

KYMEA POWER POST

A Quarterly Publication by KYMEA.



A Decade of Partnership: KYMEA Gathers to Celebrate 10 Years of Service to Kentucky Communities

BY: MICHELLE HIXON

KYMEA members, community leaders, partners, speakers, and guests gathered May 20–22 for the 2026 Annual Members Conference, a milestone event centered on the theme “A Decade of Partnership.” This year’s conference was more than an annual meeting of members and industry partners. It was a celebration of KYMEA’s first 10 years of service to Kentucky communities and a reflection on the vision, leadership, and collaboration that helped municipal utilities across the Commonwealth build something stronger together.

From the opening welcome to the final afternoon session, the conference program told the story of KYMEA’s journey through three important phases: how the Agency began, what member communities have built together, and where the partnership is headed next. That narrative reflected the heart of KYMEA’s mission and the shared belief that municipal utilities are stronger when they work together.

President and CEO Doug Buresh opened the conference by

welcoming members, mayors, partners, speakers, sponsors, and guests. His remarks recognized the commitment of the member communities that believed in the joint-action model from the beginning and helped establish a new path for public power in Kentucky. Over the past decade, that shared commitment has helped KYMEA deliver competitive wholesale power, provide stability in a volatile energy market, and invest in long-term infrastructure that supports reliability and local growth.

The opening session also provided an opportunity to look back on key milestones from KYMEA’s first decade, which highlighted KYMEA’s progress and continued focus on reliability, affordability, and future readiness. As KYMEA marks its 10-year milestone, the decisions made by its founding member communities continue to deliver meaningful value.

Doug also highlighted that the Agency’s first decade was built on careful planning, trust among members, and a willingness to make bold decisions in support of local control and long-term stability.

(continued on pg. 4)

P. 2 The Founding Vision

P. 4 A Decade of Partnership

P. 6 Community Impact

P. 7 Energy Center I Update



CEO Letter: The Founding Vision

BY: DOUG BURESH, KYMEA CEO & PRESIDENT



Greetings,

Over the past two issues of the Power Post, we've been telling the story of KYMEA's first decade—how a shared vision brought our member communities together and how that vision became a functioning joint public agency.

This issue brings that story full circle.

At our Annual Members Conference, we had the opportunity to reflect not just on what KYMEA has become, but on the people and decisions that made it possible. Under the theme "A Decade of Partnership," we celebrated the journey from idea to institution—and recognized those who were there at the very beginning.

We were proud to recognize our founding directors—Josh Callihan, Ron Herd, and Mayor Philip King—along with key advisors John Painter, Fred Haddad, Brown Thornton, Tom Trauger, and Charles Musson. Their leadership, along with many others, helped shape the Agency's early direction.

We also acknowledge the original members of the Plant Boards, Utility Commissions, and City Councils. Their decision to leave behind a long-standing power supply arrangement and create something new was not easy—but it was grounded in what they believed was best for their communities.

Those early conversations were not simple. Leaders faced rising complexity, cost pressures, and important questions about long-term control of their power supply. Together, they explored options, weighed risks, and ultimately chose a different path—one rooted in collaboration and shared responsibility.

Looking back, what stands out most is the level of commitment. Long before KYMEA had staff or operations, our

members were making real, binding decisions—establishing governance, negotiating contracts, and building the legal framework needed to act collectively.

By 2018, that work allowed KYMEA to transition from concept to operation. And in 2019, the Agency began delivering power. Everything since—portfolio diversification, infrastructure investment, financial stability, and projects like Energy Center I—traces back to those early decisions.

But if there is one takeaway from the conference, it is this:

KYMEA has never been about a single moment. It has always been about partnership.

The founders spoke about long meetings, detailed analysis, and stepping into a new and unfamiliar world. They spoke about uncertainty—but more importantly, about trust. Trust in each other. Trust in the process. And trust that working together would lead to better outcomes.

That same spirit defines KYMEA today.

As we enter our second decade, the energy landscape is more complex than ever. Market volatility, changing resources, and new infrastructure demands will continue to shape the path forward. But the principles that guided KYMEA's formation—collaboration, local control, and long-term thinking—remain just as relevant today.

