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AMERICA'S ENERGY PORTRAIT --- 1978 AND BEYOND

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ABSTRACT

There is a general consensus that fragmented energy policies are a product of unrefined knowledge about our energy supplies and energy management capabilities. There is also a specific endeavor that we mortals must have knowledge available in order to learn how to proceed with this business of living. Knowledge about energy and how we use it is our strongest weakness and our most gullible assumption.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab oil embargo in 1973 coupled with the quadrupling in the price for oil by OPEC members in 1974, have done something more than foster our current inflation demise. The impact of these events has caused an explosion of technical and semi-technical information on energy developments. The dynamics of the energy information explosion are of such proportion that current systems of storage and retrieval are strained and in some cases inadequate. The numbers and events, which contribute to energy knowledge, are changing so fast that books and charts are outmoded even before they are published.

ENERGY TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

We know how to read and we know how to learn and comprehend what we read, but we do not know the best method of tackling this beast known as energy technology information. Our methods of marshaling and cataloguing energy knowledge are a great challenge and the urge to change and adapt is a starting point.

Since energy information is in such a state of change, it is perpetually altering itself for enhanced clarity. One possibility is a perpetual system of energy information and retrieval based on chronological order.

A PERPETUATING ENERGY INFORMATION LIBRARY

Since March 23, 1974, I have made an attempt to build a library system as an experimental effort to seek out the facts about our energy resource problems. To date I have accumulated more than 14,000 energy related articles and they are placed chronologically in 60 200 page volumes. A referencing guide of 34 energy topics pinpoints the volume and page number quickly for a particular article. I have entitled the system "Our Energy Crisis" and it grows at a current rate of 1.5 volumes per month with technical and semi-technical information coming from 52 different source areas. What began as a simple process of self-education has slowly blossomed into a mammoth undertaking. The system will remain contemporary as long as I remain contemporary.

Figure 1. A Perpetuating Energy Information Library

"Our Energy Crisis" -- Reference Categories

Energy - Essays & Documents	Energy Conservation
Energy Resources	Energy & People
Energy Organizations	Transportation
Oil	Industry
Shale & Fuel Oil	Electric Utilities
Gasoline	U. S. Electric Production
OPEC	Hydroelectric
OECD	Cogeneration
Coal	NG Utilities
Coal Gasification	Telephone Utilities
Natural Gas	Water Utilities
LNG & SNG	Home Life
Nuclear Power	Jan. 1977 Energy Bust Effects
Solar, Sea & Wind	Summer, 1977
Search for Solution	Winter, 1978
Weather & Energy	Summer, 1978
Federal Government	Letters
Federal Energy Legislation	Man's Predicaments
Energy Policies	Economics & Energy
EPA, FEA, ERDA, DOE	Metals & Minerals
State Government	Overseas Energy Events
Food & People	United Nations
	Toward War & Social Strife
	Toward Peace & Freedom

SIFTINGS AND PROJECTIONS

Fuels

Demand growth	3%/An.
Supply growth	3%/An. (42 to 50% imported) involved.

Electricity

Demand growth	6%/An.
Reserve Supply growth	5.6%/An.

Utility Rates

Industrial	kWe 5%/An. kWh 7%/An.
Residential	kWh 8%/An.

There are several assumptions concerning these projections of fuel use and electric energy use which contribute to the contingencies

1st Assumption

No foreign embargoes on energy supply imports to U. S. until 1986.

2nd Assumption

Normal weather patterns will have little effect on energy use values.

There are several realizations which come about with these comfortable assumptions:

1st Realization

Expect the unexpected with weather.

2nd Realization

Energy conservation is working--it is buying us the needed time to develop workable energy alternatives.

3rd Realization

Never assume about energy supply contingencies.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

There are many talented and hard working journalists now who have specialized in energy writing and reporting. A voting public is becoming better informed and more than capable of reaching an understanding of our energy supply predicaments.

We need to break our embryonic ties to fossil fuels and pursue the answers we need to have in a "Manhattan" style project of completely developing workable energy resources. If we do not start providing our own technical and social answers for our long term energy ills, who will do the task for us? And at what price?

SELECTED REFERENCES

"11 Contemporary Energy Studies: A review of Electric Utility Industry and Related Topics" -- Electric Perspectives, Vol. 77/6 p. 12ff.

See also: Energy Technology Handbook. Ed. D.M. Considine, 1977. McGraw-Hill, Inc., p. 9-247FF, Electric Power Production and Requirements.

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