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At 2022 annual meeting, co-op leaders pledge to fight to protect reliability, affordability

WINCHESTER, Ky.— During Tuesday’s 2022 annual meeting of East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC), leaders highlighted ongoing efforts to ensure electric service remains reliable and affordable now and in the future for Kentucky’s homes and businesses.

“In the current political climate, there is a policy trend toward using less-reliable energy sources while demand for electricity grows,” said Chairman Alan Ahrman during his remarks. “EKPC will continue to advocate for sustainable but reliable transitions in our energy portfolio and doing so at a pace determined by the availability of technology that is affordable and reliable for the people we serve.”

Ahrman, who represents Owen Electric Cooperative on EKPC’s board, was re-elected to a second term as chairman during Tuesday’s annual meeting.

President and CEO Anthony “Tony” Campbell noted that the February 2021 energy crisis in Texas, which caused an estimated 250 deaths, spotlights the essential nature of reliable electric service during extreme temperatures.

“The Texas crisis demonstrated the critical importance electricity plays in the lives of the people we serve,” Campbell said. “We must recognize the value of generating resources that are flexible and available around the clock, because lives depend on it. That is why I have advocated for decarbonizing at a pace that protects reliability and affordability for our members.”

With that goal in mind, Campbell said, the cooperative is making prudent investments in reliability.

A 4.4 percent base rate increase finalized in October allows EKPC to continue investing in maintenance and infrastructure, Campbell said, particularly as inflation adds cost pressure. EKPC is replacing aging transmission facilities to safeguard reliable service, he said.

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In addition, EKPC continued investing in its power plants over the past year, he said, conducting preventive maintenance on generating units, adding a backup fuel source at Bluegrass Station in LaGrange, and continuing a multi-year project at its flagship Spurlock Station to ensure that plant remains compliant with more-stringent environmental rules.

Campbell reviewed progress on the cooperative's sustainability plan and noted the plan features reasonable goals for integrating renewables and reducing carbon dioxide emissions at a pace that protects reliability and affordability.

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East Kentucky Power Cooperative is a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative providing wholesale electricity to 16 owner-member distribution cooperatives that serve 1.1 million Kentucky residents at 560,000 homes, businesses and industries across 87 counties. EKPC provides power through coal-fueled plants located in Mason and Pulaski counties; natural gas-fueled peaking units in Clark and Oldham counties; renewable energy plants in Barren, Boone, Clark, Laurel, Greenup, Hardin and Pendleton counties; and nearly 3,000 miles of transmission lines. Together, EKPC and its 16 owner-member cooperatives are known as Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. Visit EKPC at www.ekpc.coop.

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