

The power that keeps Western Kentucky running

At 3 a.m., long before most Western Kentuckians begin their day, the paper mills are alive with motion. Their massive drums spin, conveyors move and production lines rumble on through the night. Deep underground, miners rely on electrically powered ventilation systems to keep air moving through the coal seams. Across the countryside, powerful fans continue turning inside grain bins, protecting harvests gathered from Western Kentucky fields. Hospital staff continue caring for patients under bright lights that never go dark.

“People don’t always think about electricity until they flip the switch and the lights don’t come on,” says Richard Basham, Kenergy industrial director. “However, it’s something businesses depend on every minute of every day. Reliable power is what allows them to operate, compete and keep people employed.”

The region’s economy was built on industries that depend on reliable electricity around the clock. Even a brief interruption can affect production schedules, supply chains and essential community services.

While most people are familiar with roadside power lines, a much larger network operates in plain sight—as an



afterthought to most—to keep electricity flowing where and when it’s needed. That network—and the planning, coordination and investment required to maintain it—is key to keeping our communities a safe and competitive place to live, work and do business.

Big Rivers Electric Corporation's role

While Kenergy is widely recognized as the consumer-facing utility providing electricity where it is needed, it’s Big Rivers that is responsible for operating the lesser-known high-voltage transmission system. Providing wholesale electric power to 22 counties in Western Kentucky, Big Rivers helps provide the

foundation for that reliability.

As the wholesale power supplier for Kenergy, Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative and Meade County RECC, Big Rivers generates and delivers electricity to member-owner cooperatives serving communities, farms, businesses and industries throughout the region.

But reliability involves more than generating electricity. Power must be available where it’s needed and delivered the instant it’s needed. Any disruption in that process can lead to frustrating interruptions and lost opportunity.

Just as a car can’t take you very far without roads and highways, electricity can’t reach homes and businesses without transmission lines. Power plants generate

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Employee Spotlight



Materials Management Specialist Brent Millay—30 Years



Service Technician Wally Hancock—30 Years

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electricity, but the transmission system is what moves it across the region to the people who depend on it.

As weather events challenge the system and demand grows, maintaining reliability requires ongoing investment in transmission infrastructure. Keeping the lights on isn't just about meeting today's needs—it's also about planning for tomorrow's.

That is why Big Rivers actively participates in regional transmission planning efforts that help keep the region connected to the broader electric grid.

Planning for tomorrow's needs

"Our facility plans years into the future," says Nicholas Rozanski, PM18 general manager at Pratt Industries, a paper mill in Henderson. "The electric grid has to do the same. The infrastructure decisions being made today will help determine whether businesses like Pratt Industries can continue operating and investing here tomorrow."

That's where the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, or MISO, comes in. If transmission lines are the highway of the electric grid, MISO is responsible for safely managing traffic on those lanes. MISO helps coordinate the flow of electricity across a 15-state region, and studies where future improvements may be needed to maintain reliable service.

Big Rivers works alongside MISO and other utilities to share local knowledge and help identify opportunities to strengthen the grid.

The goal is simple: ensure the electric system is ready to serve all whose livelihoods depend on it, for years to come.

Through this multi-year planning process, Big Rivers suggested an additional transmission line connecting the Reid Extra-High Voltage Substation near the Webster/Henderson County line in Kentucky to a substation in Warrick County, Indiana. MISO evaluated this suggestion through a rigorous

process and ultimately approved this plan for a new power line.

MISO named the proposed project "RIKY," short for "Reid to Indiana/Kentucky Border." Studies showed the project would solve a critical regional reliability need, enhance resiliency during extreme weather events and relieve bottlenecks and system congestion.

Throughout the process, Big Rivers has worked to ensure the interests of Western Kentucky consumers are represented as regional transmission plans are developed and evaluated.

Keep Western Kentucky running

Big Rivers has incorporated the proposed RIKY Transmission Project into its long-term planning as an investment in the reliable electric infrastructure Western Kentucky will depend on for decades to come.

