

State marks 25 years of Gear Up’s impact

BY THE JE STAFF

The Commonwealth of Kentucky marked 25 years of educational progress through the GEAR UP program on May 1 with the official recognition of #GEARUPworks Day, as proclaimed by Gov. Andy Beshear.

The statewide celebration highlighted GEAR UP's long-standing efforts to increase college and career readiness among Kentucky students, especially those from low-income backgrounds. According to a news release from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, more than 66,000 students across 91 school districts have benefited from GEAR UP Kentucky since 2000.

“This is about more than just one moment—it’s about every moment that helps build our future Kentucky workforce,” said Dr. Aaron Thompson, president of CPE,

in the release. “We’re proud to celebrate a program that works—and has worked for more than two decades—to give Kentucky students the tools to succeed.”

GEAR UP, or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, partners with middle and high schools, colleges, families and communities to provide career exploration, advising, college tours, FAFSA workshops and teacher training. Eligibility is limited to schools where the majority of students come from low-income households.

The release notes that GEAR UP Kentucky student cohorts have consistently outperformed their economically disadvantaged peers in Kentucky with higher ACT scores, high school GPAs and college GPAs. Since 2012, GEAR UP Kentucky schools have met or exceeded the

statewide high school graduation rate in every graduating class.

College application and financial aid participation has also increased. FAFSA completion rates among GUK graduating cohorts have exceeded state and national averages annually since 2019, and the number of high school seniors applying to college rose by 44 percentage points since 2020.

Additionally, every GUK graduating class since 2011 has exceeded the college-going rate of all low-income students in Kentucky by at least seven percentage points, and college persistence rates for GUK students attending public colleges or universities in Kentucky have also been higher since 2020.

The program’s success is further reflected in the more than \$80 million in local matching funds and over 230

community partnerships it has received since 2000.

“GEAR UP helped us understand what college would really take—financially, academically, emotionally,” said Kim Proffitt, a GEAR UP parent from Frankfort High School. “We’re not alone in this anymore. We have support, and that means everything.”

“As a principal, I see the impact daily,” said Thad Elmore, principal of Frankfort High School. “GEAR UP brings resources, relationships, and real results to our school. This program isn’t just working—it’s transforming futures.”

GEAR UP programs in Kentucky are currently serving more than 55,000 students through partnerships with the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative and Partners for Rural Impact. More information is available at gearupky.org/gearupworks.

WCHS

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of the state college campuses learning and exploring different areas of interest. They will also qualify for scholarships from Kentucky’s universities and colleges by attending the program.

THUNDER

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The show was originally a fundraiser for the football team, but after the severe flooding experienced by many in the southwestern and north-eastern sections of Webster County, the team elected to raise money for local flood victims.

The organizers stated they will contribute all proceeds from the show to a local non-profit to distribute.

EMR

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will also receive a certificate of completion at the end of the course.

“This course provides essential skills not only for aspiring EMTs but also for those working in public safety, schools, industry, and other environments where rapid medical response can make a critical difference,” said Tapp.

There are 20 seats available, and MCC encourages early registration. Participants are welcome to bring food for scheduled breaks during class sessions. People can register by calling (270) 824-8658 or going online to <https://tinyurl.com/yhzrt7xe>.

AP: ‘No definitive evidence’ to change credit for Vietnam photo

BY DAVID BAUDER
AP MEDIA WRITER

Months after the release of a film that questions who took an iconic Vietnam War image of a naked girl running from a napalm attack, The Associated Press said Tuesday it had found “no definitive evidence” to warrant changing a nearly 53-year-old photo credit.

The AP released a 96-page report — its second examination in less than four months — about who actually took the Pulitzer Prize-winning photo credited to Nick Ut that became one of the defining images of the 20th century. A documentary shown at Sundance in January, “The Stringer,” asserts that it was actually shot by another man, Nguyen Thanh Nghe, but that credit was given to Ut, an AP staff photographer.

The AP concluded that it was “possible” Ut took the photo, but it was unable to be proven conclusively due to the passage of time, absence of key evidence, limitations of technology and the deaths of several key people involved.

