KU economist inducted into American Academy of Arts & Sciences

Staff Report

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A University of Kansas economist has been inducted into one of the country's top organizations for artists and scientists.

Donna Ginther, who is a distinguished professor of economics at KU, has been named to the American Academy of Universities, which is consid-Arts & Sciences. Ginther is the sixth KU faculty member to



Ginther

ulty members in the academy plays a role in whether a university deemed qualified to be a member of the Association

ered the top organization for research universities in North be named to the academy. The America. KU is a longtime Economist, The Washington

number of fac- member of the AAU, and cur- Post, National Public Radio and Warrior, distinguished profesrently is the only Kansas school in the research organization.

Ginther's areas of research expertise include the economics of science, academic labor markets, gender differences in employment outcomes, wage inequality, and investments in children.

Ginther, who often serves of American as a researcher for economic matters for the state of Kansas, has had her findings featured in The New York Times, The

other national media outlets.

Before coming to KU, Ginther worked as a researcher for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and had taught at Washington University and Southern Methodist University.

Ginther joins the following KU faculty members who previously have been inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences: Kristin Bowman-James, distinguished professor of chemistry; Robert

sor of American literature and culture; Jorge Soberón, distinguished professor of ecology and evolutionary biology; Donald Worster, distinguished professor emeritus of history; and Paul Meier, professor emeritus

Ginther was one of 250 artists and scientists inducted into the class of 2025, which also included activist and journalist Gloria Steinem, novelist Amy Tan, and chef José Andrés.

Black Hills asks to raise natural gas rates for Kansas customers by 17.6%

By Morgan Chilson

Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA — A public hearing Tuesday in Wichita will give Black Hills Energy customers an opportunity to comment on a proposal that would raise residential bills by about 17.6%.

For a customer with average usage, that equates to an additional \$11 per month to take effect in the

second half of 2025, according to a In testimony, company officials Kansas Corporation Commission press release. Black Hills provides natural gas service to approximately 120,000 Kansas customers, primarily in the southern half of

The company filed a request with KCC to increase rates in early February. Its last rate review was in 2021 and its most recent new revenue request was in 2014.

said Black Hills has experienced declining residential usage per customer. In addition, increased insurance costs and investments in infrastructure are affecting

"Presently effective rates do not produce sufficient revenues to cover the reasonable cost of Applicant's continued ability to render reasonably sufficient and

efficient service," the company said in testimony.

The public hearing begins at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Lowe Auditorium, Hughes Metropolitan Complex, 5015 E. 29th St. North, in Wichita. An online option is available for participants, and those who want to comment or ask questions online must register in advance by noon Monday on KCC's website. The hearing also will be broadcast on KCC's YouTube channel.

Written comments may be submitted to KCC through 5 p.m. June 20, via KCC's website, by mail to the commission's office at 1500 S.W. Arrowhead Road, Topeka, KS 66604-4027, or by calling (785) 271-3140 or (800) 662-0027.

The commission will issue an order on the application on or be-

BRIEFLY

Pulitzer-winning historian to speak at KU about 'Scopes Monkey Trial'

A Pulitzer Prize-winning historian will provide a public lecture at the University of Kansas looking back on the "Scopes Monkey Trial," which brought to a head 100 years ago the role of religion in public classrooms.

Edward Larson — a 1998 winner of a Pulitzer Prize for his book "Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's



Larson

Religion." will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Kansas Union. l ar-

son is considered one of the country's top experts on the Scopes Trial, which in 1925 put high school teacher John Scopes on trial for teaching evolution in his public school classroom. The trial created lasting impacts on science, religion, and academic freedom.

Continuing Larson's lecture, which is Debate free and open to the public, Over Sciwill examine how the case ence and became a defining moment in American history, and also share insights about some of the personalities behind the case, including attorneys Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan.

Topeka man charged with raping 14-year-old in Douglas County

A Topeka man is charged in Douglas County with



Patterson

to charging documents. The charges are in connection with two incidents involving the same girl between May and August of 2024.

raping a

14-year-

old girl.

