excused  
Vaughn Flora-excused

Committee staff present:

Mary Galligan, Kansas Legislative Research  
Carol Toland, Kansas Legislative Research  
Mary Torrence, Revisor's Office  
Melissa Doeblin, Revisor's Office  
Rena Hansen, Committee Administrative Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Steve Owens, Director of Distributions of Operations, Westar  
Dave Holthaus, Kansas Electric Cooperatives  
General Todd Bunting, Adjutant General's Office

Others attending:

Twenty five including the attached list.

Steve Owens, Westar, (Attachment 1), updated the committee on the process and progress of restoring power to their customers in Kansas that suffered power outages during the December 2007 ice storm. In addition Mr. Owens provided the committee with photos (Attachment 2) from the storm and some of the recovery efforts. He noted that the weight of a 200 foot span of wire with no ice is 15 pounds compared to 2 inches of ice weighing 1,100 pounds. That weight difference makes the lines very susceptible to wind damage, and to tree branches that might even touch the line.

Questions were asked and comments made by Representatives: Rocky Fund, Tom Sloan, Tom Hawk, Vern Swanson, Oletha Faust- Goudeau, Tom Moxley, and Richard Proehl.

Dave Holthaus, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, (Attachment 3), offered an update to the committee on the December 2007 storm outage. He offered information on the individual co-ops and their specific outages, as well as the ten different states that sent linemen to help restore power. Additionally, (Attachment 4), he included a brochure that showed the Christmas dinner served to linemen at the Kickapoo Reservation.

Questions were asked and comments made by Representatives: Tom Sloan, Carl Holmes, and Tom Hawk.

General Todd Bunting, Adjutant General's Office, (Attachments 5 and 6), offered information to the committee on the ice storm and shared with the committee the ways in which the electric utility companies and the National Guard worked together as a team to help restore power as quickly as possible. He noted that the Guard provided a member in Westar's office and that Westar had an employee in the Adjutant General's office to provide good communication to the restoration efforts.

Questions were asked and comments made by Representatives: Tom Sloan, and Tom Hawk.

Written testimony was offered by Kansas Municipal Utilities (Attachment 7), giving a short synopsis of the issues they encountered during the 2007 ice storm.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2008.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m..