




POWERING GROWTH RESPONSIBLY


DATA CENTER, LARGE LOAD, & COMPREHENSIVE UTILITY PLANNING SUMMIT

JULY 15-16, 2026 | DOCKING STATE OFFICE BUILDING - TOPEKA, KANSAS



POWERING GROWTH RESPONSIBLY
**DATA CENTER, LARGE LOAD,
& COMPREHENSIVE UTILITY
PLANNING SUMMIT**

 **July 15-16, 2026**
Day One: 9 AM - 4:45 PM | Reception 5 PM - 6:30PM
Day Two: 8 AM - Noon

 **Docking State Office Building**
3rd Floor Auditorium (Ad Astra Room 350)
915 SW Harrison Street, Topeka, KS

 **KMU Member: \$250 | Non-member: \$295**

Utilities across Kansas are navigating a rapidly changing energy and water landscape. As electricity and water demand shift—driven in part by the growth of data centers, advanced manufacturing, and other industries that require significant energy and water—communities are now faced with challenging questions about growth, infrastructure, and long-term planning.

This event brings together utilities, regulators, developers, and local leaders for two days of discussion on how to serve large-load customers responsibly, protect ratepayers, and position Kansas communities for sustainable growth. Local officials must determine whether this kind of development aligns with their local priorities and goals and is the right fit for their community—or not.

Serving large-load customers requires far more than available land and competitive rates. It demands coordinated, long-term planning across generation resources, transmission networks, substations, high-capacity distribution systems, water infrastructure, and local permitting processes. The event will examine how utilities and policymakers are adapting generation and water supply planning strategies to address accelerating growth and increasing uncertainty in demand forecasts, and why the need for clear, sustainable rate structures and policy frameworks has never been greater.

The summit will separate fact from speculation with data-driven information from independent experts on the most common topics surrounding large-load development, including real-world case studies from utilities and communities already supporting hyperscale data centers. Attendees will leave with a better understanding of what these projects require, what communities can realistically expect, and how to evaluate proposals using objective information rather than assumptions.

The summit will also focus on the community evaluation process, covering how local governments, utilities, economic development organizations, and residents can thoughtfully assess whether a proposed project aligns with their community's goals, infrastructure capacity, and long-term vision.

AGENDA - DAY ONE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026

WELCOME

9:00 AM - 9:10 AM

MAKING SENSE OF THIS TIME IN ENERGY & IN OUR ECONOMY

9:10 AM - 10:00 AM

As electricity demand accelerates for the first time in decades, utilities, regulators, and large-load customers are navigating a fundamental shift in the energy economy. The explosive growth of AI computing, hyperscale data centers, and other energy-intensive industries is reshaping load forecasts, infrastructure planning, and the traditional regulatory compact between utilities and customers.

How are policymakers, utilities, and developers making sense of a rapidly evolving landscape where reliability, affordability, and economic competitiveness must all be balanced in real time? What does rising large-load demand mean for grid investment, rate design, transmission expansion, and the future relationship between utilities and the customers driving unprecedented growth?

- *Dave Berry, Co-founder & CEO, Cloverleaf Infrastructure*

WHY ARE LARGE-LOAD CUSTOMERS LOOKING AT KANSAS, & WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOUR COMMUNITY IS APPROACHED?

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Kansas has emerged as a serious contender for large-load and data center investment. With our central geography, transmission access, competitive energy costs, and new state incentives, communities across Kansas are increasingly finding themselves part of site-selection conversations.

But what exactly are developers looking for, and how should local leaders evaluate whether a project is the right fit? This panel will break down the key drivers behind data center site selection, including power availability, fiber connectivity, water, workforce, tax policy, and speed-to-market considerations.

Panelists will also explore the practical questions communities should ask when approached by developers: What are the long-term economic benefits? What infrastructure investments may be required? How can communities protect ratepayers and taxpayers while positioning themselves for growth? Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of both the opportunities and the tradeoffs associated with attracting large-load projects in today's rapidly evolving economy.