Lee Pat-

Tyler

terson, 19,

faces two

according

counts

of rape,

Patterson was arrested in Topeka on April 21 and was taken to Douglas County on Wednesday afternoon.

If convicted, Patterson faces a minimum of 12 years in prison in accordance with Kansas law.

Patterson is being held on a \$75,000 cash or surety bond.

Dispose of unwanted medications at police HQ today

Residents can safely dispose of their unwanted and expired medications today at the Lawrence Police Department headquarters as part of the Drug

Enforcement Administration's annual Take Back Day.

According to a release from the police department, people can anonymously dispose of their medications at the headquarters, 5100 Overland Drive, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The DEA's Take Back Day encourages people to "remove unneeded medications from their homes as a measure of preventing medication misuse and opioid addiction from ever starting," according to the DEA's website. For more information on the national program, visit dea.gov/takebackday.

Credit

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She had the option of vetoing the bill, which likely would have held, given that the Kansas Legislature has already adjourned for

The bill eliminates, after 2025, a 4% tax credit that has been used by many projects in Lawrence, including for several hundred rent-controlled apartment units in Lawrence near the South Lawrence Trafficway. Additionally, the bill placed a cap of \$8.8 million in tax credits that can be issued in total for Kansas affordable housing projects in any given year.

That's compared to approximately \$30 million in affordable housing tax credits that the state has been issuing in recent

"I will not be surprised that next year we will develop fewer affordable housing projects than we did in 2022, when we didn't vet have the tax credit program," Krsnich said.

He said the tax credit program has become more vital since its adoption because back in 2022 mortgage interest rates were around 3%, and construction costs were about 40% less than they are today.

"Now we are dealing with the great inflation, Krsnich said.

The tax credits serve as a unique form of revenue for affordable housing developers to partially fund their projects. A tax credit allows any taxpayer to

apply the credit to their tax bill and automatically reduce the amount of taxes they owe. Often, affordable housing developers don't need the tax break but they do need money to fund their building projects. The tax credit program allows developers to sell the tax credits to other businesses or individuals who want to reduce their tax liability. A \$100,000 credit, for example, might sell for needed for construction.

Developers who receive the tax credits from the state must sign agreements limiting the amount of rent they will charge for apartments they build, and also agree to rent to individuals who are at or below certain income levels.

Krsnich, in his role as the legislative chair for the Kansas Housing Association, had been lobbying the Kelly administration to reject the bill. But the bill had sup-\$80,000, thus giving port in the Republican-conthe buyer a tax break and trolled Legislature, which giving the developer cash had made a goal of cutting state spending. Krsnich said Kelly has shown a strong against the bill, but Rep. program.

he thinks lawmakers didn't understand the impacts of the bill well enough.

"Affordable housing might be the No. 1 issue statewide," Krsnich said. "I think most counties and cities would say that it is, but this was one of a hundred some bills that they had to become an expert on in a short period of time. It is unfortunate it works that way."

Krsnich, though, said doesn't understand understanding of the need for workplace housing and a desire to end homelessness.

"I don't understand the play here," Krsnich said. "Where are these people going to live?"

In Friday's press release, Kelly noted the bill had bipartisan support in the Legislature. In the House, 12 Democrats voted to limit the tax credit, while in the Senate, five Democrats supported the bill. Douglas County's delegation of

Marci Francisco both voted to limit the tax credits. Francisco briefly explained her vote in a newsletter message to constituents.

Barbara Ballard and Sen.

'This was a much valued but unaffordable state tax credit," Francisco said.

Krsnich said the Kansas Housing Association will lobby for a reversal of the bill in the next legislative session. As approved, the bill will entirely end the tax credit program after 2028. why Kelly, a Democrat, Democratic lawmakers split unless the Legislature takes signed the bill. Krsnich said on the measure. Most voted specific action to extend the



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