

News

Homes evacuated, holiday disrupted: McLouth area gas leak stalls cars, puts lives in jeopardy

A pipeline operated by Enterprise Products Partners L.P. experienced a leak in an area near the K-16 Highway approximately 1.5 miles east of the city of McLouth in Leavenworth County Nov. 27.

Company staff reported that a differential in pipeline pressures was noticed at 7:10 p.m. and residents in the area called the county 911 offices to report the smell of gas, according to a news release from Keith Jeffers, manager of Jefferson County Emergency Management.

Fire Districts from Jefferson and Leavenworth counties were dispatched to the area, where several vehicles were discovered on Fairmount Road (also known as Levee 8 Road) to have been stranded in the roadway due to driving through a vapor cloud and stalling from a lack of oxygen to the engines.

Jefferson County Fire District 9 from Union Township and Jefferson County Emergency Management immediately evacuated the vehicle occupants and the nearby homes due to the strong odor and indications of a large-scale gas spill.

Due to the presence of the propane gas in the area, several homes were evacuated, and the K-16 Highway was closed to traffic from the east side of the city of McLouth to the intersection of K-16 Highway also known as McLouth Road and Donohoo Road.

Other roads that were closed are Fairmount Road between 259th and 251st streets and Dempsey Road between 259th and 243rd Street. The K-16 Highway, Fairmount and Dempsey roads were closed until the area was determined to be safe for vehicular traffic and building occupancy.

There are several pipeline companies operating in the area and contact was made to each to request assistance,

Jeffers said. After conferring with representatives from each company it was determined that Enterprise is the owner of the 8-inch pipeline that suffered the rupture.

Technicians from Enterprise were already en route to the area to investigate the drop in pipeline pressure and met with the responders on scene to begin the repair and recovery process.

Additional response support was requested from Jefferson County Fire Districts 8 (Oskaloosa Township) and Jefferson County Fire District 10 (Jefferson Township) the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Leavenworth County Emergency Management, the Leavenworth County Sheriff's Department, McLouth and Winchester police departments, the Kansas Department of Transportation, the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Department, and the Tonganoxie Township Fire Department.

The Overland Park and Topeka Hazardous Materials Fire teams were requested to assist with air monitoring and hazardous materials response. More than 60 firefighters, law enforcement, and first responders were on scene to assist with evacuation of the residents in the area.

Energy and FreeState Electric also responded to shut off power to the homes and businesses in the affected area to prevent possible explosions due to gases inside buildings.

The nearby homes and roadways remained closed for an extended period due to the presence of propane gas which is heavier than air and will settle near the ground creating possible explosive conditions in buildings and from sparks from vehicles. The vehicle owners were warned not to try to restart the stalled cars as sparks

from the engines could create fires or explosions.

As of early Friday morning, KDOT had assumed the coordination of the Highway K-16 closure until the gases dissipated, and it was determined to be safe for re-entry.

Several air monitoring sites were put in place along K-16 Highway, Fairmount Road, and Dempsey Road, being monitored by the Overland Park Fire Department Hazardous Materials team and the Enterprise Products Partners L.P. staff which assumed responsibility for air monitoring later in the day, Nov. 28, Jeffers reported.

Per the Enterprise staff, they have started a "flare" at the operational plant on Union Road to the south of McLouth to begin the removal of residual gasses in the line to allow for safe repairs to be conducted. This flare produces a flame of burning gas at least 20 feet high and is a safe method to remove the gas in the line. A second flare will be started as soon as equipment and materials are on site at a location on K-92 and Springdale Road. These flares were expected to burn for at least two days.

Evacuated homeowners are currently being assisted by the American Red Cross with shelters and food.

At this time, it is unknown the cause of the pipeline rupture which will be investigated and repaired with all safety measures to be followed by the emergency responders and the Enterprise Products Partners L.P.

The Jefferson County Emergency management expressed thanks to the McLouth Church of the Nazarene for providing a meeting space for the responders to get in out of the weather and cold to conduct planning activities and the American Red Cross of Kansas for their support to the first responders.

Soup . . .

(Continued from page 1) squeezed out or bought out. Small dairies are closing at a heartbreaking pace. Labor shortages and immigration crackdowns are hitting agriculture hard. There's talk of importing more beef while our own producers struggle. SNAP disruptions are already here.

Anyone paying attention understands the direction things are moving.

This isn't fear. It's foresight. And it's not partisan. It's personal. Food isn't politics – food is survival, dignity, and freedom.

When a community loses the ability to feed itself, it loses more than convenience. It loses sovereignty.

