COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The deadline for the Community Calendar is at 4 p.m. Friday. Email to news@ caseynews.net.

HAPPENINGS

• St. Bernard's Lenten Fish Fry, located in Clementsville runs for six weeks each Friday night through April 11, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Adults \$14 per plate, Children 5-12 \$8. Kids four and under eat free. Serving baked or fried fish, slaw, hush puppies, macaroni and cheese, pinto beans, potatoes, cornbread, dessert and drink. Carry-outs are available.

• The VFW Post #5704 will hold a grand opening for its new Post building in Liberty, located at the intersection of Whipp Avenue and Hustonville Street, at noon through 5 p.m. on Saturday,

March 29. All are welcome to attend.

• The Red Hatatudes will meet at noon Wednesday March 26 at Sacred Heart Church to carpool to McKinney Depot for lunch.

 Anthony Cook, VFW Post 5704 service officer, will be at the Casey County Public Library the second Tuesday of every month to talk to veterans about benefits or other services.

SUPPORT GROUPS

 A child bereavement group will meet the first Friday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Outreach Center, 289 Wallace Wilkinson Blvd., in Liberty. For more information call 606-303-1422.

 Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 8 p.m. every

Tuesday at the First Christian Church fellowship hall. For information, call 606-787-5866 or 606-305-1288.

 Narcotics Anonymous meets at 8 p.m. every Thursday at Hope Ministry, 882 Caney Fork Road, Liberty. For more information, call 606-448-

 A Narcotics Anonymous open discussion meeting is held at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays in the basement at Brush Creek Pentecostal Church on KY 49.

• A Survivor of Suicide support group meets the first Thursday of the month from 6-7 p.m. at the Boyle County Library.

This group is for adults who have had friends or family members die by suicide.

Stats show unemployment up across state from previous year

BY CASEY COUNTY NEWS

Unemployment rates rose in 109 counties, including Casey, between January 2024 and January 2025, according to the Kentucky Center for Statis-

The January 2025 rate of 6% in Casey County accounts for 373 jobless residents local actively seeking employment, the KYSTATS breakdown says. That rate was well above 4.5% recorded here in January 2024, the report said.

The center's data showed Casey County's unemployment rate was better than the 6.2% average for the 10-county Lake Cumberland Area Development District

Woodford County recorded the lowest jobless rate in the commonwealth at 4%. It was followed by Fayette and Shelby counties, 4.3% each; Oldham and Scott counties, 4.4% each;

Internal Combustion Engine Project (Project)

Bourbon, Jessamine rate for the state was and Nicholas counties, 5.5% for January 2025, 4.6% each; and Harrison, Todd and Washington counties, 4.7% each.

Wolfe County recordunemployment rate at 13.8%. It was followed by Lewis County, 12.2%; Elliott County, 11.5%; Magoffin County, 11.2%; Martin County, 11%; Carter County, 10.7%; Menifee County, 10.6%; Lawrence County, 9.8%; Breathitt County, 9.3%; and Morgan County,

County unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted because of small sample sizes. **Employment statistics** undergo fluctuations due to seasonal events such as weather changes, harvests, holidays, and school openings and closings, the KYSTATS news release said.

The comparable, unadjusted unemployment Cabinet.

and 4.4% for the nation. Kentucky's seasonally adjusted January 2025 unemployment rate was ed the state's highest released March 13. It remained unchanged at 5.3% from December 2024 to January 2025.

In that release, Kentucky's statewide unemployment rate and employment levels are adjusted to observe statistical trends by removing seasonal influences such as weather changes, harvests, holidays and school openings and closings.

The statistics do not include unemployed Kentuckians who have not looked for employment within the past four weeks. The data should be only to the same month in previous years, according to the Center for Statistics, an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development East Kentucky Power Cooperative: Notice of Availability for an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment for the Liberty Reciprocating

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, is issuing a Draft Environmental Assessment in connection with possible impacts related to a project proposed by East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC), of Winchester, Kentucky. EKPC is requesting a loan from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) RUS to construct a Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine (RICE) facility in Casey County, Kentucky and to rebuild and upgrade existing electric transmission lines in Casey and Marion Counties, Kentucky.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions and comments should be emailed to the Environmental and Historic Preservation Division, USDA Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service at: RUSPublicComments@usda.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Liberty RICE Project includes the construction and operation of an approximately 214-megawatt (MW) net RICE power plant to meet projected load demand and support the integration of increased amounts of intermittent renewable energy generation on the EKPC system. The plant will be powered by natural gas with fuel oil as a backup option. Twelve individual 18-MW RICE would be constructed at a site approximately 3.2 miles north of Liberty in Casey County, Kentucky (Figure 1). The 108-acre Project Site is currently provided by the Project Approximately 4.3 acres would be agricultural land that EKPC would develop for the Project. Approximately 43 acres would be permanently disturbed within the proposed fenced facility, 10 acres would be permanently disturbed within new permanent rights of way, 33.8 acres would be temporarily disturbed during construction, and 21.2 acres would be undisturbed. A security fence would be constructed around the permanent facilities.