- *Paul Hughes, Headquarters & Megaprojects, Kansas Department of Commerce*
- *Nekabari Goka, Lead, Global Infrastructure & Energy, Google*
- *Ben Alingh, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Monarch Energy*

INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVING LARGE LOADS

11:00 AM - NOON

The rapid growth of energy-intensive industries is placing unprecedented demands on critical infrastructure systems. Serving large-load customers requires far more than available land and competitive rates. It demands coordinated, long-term planning across generation resources, transmission networks, substations, high-capacity distribution systems, water infrastructure, and local permitting processes.

This session will examine the infrastructure realities behind large-load development and what utilities, regulators, developers, and communities must consider to ensure projects can be delivered reliably and responsibly.

Panelists will discuss generation adequacy, transmission constraints, interconnection timelines, cooling and water requirements, backup power considerations, and the infrastructure investments needed to support multi-megawatt growth. The conversation will also explore how utilities and communities can balance economic opportunity with system reliability, resiliency, and long-term resource planning in an era of accelerating electricity demand.

- *Darrin McNew, Executive Director of Electric Operations, Kansas City BPU*
- *Chad Albin, Senior Director of Network Operations, Cox Communications*

LUNCHEON *(lunch provided)*

NOON – 1:00 PM

WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT LARGE LOADS & DATA CENTERS?

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

As interest in data centers and other large-load projects grows, so do the questions from policymakers, community leaders, and residents. This session will separate fact from speculation by providing clear, data-driven information from independent experts on the most common topics surrounding large-load development.

Panelists will address key questions about electricity demand, water consumption, workforce and employment opportunities, tax impacts, land use, sound and visual considerations, and the operational realities of modern data centers. The discussion will also explore how different facility designs, cooling technologies, and site characteristics can influence community impacts and long-term benefits.

Attendees will leave with a better understanding of what these projects require, what communities can realistically expect, and how to evaluate proposals using objective information rather than assumptions.

- *Ben Alingh, Co-founder & CEO, Monarch Energy*
- *Alan Anderson, Energy Chair, Polsinelli Law Firm*

POWER SUPPLY PLANNING FOR LARGE LOADS

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting the demands of energy-intensive industries requires long-term decisions around generation resources, fuel diversity, transmission availability, permitting timelines, and wholesale market participation — all while maintaining reliability and affordability for existing customers.

This panel will explore how utilities and policymakers are adapting generation planning strategies to address accelerating load growth and increasing uncertainty in demand forecasts. Panelists will discuss the implications for new generation development, permitting and siting challenges, resource adequacy requirements, and wholesale power procurement strategies.

The session will also examine alternative tools available to meet growing demand, including demand response, energy storage, distributed generation, renewable energy partnerships, and emerging technologies that may help bridge near-term capacity constraints. Attendees will gain insight into the complex planning decisions shaping the future power supply landscape in the era of large-load growth.

- *Andrew French, Chairman, Kansas Corporation Commission*
- *Lindsay Campbell, CEO, Southern Pioneer Electric Company*

BREAK

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM

CASE STUDIES: COMMUNITIES SERVING DATA CENTERS

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

Utilities and local leaders have firsthand experience with the opportunities and challenges that come with serving large digital loads. As Kansas is part of the second wave of large-load build-out, participants will get the benefit of learning from those who have gone before us.

This panel will feature real-world case studies from utilities and communities already supporting hyperscale data centers and other energy-intensive technology facilities. Panelists will share lessons learned on infrastructure planning, rate design, customer agreements, permitting, economic development partnerships, and community engagement.

The discussion will explore what worked well, what challenges emerged, and how utilities balanced reliability, affordability, and growth while integrating large new loads into their systems. Attendees will gain practical insight into how communities can prepare for data center development, evaluate long-term impacts, and build strategies that position both utilities and local economies for sustainable success.

- *Andrew Farris, CFO, Kansas City BPU*

DOES THIS WORK FOR US? UNDERSTANDING AN OPPORTUNITY & USHERING A COMMUNITY THROUGH EVALUATION, DELIBERATION, & OUTCOME

4:30 PM – 4:45 PM

As communities are increasingly approached about hosting data centers and other large-load developments, local leaders are being asked to make complex decisions with long-term implications.