"Western Kentucky's economy depends on reliable electricity," says Don Gulley, president and CEO of Big Rivers. "The industries that create jobs here, the hospitals that care for our families and the communities we serve all depend on a strong transmission system. RIKY is an important investment that will help ensure our region remains well positioned to meet ongoing electric needs. At the same time, it creates value for our members by generating returns and helping offset the growing costs of the regional transmission system."

Just as manufacturers, mines, farms, hospitals and businesses plan for the future, so too must the electric system that supports them. The work of maintaining and strengthening the electric grid happens far from the factory floor, the hospital ward or the family farm. But its impact can be seen every day—in the jobs it supports, the communities it powers and the opportunities it creates—making it, in many ways, the power that keeps Western Kentucky running.

Kenergy students make connections across Kentucky and beyond

Three local delegates represent co-op on 2026 Washington Youth Tour

Kenergy students Heath Ford, Maeson Martin and Rex Whitsell returned from Washington, D.C., with new friendships, stronger confidence and a deeper appreciation for American history and civic engagement.

Ford, a Henderson County High School student; Martin, a Crittenden County High School student; and Whitsell, a Webster County High School student, were sponsored by Kenergy on the 2026 Washington Youth Tour, a weeklong experience coordinated by Kentucky Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Ford says meeting students from across the state, and nation, exceeded his expectations.

"I have made countless friends from across the state and country that I hope to maintain," Ford says. "Regardless of where I go, there will be someone who I share this experience with."

Whitsell says the week offered both friendship and a firsthand look at government.

"My favorite part about the Washington Youth Tour was, for one, making lifelong friends," Whitsell says, "but two, being able to go to Capitol Hill and speak with Sen. Rand Paul."

In a room set aside for the Kentucky delegation in the Capitol Visitor Center, Sen. Paul and congressional staff members answered questions about artificial intelligence, term limits and a major issue for electric cooperatives, reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, including adequate response for electric co-ops.

The Kenergy students joined Kentucky delegates for visits to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and George Washington's Mount Vernon before continuing to Washington, D.C., where they toured the U.S. Capitol, museums and memorials.

For Martin, the Holocaust Museum was the most meaningful stop.

"You can talk about it over and over again in history classes all throughout years of school," Martin says, "but looking at it through pictures and video, being able to actually walk through one of the cattle cars, it hits you different."

The week also included a walking tour of the memorials on the National Mall, stops at the Smithsonian museums, the White House Visitor Center, the World War I Memorial and the National Air and Space Museum. At Arlington National Cemetery, the students watched the Changing of the Guard and members of the Kentucky delegation laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"It is a privilege to spend a week in Washington, D.C., with



From left, Chaperone Kristine Carrier, Washington Youth Tour delegates Maeson Martin, Rex Whitsell and Heath Ford and chaperone Jonathan Carrier at the Jefferson Memorial. Photo: Tim Webb

some of Kentucky's brightest young leaders," says Mallory Wafzig, the statewide association's manager of cooperative outreach. "As they walk in the footsteps of our nation's founders and experience our democracy firsthand, they are inspired to lead, serve and make a difference in their own communities."

Wafzig thanked the chaperones who helped lead and support the students throughout the week, notably Kenergy's Kristine and Jonathan Carrier.



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6402 Old Corydon Road

Owensboro: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
3111 Fairview Drive

Hanson: 9 a.m. – Noon, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
2620 Brown Badgett Loop

Hawesville: 9 a.m. – Noon, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
315 Hawes Blvd

Marion: Tuesday and Friday, 9 a.m. – Noon,
1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., 3000 Mott City Road

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FRIDAY, OCT. 23 | 11 A.M.-2 P.M.

Visit www.KenergyCorp.com for location details.

- BBQ Lunch
- Giveaways (online registration only)
- Bucket
- LED lightbulb

**Proof of membership required*



All Kenergy offices will
be closed Sept. 4 and 7,
in observance of the
Labor Day holiday.

We hope you enjoy a safe holiday weekend!