Energy Center I and other investments reflect that same forward-looking mindset. These are not just decisions for today—they are commitments to reliability, stability, and value for years to come.

As we reflect on the past decade, we do so with deep appreciation—for the leaders who took the leap, the advisors who helped guide the process, and the member communities who have stayed committed every step of the way.

Most importantly, KYMEA's strength has always come from its members.

That message was captured perfectly during the closing session of the conference, where local leaders emphasized how collaboration among cities strengthens every community. Put simply—this is KYMEA's "secret sauce."

The partnership that began ten years ago is delivering real value today. And as we look ahead, it will remain the foundation for everything we do—supporting reliable, affordable power and helping our communities grow and thrive.

Thank you to our members and partners who have been part of this journey.

Important Dates

June

16th BROC Mtg (Virtual Only)

July

23rd ECI Committee Mtg

23rd Combined AR & Board Mtg

August

27th ECI Committee Mtg

27th Combined AR & Board Mtg





KYMEA
KENTUCKY MUNICIPAL ENERGY AGENCY

ANNUAL MEMBERS CONFERENCE
05.21.2026

EVENT SPONSORS:

Rubin & Hays

BAIRD

SPIEGEL & McDIARMID LLP

CHRISTMAN
Industrial and Power Group

Stanley Consultants

nFront Consulting

HALLADOR ENERGY COMPANY

LightChange TECHNOLOGIES

Big Rivers ELECTRIC CORPORATION

BofA SECURITIES

patterson & dewar ENGINEERS

Independence Bank

FORVIS

ACES excellence in energy

OLD NATIONAL BANK

WÄRTSILÄ



A Decade of Partnership: KYMEA Gathers to Celebrate 10 Years of Service to Kentucky Communities (Cont.)

Following the welcome, Scott Akin, Executive Director of Natural Gas Trading at ACES, presented “State of the Market.” His session offered timely insight into the broader energy landscape and the forces shaping public power today. Attendees heard about market volatility, commodity pricing, reliability concerns, demand growth, natural gas market considerations, and regulatory changes affecting the industry. The presentation helped frame the current environment municipal utilities are navigating as they plan for future power supply needs and work to manage cost and reliability for customers.

The energy industry has changed significantly over the past decade, and the challenges facing utilities today are increasingly complex. Changing generation resources, transmission development, policy pressures, fuel markets, and growing demand for reliable power all influence how utilities plan for the future. For KYMEA members, sessions like this provide an important perspective as communities continue making decisions that will affect customers for years to come.

One of the most meaningful moments of the conference was the roundtable discussion, “The Founding Vision: How Partnership Became Power.” Moderated by Doug Buresh, the discussion brought together several individuals who played important roles in KYMEA’s creation, including founding directors and consultants. The panel reflected on the early decisions, feasibility studies, governance structure, power supply planning, and leadership required to form a joint-action agency.

Panelists shared what it was like when member communities first began evaluating their options and considering a different path for their energy future. They discussed the rate pressures, uncertainty, and desire for greater local control that influenced those early conversations. They also reflected on the work required to evaluate whether a joint-action model was feasible, including load forecasts, market analysis, financial modeling, power supply planning, and risk evaluation.



Pictured: (left to right) Doug Buresh, John Painter, Fred Haddad, Tom Trauger (speaking), Brown Thornton, Mayor King, Josh Callihan, all founding leaders of KYMEA.

The founding roundtable served as a powerful reminder that KYMEA did not happen by chance. It was built through thoughtful analysis, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and local leadership. Municipal officials, consultants, attorneys, and utility leaders worked together to create a structure that would allow communities to share resources, manage risk, and plan more effectively for the future.

The founding roundtable also emphasized one of the conference’s central messages: the partnership formed 10 years ago continues to provide stability, collaboration, and long-term value for member communities. Those early decisions required confidence, vision, and a willingness to step into a new and unfamiliar world of wholesale power markets. The discussion made clear that the same principles that guided KYMEA’s formation—collaboration, leadership, shared responsibility, and local control—continue to guide the Agency today.