This discussion will focus on the community evaluation process — how local governments, utilities, economic development organizations, and residents can thoughtfully assess whether a proposed project aligns with their community's goals, infrastructure capacity, and long-term vision. What key questions should communities ask when evaluating opportunities, including economic impact, utility readiness, land-use compatibility, workforce needs, environmental considerations, tax implications, and quality-of-life concerns?

Attendees will gain insight into how communities can move from initial proposal to informed outcome — whether that means advancing a project, reshaping it, or determining it is not the right fit.

- *Josh Svaty, KCMU Government Affairs Liaison*

SUMMIT NETWORKING RECEPTION

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Cyrus Hotel, Vanguard Room

920 S. Kansas Avenue, Topeka, KS

Join industry and municipal colleagues for an evening of networking, hors d'oeuvres, and drinks at the Cyrus Hotel. Connect with data center professionals, city leaders, and utility stakeholders in a relaxed setting for meaningful conversations.

AGENDA - DAY TWO

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026

BREAKFAST *(provided)*

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

IN THIS TIME OF HYPER-POLARIZED CONVERSATIONS, HOW TO GATHER PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC INPUT?

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

As communities wrestle with the rapid growth of data centers, public conversations around energy, water, economic development, land use, and quality of life have become increasingly polarized. Traditional public engagement methods often struggle to build trust, surface constructive feedback, or move stakeholders toward shared understanding.

The panelists are experienced with productive public dialogue that leads to increased public input, transparency, addressing misinformation, and fostering collaboration rather than conflict.

- *Mike Kelly, Chairman, Johnson County Board of County Commissioners*
- *Tom Stolz, County Manager, Sedgwick County*
- *Lona Duvall, President & CEO, Finney County Economic Development Corporation*
- *Patrick Hoffman, City Attorney, City of Salina*

HOW TO SERVE A LARGE LOAD?

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

As demand for data centers accelerates, utilities, policymakers, developers, and communities are facing a critical question: how do we reliably and responsibly serve large-scale energy loads?

This panel will bring together industry leaders and public-sector experts to examine the policy, infrastructure, and financial considerations shaping the future of large-load development. Panelists will explore how to prepare the system for new large-load customers, changes to the regulatory framework, rate design, and public-private partnerships.

- *Jason Klindt, Senior Director of External Affairs, Evergy*
- *Lindsay Campbell, CEO, Southern Pioneer Electric Company*
- *Darrin McNew, Executive Director of Electric Operations, Kansas City BPU*

DESIGNING A LARGE LOAD TARIFF & MODEL LARGE-LOAD POLICY

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

As utilities face new demand from data centers and other large-load customers, the need for clear, sustainable rate structures and policy frameworks has never been greater.

This panel will examine how utilities can design large-load tariffs that support economic growth while ensuring existing customers are protected, and growth pays for growth.

Panelists will discuss key tariff design considerations, including demand charges, capacity reservation charges, infrastructure cost recovery mechanisms, and minimum load commitments.

The conversation will explore how utilities can balance competitiveness for large-load development with grid reliability, long-term planning, and cost certainty. Model large-load policies that utilities can adapt will be discussed, with key elements defining large-load thresholds, infrastructure prepayment requirements, minimum contract terms, curtailment authority, financial guarantees, and exit fee structures designed to address stranded costs.

- *Andrew Farris, CEO, Kansas City BPU*

SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS & KEY TAKEAWAYS - CLOSING REMARKS

11:45 AM - NOON



REGISTRATION

Don't miss one of the most important conversations happening in Kansas right now. Visit the KMU website to register online and secure your spot, and take advantage of the room block KMU has reserved at the Cyrus Hotel (*hotel room block expires June 18*). Simply scan the QR code with your smart device or visit www.kmunet.org/event/data-center-large-load-summit.

Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU), based in McPherson, Kansas, is the statewide association of community-owned electric, water, wastewater, and natural gas utilities. As a non-profit association established by its members in 1928, KMU provides education, training, advocacy, and mutual aid support to help communities deliver reliable, locally governed utility services to their communities.