

Editor's Note:

A retiring member of the Omaha Public Power Board recently suggested selling the publicly-owned electricity assets to investor-owned utilities to provide tax relief.

Later this year, the Legislature's Natural Resources Committee will be studying the effect of utility deregulation at the national level on the state's public power system.

In the first of a three-part series, "Public Power at the Crossroads", the *Quarterly* will chronicle how Nebraska became the only state in the nation where all electric systems are owned by the public and what the system's future may hold.

The first installment, "Public Power in The Early Years," appears in this issue.

At the Crossroads...**Public Power in the Early Years**

To find the reasons Nebraska is the only state in the nation served solely by publicly-owned electric systems, one needs to venture back in time when electricity was considered a "luxury."

The middle of the Great Depression is generally regarded as the beginning of public power in the state, although parts of a system existed as early as 1895. Sweeping societal,

political and economic trends of the time combined to present a rare opportunity for public power systems to flower.

In 1933, passage of the state *Enabling Act* permitted formation of separate or combined public power districts and public irrigation districts as state political subdivisions. Although the *Act* permitted development of public power, the motivating forces were primarily based on prevailing situations — economic distress and the survival of Nebraska's agricultural economy in the midst of a prolonged drought. Farsighted Nebraskans also yearned to augment unreliable annual rainfall with more reliable water sources.

The creation of a public power state was accomplished in just 13 years — from 1933 to 1946. In 1946, the last investor-owned electric utility in the state was purchased by Omaha Public Power District.

National and State Trends Converge

Conditions fostering development of public power in Nebraska included the federal *Public Utility Holding Company Act* of 1935, the Public Works Administration, widespread municipal ownership of electric utilities, a champion of public power and rural electrification in U.S. Senator George Norris and an abiding interest in the development of irrigation in the state.

The *Holding Company Act* forced the dissolution of private multi-state utility empires. The Public Works Administration had both grants and loans for hydroelectric projects.

The state had a long history of municipally-owned light and power plants. The first municipally-owned system started in Crete in 1886. By 1920, Nebraska led the

nation in the number of municipally-owned light and power plants.

The Development of Public Hydropower

In 1932, the federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation was created to supply credit to public and private organizations that were developing projects that would pay for themselves. Nebraska was allotted \$15 million from the Corporation for such projects.

The promise of financing was enough to bring three long-stalled projects off the shelf. These were Sutherland (Platte Valley Public Power and Irrigation District) and Tri-County (Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District) irrigation and hydroelectric projects and Loup River (Loup River Public Power District) hydroelectric project.

The Loup River project was the only one with the primary objective of generating electricity. Irrigation was the main interest of the promoters of the Sutherland and Tri-County projects. Supporters had an equally important concern — providing jobs and economic activity in Depression-stressed Nebraska.

Forerunners of the Tri-County project date from 1889, including plans for an electric power and irrigation canal. The Tri-County Supplemental Water Association was formed in 1918 by Charles McConaughy and George Kingsley. The Association worked for eighteen years to bring their plan for irrigation to fruition.