The conference shifted from KYMEA’s foundation to its future with “Energy Center I and the Next Chapter.” Representatives from The Christman Company provided an update on construction progress, major milestones, upcoming phases of work, and the path toward startup and commissioning.



Pictured: Quentin Craig, Sr. Project Manager at The Christman Company (speaking).

The conference then shifted from KYMEA’s foundation to its future with “Energy Center I and the Next Chapter.” Representatives from The Christman Company provided an update on construction progress, major milestones, upcoming phases of work, and the path toward startup and commissioning. Energy Center I represents one of the most significant infrastructure investments in KYMEA’s history and is an important part of the Agency’s long-term reliability strategy.

The session highlighted how coordination across the project team is helping move this major generation resource forward. Presenters discussed the importance of planning, communication, construction sequencing, and collaboration among KYMEA, contractors, and local stakeholders. As the project advances, Energy Center I reflects KYMEA’s continued focus on building resources that support reliability and provide long-term value for members.



Energy Center I also represents the next chapter of the same story that began with KYMEA's formation. The Agency was created to help municipal utilities work together to manage power supply, increase stability, and strengthen their ability to serve customers. A decade later, the development of Energy Center I demonstrates how KYMEA continues to apply that long-term thinking to meet the evolving needs of its members.

Following lunch, attendees heard from Mark Beauchamp, President of Utility Financial Solutions, during "Building the Next Decade: Rate Making That Strengthens Your Utility." His presentation focused on the importance of thoughtful rate design and financial sustainability for municipal utilities. As utilities work to balance affordability, reliability, infrastructure needs, and future investment, strong rate structures remain essential to long-term success.

The session explored key rate design trends, cost recovery strategies, financial ratios, peer benchmarking, and the role of fixed, demand, and energy charges. For municipal utilities, rates must do more than recover costs. They must support ongoing operations, maintain infrastructure, prepare for future needs and provide customers with reliable power at a fair and reasonable cost. The discussion reinforced that financial planning is a critical part of utility strength and community stability.



Pictured: Josh Callihan, KYMEA Board of Directors Chairman (front). Mark Beauchamp, President of Utility Financial Services (back)

The final session of the day, "Powering Prosperity: Partnership in Economic Development," connected KYMEA's power supply mission to the broader growth and success of member communities. The session featured Brad Long, Deputy City Administrator for the City of Madisonville; Kevin Cotton, Mayor of Madisonville; and Bruce Fraley, Mayor of Berea. Together, they discussed how reliable power, local leadership, and collaboration among cities can help support economic development.

Reliable and affordable power is often a key factor when businesses are evaluating where to locate, expand, or invest. Municipal utilities play an important role in helping communities prepare for those opportunities by supporting infrastructure readiness, responding quickly to local needs, and working closely with city leadership. The session highlighted the importance of partnerships between utilities, local governments, regional organizations, and community leaders and the incredible impact they can have on a community.

The discussion also emphasized the value of city-to-city collaboration and a proactive approach to economic development. Rather than working in isolation, KYMEA communities have opportunities to learn from one another, share strategies, and strengthen the visibility of Kentucky municipalities. The same spirit of partnership that helped form KYMEA also supports broader collaboration among member cities as they pursue economic development, community investment, and long-term prosperity.



Pictured: Brad Long (left), Mayor Cotton (middle), Mayor Fraley (right).

In addition to the educational sessions, the conference provided members and partners time to reconnect, exchange ideas, and celebrate KYMEA's anniversary together. Networking events, informal conversations, and shared experiences throughout the conference reinforced the relationships that make the public power community strong. These moments of fellowship are an important part of the Annual Members Conference because they help build the trust and connection that support collaboration long after the event ends.

The 2026 conference also recognized the important role of KYMEA's sponsors and partners. Their support helped make the event possible and contributed to a meaningful experience for attendees. KYMEA is grateful for the continued involvement of organizations that support public power and understand the importance of strong municipal utilities in Kentucky communities.