That is why we began serving free community soup every Monday at Lago Vista Grill. Not charity, but solidarity. Not a handout, but a hand extended. The most powerful part wasn't the soup; it was how many neighbors immediately started feeding others, running drives, and checking in on families.

That's who we are.

Now we take the next step.

We have empty rural grocery buildings. Yes, co-ops should be on the table. Local producers selling to local families. Food grown here, feeding here. That is one path.

But the bigger mission is this: We take care of each other again. Not out of charity. Out of strength.

When one neighbor rises, the whole road gets bigger. When one farmer survives, a town survives. When one family eats, we all stand a little taller. Our futures are connected, whether we admit it or not.

We don't have to wait for crisis headlines to prove it.

We can cook for one another.

We can organize meal trains.

We can check in on elders and young families.

We can buy direct from the folks who raise our food.

We can build systems that make helping normal again, not rare.

This is not about pity. It's about pride. It's about remembering who we are.

We have land.

We have skills.

We have farmers, builders, welders, cooks, pastors, teachers, neighbors.

We are not powerless.

We are not small.

We are not waiting for someone else to save us.

If love is our currency and people are our strength, then Jefferson County is already rich. Our wealth isn't sitting in banks – it's sitting in kitchens, in barns, in gardens, in strong backs and willing hearts.

Now is the time to put it to work.

So I am asking anyone who understands the stakes – farmers, families, churches, veterans, students, workers, retirees – to step forward. Not just to talk about community, but to live it. To volunteer. To cook. To support local producers. To build networks that can't be bought or bulldozed.

Rural America didn't survive by accident. We survived because we carried each other.

The night my restaurant burned, this county showed me exactly who we are. We rise together here. We don't let our people fall alone.

Let's bring that same spirit to our tables, our farms, and our future.

Not someday. Now.

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The soups are about more than just giving back to Cadena. They are a chance to share meaningful recipes close to his heart.

The first week's soup was Al-bondigas, a family recipe served around his table for years. Al-bondigas is a traditional Mexican soup made with flavorful meatballs in a tomato-based broth filled with vegetables like potatoes, carrots, and zucchini.

The second week's choice was Caldo de Pollo, a Mexican chicken soup made with a rich broth and loaded with hearty vegetables. Cadena credits his brother, Frank, for stepping up in his absence to bring this recipe to life.

The third week, Choctaw Squash Soup, has been the most heartfelt to Cadena thus far.

According to the Lago Vista Facebook post typed by Cadena, "During the Trail of Tears, the women of the Choctaw tribe were restricted on what they could carry. Refusing to leave

their culture behind, they sewed seeds into the hems of their skirts so they could keep growing what sustained them. Earlier this year, the Standing Chief of the Choctaw Nation shared that piece of history and seed sent out from the original Choctaw squash. My children are of Choctaw heritage. Their uncle grew the squash for us and we shared them with Jefferson County."

Cadena estimates that he has been serving up over 80 quarts of soup or roughly 200 people weekly since the project began. Soup is served in single serving pints or quarts which can make two to three servings.

The soup is served every Monday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. or until the pot runs dry. No questions, no qualifiers. You can dine in the restaurant or grab some to go.

Many silent hands have made giving back possible. Cadena's mother, Sonia Cordova, and brother, Frank, have been a huge asset to the weekly meals along with Lago Vista staff including Korbe Bojack, Summer Jaap, and Amber Flowers. The group donates their time each week to fulfill the ever-growing quantities of soup being sent out the door.

A network of volunteer delivery drivers have also stepped up to help get the soup to those in need. Soup is reaching as far away as Nortonville, Winchester, and Oskaloosa, and the surrounding areas.

"If we keep up at this pace, I'm going to need bigger pots to help with the growing demand for soup," Cadena said.

While donations in any form are welcome, Cadena does have to be careful when it comes to raw meats and would prefer to purchase that himself with monetary donations.

His short-term goal for the project is to keep it running through the winter months, if not longer.

"This isn't a charity, it's a community meal," Cadena said. "Just neighbors feeding neighbors, just like we always used to do."

Lago Vista is located at 102 Main Street, Ozawkie. If you would like to make a donation to the cause, the business can be reached at 785-642-1111.