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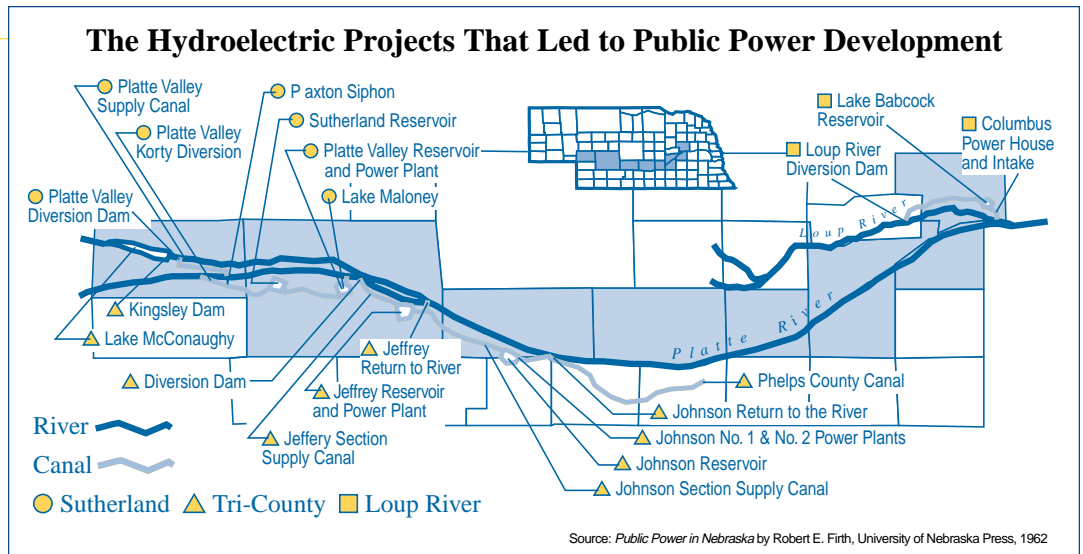
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The forerunner of the Loup River project was the Nebraska Central Irrigation Company formed by H.E. Babcock in 1896. A successor organization formed in 1909 wanted to develop hydroelectric power on the Loup River. This project initially failed, but would be revived by promoters of the Loup River hydroelectric project in 1932.

Bringing the three hydro projects to completion was no easy task. Some Nebraskans in each area contested construction. Backers of the Tri-County project

believed that the Sutherland and Tri-County projects should be linked. Differences between the two groups led to disputes over water rights with each group protesting to the Public Works Administration urging denial of the other project. Even though the dispute was settled, Nebraska Governor Bryan delayed signing water rights for the projects until the Secretary of the Interior notified him that the construction funds would be used elsewhere unless the water rights were approved. With this issue resolved, construction of the Sutherland and Loup River projects proceeded and were completed in 1938.

Tri-County was the largest of the three projects and generated the most opposition. Some opponents strongly contested granting



water rights to the Central Nebraska district. In its decision, Nebraska's Supreme Court ruled that water could not be diverted from one watershed to another, effectively reducing by half the planned irrigation area.

Construction of the power facilities was delayed when private utilities, reacting to the sizeable generating capacity of Lake McConaughy, had a court stop the project in 1936. Construction of power facilities could not proceed until 1938 when the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of government loans and grants to publicly-owned electric utilities. When completed, the three-mile long Kingsley Dam was the second largest earth-filled dam in the world (Kingsley Hydro and the Canaday Steam Plant were constructed after 1949).

Who Would Buy the Power?

Marketing electricity was a major problem facing the completed hydro projects. A related problem which concerned the Public Works Administration was coordination among the projects and the elimination of competition for markets by the three districts. The solution resulted in the formation of Consumers Public Power District and Nebraska Public Power System.

Headquartered in Columbus, Consumers Public Power District was formed in 1939. The *Enabling Act* permitted the District to own and operate facilities anywhere in the state. Consumers had two important functions. One was to market the embarrassing surpluses of power from the hydro projects. The other was to purchase the private utilities in the state. By 1942, Consumers had purchased all the privately-owned utilities in the state except the Nebraska Power Company which served Omaha. Consumers entered into contracts with the Nebraska Public Power System for the operation of the generating plants. It was planned that all generating plants be operated as a unit by the System. Consumers would be a distributor, buying and selling power to retail and wholesale customers. By 1948, the electric power delivered by Consumers was two and a half times its 1939 rate.