At the same time, AP found no proof that Nguyen took the photo, the report said.

“We left nothing uncovered that we’re aware of and we’ve done it with a great deal of respect to everybody involved,” said Derl McCrudden, an AP vice president who heads global news production. “It makes no difference to us if we changed the credit, but it has to be based on facts and evidence. And there is no definitive evidence proving that Nick Ut did not take this picture.”

The AP’s latest study involved further

interviews, examination of cameras, building a 3D model of the scene and studying photo negatives that survive from June 8, 1972, the date of the photo.

The report revealed inconsistencies on both sides. The prize-winning photo was apparently taken on a Pentax camera, not a Leica as Ut had long claimed. Nguyen told AP he was not working for NBC that day, as was earlier asserted. Of 10 people on the scene that day that the AP reached, Nguyen is the only one who believes that Ut didn’t take the picture, the report said.

The report said that believing Nguyen’s story would require several leaps of faith, including believing that the only time he ever sold a photo to a Western news agency it turned out to be one of the most famous images of the century.

BOND

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Henry said the funds would allow the county to fix problems at several locations before they become an issue.

“This would be for upgrades to existing facilities that are related to (infrastructure) efficiency,” he noted.

That includes significant renovations at county properties, starting with the replacement of lighting in every building.

“That’s what I see as low-hanging fruit,” said

Ryan Baker, Senior Business Development Engineer for Ascendent Facility Partners of Paducah. “Quick payback, utility rebates, and the energy savings are instant.”

Baker has evaluated every aspect of the county’s utility spending and identified what he calls “pain points” during his discussions with local officials. The total possible expense for the replacements and repairs are approximately \$3.5 million, according to Henry.

“There are a couple of things that I’m probably going to pull out of

that,” he said. “I want to tackle those in conversations with Ryan before I do.”

The Webster County Detention Center is likely to see the biggest upgrade of any facility. The work to the two buildings — which includes the main jail and the Restricted Custody Center — will include replacement of several heating and air units mounted on the main jail’s roof. Those cost in the neighborhood of \$20,000 each and all but a couple are more than 20 years old.

Baker said the improvements will also

include solar arrays that are estimated to account for approximately 40% of the electricity the facility uses.

“The solar is a huge win for Webster County,” he explained. “It is a large expense, but the return on it, plus the opportunity for them to get the investment tax credit back...the payback and the long term benefit of locking in those utility rates is very beneficial.”

Henry said he expects solar arrays to be installed at every building the county owns, even compaction centers.

Another large project included in the proposed changes is the sealing of manhole covers. The county contracts with the City of Providence to treat wastewater, but Baker said a large portion of that is simply rain.

Henry said preventing that water from entering the system will not only save the county money but will take a large burden off Providence’s treatment plant.

The payback on the bonds will be paid through the savings accrued each month. Baker has estimated

that to be approximately \$190,000 annually. That translates to a bond payment of nearly \$16,000 each month. All of that will come from the difference between past utility payments and the expense after the improvements.

The bonds will be sold by Compass Municipal Advisors, a Lexington-based firm that is partnering with KACO to offer the program to its members.

Henry said the county has not yet discussed terms specifics with the firm, but does expect that conversation to happen soon.

NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF KENTUCKY UTILITIES COMPANY

RECOVERY BY ENVIRONMENTAL SURCHARGE OF KENTUCKY UTILITIES COMPANY’S 2025 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE PLAN

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that in an April 30, 2025 Application, Kentucky Utilities Company (“KU”) is seeking approval by the Kentucky Public Service Commission (“Commission”) in Case No. 2025-00105, pursuant to Kentucky Revised Statute 278.183, of an amended compliance plan (“2025 Plan”). (Collectively, KU’s Application and supporting testimony and exhibits are KU’s “tariff filing.”) If approved, KU will begin recovering capital costs associated with a new pollution control facility in the 2025 Plan under KU’s existing Electric Rate Schedule ECR (also known as the Environmental Surcharge tariff) through an increase in the environmental surcharge on customers’ bills beginning in December 2025.

