

STATE NEWS

The one-mile underground Kansas reactor didn't meet a July 4 goal, but is still on track

BY RACHEL SCHNELLE
Kansas News Service

The Department of Energy set the Independence Day deadline as part of the nuclear reactor pilot program. Deep Fission was one of the advanced nuclear projects. Officials now say they have other goals.

The company building a one-mile underground nuclear reactor in Parsons, Kansas, did not meet a previous July 4 deadline for criticality — or a fully functioning reactor — but the company now says it's focused on testing and commercialization.

The Department of Energy set the Independence Day goal as part of a nuclear reactor pilot program. Deep Fission was one of eleven advanced nuclear projects selected by the Trump administration.

In December, the company said it planned to meet the July 4 goal for criticality, pending regulatory approval. Now, the company's CEO points to different goals.

"Crticality isn't the proof point for us," CEO Liz Muller said in a statement to the Kansas News Service.

Deep Fission officials said they're now focusing on factors including drilling to depth at commercial scale and safely integrating nuclear components underground.

The most recent development is that a prototype reactor canister arrived on the site at Great Plains Industrial Park.

Muller said it is called the "Proof-of-Concept Well Program." It's a full-scale, non-nuclear demonstration where they test the entire workflow. This involves lowering a reactor prototype into the borehole and integration into the surface infrastructure.

"It's meant to validate our engineering assumptions and de-risk the process before we move towards any nuclear demonstration," Muller said in the statement.

To start any nuclear work on the site, the company must complete the proof-of-concept work and obtain DOE authorization.

Nuclear work isn't intended for the site until 2027.

The Company has also completed a data acquisition well. That proves the ability to drill to 6,000 feet.

There's been mixed reaction from some in the Parson's community since Deep Fission's project announcement in December.

John Young is an environmental consultant in the coal mining industry. He's also part of the non-partisan civic engagement advocacy group Leading Kansas. He has some concerns but said he understands the need for the project.

"For climate change — and trying to alleviate the issues that we have with climate change, nuclear energy has to be part of that solution," Young said.

Some local advocates are concerned about how regulations for oil and gas drilling will translate to the nuclear drilling process. Marjorie Reynolds is with the Parsons-based group Prairie Dog Alliance.

"We don't know how the oil and gas industry rules and regulations apply specifically to an experimental nuclear project that includes a borehole. So that's one of our great concerns."

Reynolds said.

Another concern is how the Great Plains Industrial Park plans to protect the nearby community from potential exposure to nuclear materials.

"Where is the protection for the local community that is there for the elementary school that's 1.7 miles away, for the houses that are less than a mile from this project site?" Reynolds asked.

According to a statement from Muller, "transparency and working closely with the Parsons community has always been a top prior-

ity for us."

They recently hired someone to live in Parsons to maintain a consistent local presence.

The Company also launched a Community Advisory Group to provide residents with an ongoing forum for dialogue. Their website has a question box, and residents can voice their concerns.

Reynolds is one of the residents who has been invited to the meetings.

Labette County Commissioner Vince Schibi said he's pleased with the company's transparency since the initial announcement in Decem-

ber 2025. He represents the area where Great Plains Industrial Park is located.

"They're trying to interact better with the public and just let them know they're here to support our town as well as hopefully new energy in the future," Schibi said.

The company has selected Day and Zimmerman as its construction partner for the one-mile underground nuclear reactor. The Pennsylvania-based company will oversee the pre-construction planning and perform above-ground construction.