Operation of the Liberty RICE facility would require installation of a new natural gas pipeline lateral and a new water pipeline to service the facility. The pipeline lateral would extend approximately 530 feet southeast from the Project Site boundary to a tap point on an existing pipeline. The water pipeline would tap into an existing water main located approximately 0.1 mile east of the Project Site. Figure 2 shows the total undisturbed area, construction disturbance area, and permanent

The Project also includes upgrades to approximately 6.6 miles of existing electric transmission line, rebuild of approximately 7.6 miles of existing transmission line, and construction of 0.3 mile of new interconnection transmission line. Approximately 3.9 miles of transmission line upgrade and rebuild would occur approximately 1 mile northwest of Lebanon in Marion County, Kentucky. The remaining transmission line rebuilds and upgrades would occur in Casey County, Kentucky, extending northwest and southeast from the proposed power plant. The locations of the transmission line rebuilds and upgrades are shown in Figure 1.

Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc., an environmental consultant, prepared an Environmental Assessment for EKPC that describes the Project, assesses the proposed Project's environmental impacts, and summarizes applicable mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects. RUS has conducted an independent evaluation of the Environmental Assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed Project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of Project construction or operation.

Written questions and comments should be emailed to RUS at the email address provided above. RUS will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for 14 days from the first date of publication of this notice. All comments must be provided electronically with no hard copy comments being accepted at this time.

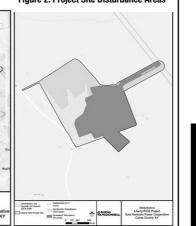
Copies of the environmental assessment and supporting documentation will be available for public review on RUS's website at: https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental- studies/assessment/liberty-reciprocating-internal-combustion-engine-rice-project

Any final action by RUS related to the proposed Project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

Dated: March 2025

Figure 1: Liberty RICE Project location

Figure 2: Project Site Disturbance Areas



New bill aims to combat loss of Kentucky farmland

BY WILL SPENCER

Kentucky farmers have been struggling with the loss of farmland to large-scale developers for more than a decade. These outside investors purchase and convert the land for other commercial purposes or lease it back to operators.

According to the recently released 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, Kentucky has lost 17,000 farms and 1.4 million acres of farmland over the last 20 years. In the previous five years, acreage has dwindled by 100,000 each year, averaging to roughly one-and-ahalf farms lost per day during this peri-

Introduced by U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the Protecting American Farmlands Act aims to combat this issue through capital gains tax relief that keeps agricultural land in the hands of active producers.

The new bill aligns with Kentucky Farm Bureau's Kentucky Farmland Transition Initiative, which supports farmers building equity in land and mitigates financial barriers for those retir-

Kyle Kelly, director of public affairs for the Kentucky Farm Bureau, said the Protecting American Farmlands Act incentivizes retiring farmers to sell their land to younger farmers.

He explained that these benefits especially maintain generational family investment in agriculture while assisting in transitions to retirement.

Eddie Melton, president of Kentucky Farm Bureau, said the bill allows landowners who sell to active farmers to roll the gains from that sale into an individual retirement account. By deferring taxes, he said the bill gives retiring farmers more control over their financial future while helping keep farmland in production.

"This legislation not only helps ensure that our nation's farmland remains in the hands of active farmers, but it also provides retiring farmers with a viable pathway to transition their operations to the next generation," Melton said.

Melton said the Protecting American Farmlands Act could be a major step in preserving the long-term sustainability

of American agriculture.

"We look forward to the lasting impact this legislation will have on farming communities here in Kentucky and across the country," Melton said.

Daniel Edwards, a partner with Edwards Farms in McCracken County, said this new legislation could ensure local farmers are vested in land over companies or corporations.

"This is going to be a great opportunity for myself, as a young farmer, and middle-aged farmers," Edwards said. They know they can get their hands on property when someone retires."

Operational since 1969, Edwards Farms has spanned three generations of family overseeing 1,800 acres. Daniel Edwards, who is 27 years old, said this bill would reinforce a lifelong passion for agriculture and broaden his farming

"That's every young farmer's goal," Edwards said. "It's certainly my goal to buy farm ground to expand. If you're not growing, you're going backwards."

With higher input costs and lower commodity prices, Edwards said farmers are facing severe economic challenges. He noted returns on average crops like corn and soybeans are alarmingly low, saying they "barely meet the production cost.'

However, he said the new bill could alleviate these hardships and thin margins by boosting land ownership and agricultural production. He anticipates benefits in his lifetime if the bill passes, and he said the current losses of 100,000 acres per year could be reduced by half.

"Everybody knows how tough it is right now in the farm economy, but this gives farmers a little bit of hope," Edwards said. "This gives farmers an idea that, even though things aren't good right now, we've got better things to look forward to."

CASEY COUNTY SENIOR CENTER MENU

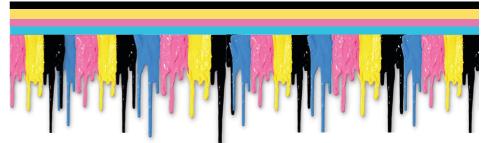
March 26: Country chicken, mashed potatoes, carrots, fruit, roll with margarine, and milk

March 27: Crispy chicken, tossed salad, cookie, banana, roll, and

March 28: Vegetable soup, tuna salad, oyster crakcers, two slices of whole wheat bread, fruit, and milk



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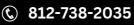
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