PUBLIC NOTICE

(Published in The Valley Falls Vindicator December 4, 2025) 1t

Advertisement for Bids City of Perry, Kansas Sanitary Sewer Collection System Improvements

General Notice

City of Perry, KS (Owner) is requesting Bids for the construction of the following Project:

Sanitary Sewer Collection System Improvements

23-1362L

Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at Perry City Hall located at 205 W Bridge Street, Perry, KS, 66073, until Tuesday, January 6th, 2026 at 10:00 am local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project includes the following Work:

This project consists of a system wide rehabilitation of the sanitary sewer collection system consisting of Point Repairs, CIPP/Fold & Form Liner, Isolated Service Tap Repair, and Manhole Rehabilitation.

Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be found at the following designated website: www.drexeltech.com

Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the designated website. Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the designated website as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than the designated website in either electronic or paper format. The designated website will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of registered plan holders, reports, and other information relevant to submitting a Bid for the Project. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered only through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the designated website.

The Issuing Office for the Bidding Documents is:

Drexel Technologies

10840 West 86th Street,

Lenexa, KS 66214, 913-371-4430

Prospective Bidders may examine the Bidding Documents at the following:

1. City of Perry, 205 W Bridge Street, Perry, KS, 66073

2. BG Consultants, Inc., 4806 Vue Du Lac Place, Manhattan, KS (785) 537-7448

3. BG Consultants, Inc., 1405 Wakarusa Drive, Lawrence, KS (785) 749-4474

4. BG Consultants, Inc., 2508 W 15th Ave, Emporia, KS (620) 343-7842

5. BG Consultants, Inc. www.bgcons.com

6. Drexel Technologies www.drexeltech.com

Bidding Documents may be viewed and ordered online by registering with the Issuing Office at www.drexeltech.com. Following registration, complete sets of Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the Issuing Office's website as "zipped" portable document format (PDF) files. The cost of printed Bidding Documents from the Issuing Office will depend on the number and size of the Drawings and Project Manual, applicable taxes, and shipping method selected by the prospective Bidder. Cost of Bidding Documents and

taxes, and shipping method selected by the prospective Bidder. Cost of Bidding Documents and shipping is nonrefundable. Contract Documents will be shipped only if the requesting party assumes responsibility for all related shipping charges. Non-refundable corporate, certified, or cashier's checks shall be made payable to Drexel Technologies. The date that the Bidding Documents are transmitted by the Issuing Office will be considered the Bidder's date of receipt of the Bidding Documents. Partial sets of the Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing Office. Additional assistance is available at distribution@drexeltech.com.

A pre-bid conference for the Project will be held on Monday, December 22nd, 2025 at 2:00 pm at Perry City Hall, 205 W Bridge Street Perry, KS, 66073. Attendance at the pre-bid conference is encouraged but not required.

Instructions to Bidders.

For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.

American Iron and Steel

Section 746 of Title VII of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (Division A - Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017) and subsequent statutes mandating domestic preference applies an American Iron and Steel requirement to this project. All iron and steel products used in this project must be produced in the United States. The term "iron and steel products" means the following products made primarily of iron or steel: lined or unlined pipes and fittings, manhole covers and other municipal castings, hydrants, tanks, flanges, pipe clamps and restraints, valves, structural steel, reinforced precast concrete, and Construction Materials.

The following waivers apply to this Contract:

De Minimis,

Minor Components,

Pig iron and direct reduced iron

Bidders on this work will be required to comply with the presidents Executive Order No. 11246 (Equal Employment Opportunity) as amended. Requirements for bidders and contractors under this order are explained in the specifications. "Bidders must fully comply with Subpart C of 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 1532, entitled Responsibilities of Participants Regarding Transactions. Contractors, subcontractors, or suppliers that appear on the Excluded Parties List System at www.sam.gov are not eligible for award of any contracts funded by the KDHE State Revolving Fund programs." All contracts and subcontracts exceeding \$100,000, at any tier under a SRF Loan Agreement shall comply with the Anti-Lobbying Act, Section 319 of Public Law 101-121, and file an AntiLobbying Certification form, and the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form, if required, to the next tier above.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any irregularities therein.

Ramon C Gonzalez

Mayor

City of Perry, KS

December 4th, 2025

(Published in The Valley Falls Vindicator December 4, 2025) 1t

Advertisement for Bids City of Perry, Kansas Water System Improvements

General Notice

City of Perry, KS (Owner) is requesting Bids for the construction of the following Project:

Water System Improvements

23-1362L

Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at Perry City Hall located at 205 W Bridge Street, Perry, KS, 66073, until Tuesday, January 6th, 2026 at 10:00 am local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project includes the following Work:

The project consists of replacing a significant portion of the water distribution system including water mains, valves, hydrants, and service meters.

Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be found at the following designated website: www.drexeltech.com

Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the designated website. Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the designated website as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than