The Nebraska Public Power System was established in 1940 by conditions of the refinancing arrangement between the Public Works Administration and the three hydro projects. Concerned that the waters of the Loup and Platte Rivers be used most efficiently and that there be no competitive battles over markets by the three districts, the Works Administration recommended a joint operating

Public Power, 1933-1949

- 1933 The *Enabling Act* passed by Nebraska Legislature
- 1933 Federal Public Works Administration created, funding of hydroelectric projects transferred from Reconstruction Finance Corporation to Public Works Administration
- 1933 Public Works Administration approves Loup River and Sutherland projects
- 1935 Public Works Administration approves Tri-County project
- 1935 Federal *Public Utility Holding Company Act* requiring breakup of large utility holding organizations with subsidiaries in several states passed
- 1935 Federal *Rural Electrification Act* passed
- 1935 Nebraska Rural Electric Association formed
- 1937 Gering Valley Rural Public Power District begins operation (first unit financed with REA loan)
- 1938 Completion of Sutherland and Loup River projects
- 1941 Tri-County begins production of electricity
- 1939 Consumers Public Power District formed
- 1940 Nebraska Public Power System, a joint operating agreement of Platte Valley Public Power and Irrigation District, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, and Loup River Public Power District established
- 1942 Securities Exchange Commission orders dissolution of American Power and Light Company, parent of Nebraska Power Company in Omaha
- 1945 Nebraska Legislature authorizes creation of Omaha Public Power District
- 1946 Omaha Public Power District purchases Nebraska Power Co.
- 1949 Tri-County withdraws from Nebraska Public Power System

agreement for the three hydro projects. The Nebraska Public Power System was established to operate all power facilities jointly and to pool the revenues of the three districts.

In 1949, Tri-County, wanting to concentrate on irrigation in its own area, withdrew from the System. Central District's electrical facilities including transmission lines, substations and other electrical equipment which had been part of the System continued to be operated as in the past, but ownership remained with the Central District.

The Birth of Rural Electric Systems

Bringing electricity to rural areas lagged behind urban communities. Private utilities had done little to install rural lines and they often displayed outright hostility to extension of service to rural areas.

At the time the Rural Electrification Administration was created in 1935, only 9,544 Nebraska farms — barely seven percent — were receiving central station electric service. Half of these farms were receiving electricity over lines the farmers themselves had constructed. The cost to farmers for constructing their own lines was frequently \$2,000 to \$5,000 per mile and ownership of the lines was often retained by the utilities. Rates were often 20 to 30 cents per kilowatt-hour compared to an average of 5.5 cents per kilowatt-hour in 1994 in Nebraska. Given the bleak economic conditions of the 1930s, few farmers could afford the expense.

Also, the percentage of farms in Nebraska occupied by tenants was one of the highest in the nation because mortgages were

foreclosed and owners became renters. According to the 1930 census, 47.1 percent of Nebraska farms were occupied by tenants. This did not auger well for the sale of either private or public electricity in rural areas.

While the number of owner-occupied farms increased with the economy, the federal Tenant Purchase Program, designed to make owners of tenants, was also a factor.

By the late 1930s, the hydro districts were generating large surpluses of power. However, the rural climate was no more conducive to the development of rural electrification by public power districts than it was for private power companies.

The exception was the Loup District which was instrumental in developing rural electrification in Platte County and creating a market for some of its electricity.

For the most part, development of electric power in rural areas was accomplished through Rural Electrification Administration loans received by the state's thirty-six rural electrical organizations. The first loans in the state were in western Nebraska, with Gering Valley District being completed and operational in February 1937.

By the 1950s, 95,050 Nebraska farms — 94.3 percent — were receiving electricity using more than one-third of the power coming from the Nebraska Power System. ☺

Public Power in Nebraska by Robert E. Firth, University of Nebraska Press, 1962, is recommended for those who wish to explore public power development in the state more fully.

Almost 90 in The Fleet...

State to Purchase 85 Percent Ethanol Tauruses

Governor Ben Nelson announced in January that at least 24 1996 Ford Tauruses, operating on up to 85 percent ethanol, will be added to the state vehicle fleet.