As KYMEA marks 10 years since its founding, the conference offered a clear reminder of what has made the Agency successful: committed members, thoughtful leadership, strong partnerships, and a shared focus on the future. The first decade of KYMEA has been defined by collaboration and progress. The next decade will build on that foundation as the Agency continues working to support reliability, financial stability, infrastructure investment, and community growth. KYMEA extends sincere appreciation to all members, speakers, sponsors, partners, and guests who helped make the 2026 Annual Members Conference a success. Most importantly, KYMEA thanks its member communities for their continued trust, participation, and commitment to public power.

The partnership that began 10 years ago is delivering real value today. As KYMEA looks ahead, that same partnership will remain the foundation for the next decade of service, reliability, and progress for Kentucky communities.



Community Impact: ECI Progress in Madisonville

BY: CARLY LITTLETON

On March 25, 2026, Energy Center I (ECI) received its long-awaited engines, an achievement marking off a major milestone for the plant, the Agency, and Kentucky communities. While the delivery from the railsite to the ECI site took several hours using a heavy-haul Goldhofer, getting these engines to Madisonville took years of planning and coordination. It was a true team effort between the Agency, its partners, and organizations across the globe, all working toward the same goal—delivering reliable, sustainable, and cost-effective energy services to communities throughout the Commonwealth.

Manufactured by Wärtsilä, a Finland-based energy company specializing in manufacturing and power plant services, these engines traveled thousands of miles by land and sea before reaching Madisonville. This arrival represented more than another milestone for Energy Center I; rather, it reflects the Agency's growth over the past decade, through strong partnerships and a shared vision of commitment of delivering sustainable, reliable, and cost-effect energy options to Kentucky communities.

At the site, KYMEA staff, members, and partners worked together with contractors, public safety officials, and community leaders to ensure the delivery was completed safely and efficiently. Josh Callihan, Chairman of the KYMEA Board of Directors, watched as the engines arrived and took in the significance of the moment. When asked how he would



best describe it, his answer was simple: "a dream".

Along the route, locals gathered on front porches, driveways, and lawns, watching ECI's engines as they passed through town. For many, it was not only a chance to witness ECI's progress, but a milestone moment for the home of Madisonville. Energy Center I represents more than a project milestone—it represents investment in reliable energy, strong partnerships, and the future of Kentucky's public power communities.

Energy Center I: Committee Chairman Message

“ENERGY CENTER I MARKS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN BUILDING A FUTURE OF POWER STABILITY FOR KYMEA. THIS ACHIEVEMENT REFLECTS WHAT IS POSSIBLE WHEN KENTUCKY COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, & SUSTAINABLE ENERGY OPTIONS.”



AARON SPARKMAN
ELECTRIC SUPERINTENDENT
CITY OF PARIS COMBINED UTILITIES
KYMEA ECI COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN



ENERGY CENTER I UPDATE

Engine Installation and Mechanical Progress

May marked a major milestone for ECI as engine installation began on schedule, with all units set in the engine hall by mid-month. Interior mechanical, electrical, and structural work still advancing, while exterior enclosure, roofing, utility, and architectural work continued. Radiator erection was completed, shifting focus to exterior piping and support structures. Off-site equipment fabrication and testing remained on track, and pipeline construction advanced through completed bid negotiations and ongoing grading. The switching station transfer to LGE/KU was finalized, enabling civil and substation work to begin, while network upgrade scheduling improvements reduced long-term project risk. With construction progressing as planned, focus is increasingly shifting toward commissioning, staffing, and operational readiness for plant startup.



Engine Hall Advancements and Operational Readiness

Progress continued at the Energy Center I site in April as crews advanced equipment installation prep and key plant systems. Work in the engine hall moved forward alongside exterior building and site infrastructure improvements, including utilities and substation grading. Off-site fabrication and testing stayed on schedule, while a recent system study reduced network-related risks and improved schedule confidence. As foundational work nears completion, focus is shifting toward commissioning and operational readiness.





Kentucky Municipal Energy Agency
 1700 Eastpoint Pkwy. Ste. 220
 Louisville, KY 40223

DISCOVER THE POWER OF ENERGY OPTIONS



#PUBLICPOWERFORKENTUCKY



If you have ideas for the next Power Post, please email Michelle Hixon at mhixon@kymea.org.



www.kymea.org



LinkedIn



contact@kymea.org