KU filed an application with the Commission on February 28, 2025, in Case No. 2025-00045 seeking approval to construct a selective catalytic reduction system at the Ghent generating station to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions, which are a precursor to ozone. In Case No. 2025-00105, KU is seeking an order approving the 2025 Plan to recover the costs of this new pollution control facility through its Environmental Surcharge tariff. This project will help ensure ongoing compliance with regulations issued under the federal Clean Air Act as amended, including the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone.

The estimated total capital cost of this new pollution control facility is \$152.3 million. Additionally, KU is requesting recovery of future incremental capital and operation and maintenance expenses associated with this new pollution control facility. KU is also asking to recover the cost of publishing this customer notice through the Environmental Surcharge over 12 months and to have Environmental Surcharge recovery of future Commission-approved administrative expenses, including customer notice costs.

Beginning in December 2025, the initial bill impact for KU’s Group 1 customers is estimated to be a 0.01% increase with a maximum increase of 0.81% in 2029. Group 1 includes Rate Schedules Residential Service (RS), Residential Time-of-Day Energy Service (RTODE), Residential Time-of-Day Demand Service (RTODD), Volunteer Fire Department Service (VFD), All Electric School (AES), and all Lighting Rates (i.e., LS, RLS, LE, and TE).

RS and VFD customers using 1,085 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.01 up to \$1.09. RTODE customers using 1,043 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.01 up to \$1.14. RTODD customers using 987 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.02 up to \$1.80. AES customers using 25,620 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.30 up to \$24.28. LS and RLS customers could expect a monthly increase of \$0.00 up to \$0.12. LE customers using 2,473 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.02 up to \$1.59. TE customers using 147 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.00 up to \$0.15.

Beginning in December 2025, the initial bill impact for KU’s Group 2 customers is estimated to be a 0.01% increase with a maximum increase of 1.10% in 2029. Group 2 includes Rate Schedules General Service (GS), General Time-of-Day Energy Service (GTODE), General Time-of-Day Demand Service (GTODD), Power Service (PS), Time-of-Day Secondary Service (TODS), Time-of-Day Primary Service (TODP), Retail Transmission Service (RTS), Fluctuating Load Service (FLS), and Outdoor Sports Lighting Service (OSL).

GS customers using 1,657 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.03 up to \$2.41. GTODD customers using 19,652 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.31 up to \$25.26. PS-Secondary customers using 30,434 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.39 up to \$32.35. PS-Primary customers using 35,028 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.45 up to \$36.82. TODS customers using 189,538 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$1.54 up to \$126.82. TODP customers using 1,242,574 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$8.25 up to \$678.42. RTS customers using 7,387,224 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$38.91 up to \$3,199.31. FLS-Transmission customers using 44,229,667 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$237.46 up to \$19,525.53. OSL-Secondary customers using 4,627 kWh/month could expect a monthly increase of \$0.17 up to \$13.87.

The Application described in this Notice is proposed by KU, but the Commission may issue an order resulting in an environmental surcharge for customers other than the environmental surcharge described in this Notice.

Comments regarding KU’s 2025 Plan and Application may be submitted to the Commission through its website or by mail to the Public Service Commission, Post Office Box 615, Frankfort, Kentucky 40602.

Any person may submit a timely written request for intervention to the Public Service Commission, Post Office Box 615, Frankfort, Kentucky 40602, establishing the grounds for the request including the status and interest of the party. If the Commission does not receive a written request for intervention within thirty (30) days of the initial publication of this Notice, the Commission may take final action on the Application.

Any person may examine KU’s tariff filing at the Commission’s offices located at 211 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort, Kentucky, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or through the Commission’s website at <http://psc.ky.gov> or KU’s website (<http://www.lge-ku.com>) after KU makes its tariff filing on April 30, 2025. KU has requested a deviation from the requirement to make the tariff filing available at its office at One Quality Street, Lexington, Kentucky 40507. If the Commission denies that request, KU will make the tariff filing available at its office upon request by any person.