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ning, Nancy Maureen; Lawrie, Kenneth, a/k/a Lawrie, Kenneth A.; Lawrie, Madelyn L.; Lawrie, William Sr, a/k/a Lawrie, William Jr; Lee, Cherie K.; Lee, Thomas W.; Lepley, Diana M.; Lepley, Rick L, a/k/a Lepley, Rick L, Jr., a/k/a Lepley, Rick; Lewis, Deedra; Linker, Christopher Sr.; Linker, Crystal; Livengood, Alex; Livengood, Katelyn; Loera, Stephanie; Lopez-Ramirez, Francisco Javier, a/k/a Lopez-Ramirez, Francisco J.; Lopez-Ramirez, Trista Leann, a/k/a Lopez-Ramirez, Trista; Lornes, Tracy; Lovelace, William II, a/k/a Lovelace, William, a/k/a Lovelace, Bill, a/k/a Lovelace, William E.; Loveless, Gerald; Loveless, Josie; Luckett, Brian Kenatra; Luckett, Devin; Lyons, Eugene; Lyons, Taylor; Mahar, Donald Leo Jr., a/k/a Mahar, Donald, Jr.; Mangum, Jennie, a/k/a Mangum, Jennie L.; Manley, Kathy Denise; Marshall, James, a/k/a Marshall, James D.; Marshall, Nerleane; Martin, David R.; Martin, John L.; Martin, Lien K.; Martin, Naomi; Martinez, Artie; Martinez, Kathy, a/k/a Martinez, Kathy E.; Martinez, Pablo, a/k/a Martinez, Pablo M.; Masters, Rachel D.; McClenning, Cassie R., a/k/a Cook, Cassie R.; McCoy, Alvina Verna; McCoy, Brenda; McCoy, Keenan; McDaniel, Angela L., a/k/a McDaniel, Angela Lorene; McDaniel, Frank, a/k/a McDaniel, Frank A.; McDaniel, Joe; McGinnis, Calvin; McGuire, Tim L.; McLeod, James Allen; McPherson, Gary L.; McPherson, Lori M., a/k/a McPherson, Lori; Meachum, Thomas E.; Medsker, Brian M.; Mendez, Juan Luis; Romero, Meyer, Daniel; Meyer, Lorissa; Midland Credit Mgmt, Inc.; Miller, Anthony J.; Mitchell, Jay A.; Mitche, Sara; Monroe, Anita M.; Moody, Starladena; Moody, Wesley; Moore, Beverly J., a/k/a Moore, Beverly Jewel; Moore, Deborah L.; Moore, Gerald R.; Morgan, Pamela S.; Morning Star Management, LLC; Morrison, Alene; Morrison, Charles M.; Morrison, Deanna, a/k/a Morrison, Deanna L.; Morrison, Donald; Morrison, Glatha; Morse, Nick L.; Moseley, Lillie; Mosher, Virgil D.; Muller, James D.; Murackawa, Martha Rosa; Murphy, Janice; Nelson, Kimberly; Nesbitt, Lloyd; Newkirk, Daryl; Noland, George; Noland, Mary L., a/k/a Noland, Mary, f/k/a Laforte, Mary L.; Noland, Samuel, a/k/a Noland, Samuel E., a/k/a Noland, Samuel E.; Normal, Carl Rocky; Northern Finance Home Mortgage Corp.; O'Brien, Christine; Oglesby, Rose; Olson, M. 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The Petition will be heard by the Court on August 26, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the District Courtroom, 3rd Floor, City Hall building, 7th & Walnut, Coffeyville, Kansas, or as soon thereafter as the Court may hear the same. Should you fail to plead or appear at such hearing, judgment and decree will be entered upon said Petition.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, KANSAS, PLAINTIFF

HALL, LEVY, DEVORE, BELL, OTT & KRITZ, P.A. 815 Union, P. O. Box 9 Coffeyville, KS 67337 (620) 251-1300 Attorneys for Plaintiff

July 11, 18, 29, 2026

Helpful Tips

Keep your baby sun-safe

Spending time outdoors is a summertime tradition for people of all ages.

Parents of infants may be extra excited to get outdoors this summer. Chances to get out and about don't come around very often for parents of infants, and those chances may be even more rare as social distancing guidelines remain in place. But before parents rush out the door to soak up some summer sun, it's imperative that they take steps to protect their tiny tots from UV rays.

- Avoid exposing infants to the sun. The Skin Cancer Foundation notes that infants' skin is especially sensitive to the sun, so the organization advises parents to shield children six months and younger from the sun rather than using sunscreen. Instead of applying sunscreen to their infants, parents should keep them out of the sun entirely. Seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are especially intense. When taking infants out in their strollers, make sure they are shaded at all times and avoid walking on the sunny side of the street.

- Dress babies for the sun. The SCF advises parents to dress their babies in brimmed hats and lightweight clothing that fully covers their arms and legs. Dressing babies for the sun may seem like common sense, but the SCF notes that researchers at the University of Miami found that only 43 percent of parents consistently cover their babies with hats, and even fewer (40 percent) cover babies with long-sleeved shirts and pants when going out in the sun.

- Consider sunglasses. Sunglasses are another way parents can protect their children from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Sunglasses can be an alternative for parents whose infants keep taking off their hats, as many baby-sized sunglasses are equipped with elastic straps to keep the glasses on. Sunglasses may be vital because the melanin in infants' eyes is still forming, and that development can be adversely affected if infants' eyes are exposed to UV rays.

- Introduce sunscreen at six months. The SCF advises parents to begin applying sunscreen to their infants when their children reach six months of age. Choose a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. The SCF notes that sunscreens that contain zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are good choices because these physical filters do not rely on absorption of chemicals and are therefore less likely to cause a skin reaction. The SCF also advises testing the sunscreen on your baby's wrist before applying it all over the body. This can indicate if the product irritates the child's skin and needs to be replaced, or if it's safe to use.

In the rush to get outside, parents should make sure they don't forget to take every step necessary to protect their infants from UV exposure.

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