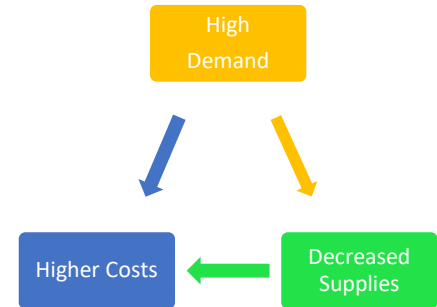


What Kansans should know about the 2021 Weather Event

What caused this event?

While Kansans are accustomed to cold winter weather, the recent event was prolonged with subzero temperatures extending over several weeks. This resulted in:

1. Increased demand by residential and commercial utility customers
2. The increased demand quickly drew down supplies and reserves.
3. Lower supplies resulted in higher natural gas prices to utilities. Sometimes 100-200 times what they normally pay. Electric utilities also purchase wholesale gas to power their electric generation plants.



Will utility customers see a large increase on March bills due to higher wholesale energy costs?

The Kansas Corporation Commission has instructed utilities under its jurisdiction to defer the extraordinary costs associated with this weather event for now. Instead, they will work on a plan to spread any extra costs out over several months or more to soften the impact to customers. All plans will be submitted to the Commission for approval. The utilities under the KCC's jurisdiction are Evergy, Liberty, Southern Pioneer, Kansas Gas Service, Black Hills, Atmos and the City of Eskridge. Customers of these utilities will likely see some increase in cost due to using more energy than usual to heat their homes during the extreme cold. However, high fuel costs related to this weather event will not be on next month's bills.

Kansans that receive service from a city municipal utility or cooperative could be affected differently. They may see higher costs sooner. Governor Laura Kelly, the KCC and members of the Kansas Congressional delegation have asked the Federal Regulatory Commission (FERC) to help provide assistance to the state and protect all consumers from high costs.

What assistance is available to consumers that cannot pay their bill due to higher costs?

All KCC regulated utilities are offering payment plans to help customers spread out costs. We recommend calling your utility provider first to explore those options. For some customers, switching to an Average Payment Plans is helpful so payments are level and consistent month-to-month.

Assistance programs are also available to those who qualify. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is accepting applications through March 31. For details, go to <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx>.

For a complete list of agencies and organizations that provide assistance in your area, visit the KCC website <https://kcc.ks.gov/> and click on the Utility Assistance Programs tab. If you need assistance, contact the KCC's Public Affairs and Consumer Protection Office at 800-662-0027 or 785-271-3140.