"This is the state's first order of Ford's new flexible fuel cars," Nelson said. "The Department of Administrative Services' Transportation Service Bureau is assessing what other state agencies will need, and I expect more vehicles will be ordered."

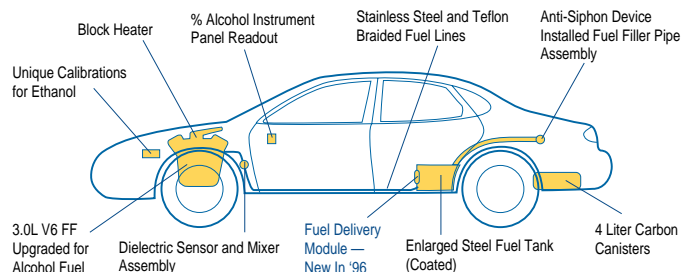
According to the Nebraska Energy Office, the first mass-produced 85 percent ethanol Tauruses came off the assembly line in Chicago in early January. The Fords are being sold at about \$14,000, the same price as similarly equipped gasoline-powered models.

"On our recent trade mission to Brazil, we learned that their ethanol program bases its success on vehicles that run on higher percentages of ethanol than are currently used in the United States," Nelson said. "Ford's commitment to ethanol is a big boost for the alternate fuel industry."

Nelson said he is asking the state's Energy Office, Ethanol Board and Corn Board to conduct an aggressive marketing campaign for the new models. The 20-state Governors' Ethanol

Coalition is also preparing promotional materials for the cars. According to the Energy Office, Ford will underwrite the cost of the marketing effort targeted at other public and private fleet operators.

1996 TAURUS 3.0L Flexible Fuel Vehicle



85 Percent Ethanol Public Pumps Coming Soon

The promotional campaign is designed to complement the Coalition's effort to install public 85 percent ethanol fueling stations throughout the Midwest. Nebraska now has three 85 percent ethanol pumps at state facilities in Lincoln and Grand Island. Public 85 percent ethanol pumps are expected to open in at least two Nebraska communities this year.

The latest purchase of flexible fuel vehicles will bring the state fleet total of 85 percent ethanol vehicles to nearly 90. ☺

"Nebraskans should follow the governor's lead and support the production of vehicles that use high percentage ethanol fuels. The opportunity is not only win-win for the farmers, the state and the environment, but an entire world that is far too dependent on traditional and vanishing resources."

Editorial
Grand Island Independent
January 12, 1996

More than \$29,000...

Science and Math Teachers Win Energy Grants

Fourteen teams of Nebraska middle and high school teachers were picked in December to receive grants of up to \$2,500 to initiate innovative energy-related projects in their math and science classrooms.

"This is a great way for students to learn about energy and improve their math and science skills at the same time," said Ann Selzer of the Energy Office.

The energy grants are awarded by the Nebraska Science and Math Initiative, but funded by the Nebraska Energy Office from oil overcharge trust funds.

Oil overcharge funds are a result of several court actions against oil companies that overcharged their customers during the period of federal price controls from 1973 to 1981. The courts ordered that some of the funds be distributed to the states as restitution to injured consumers.

For more information about these energy education grants, contact **Anita Couillard** at the PEERS Academy Office, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 126 Morrill Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0350, phone 402-472-9302, e-mail energy@unlinfo.unl.edu

1996 Winners

Town	Teachers	School	Amount
Grand Island	Barb Moran Steve Morris	Cedar Hollow School	\$775
Hebron	Jerry Neff Ryan Ruhl Don Simpson Richard Hoins	Hebron Public Schools	\$2,500

Town	Teachers	School	Amount
Humboldt	Denise Hunzeker Brad Caitlin	Humboldt Public Schools	\$2,500
Lewellen	Coralie Hayes	Lewellen Rural High School	\$2,100
Lincoln	Kent Crippen	Southeast High School	\$2,350
	Robert Curtright	Northeast High School	\$2,500
	Robert Mann		
	Sr. Noreen Hrnicek	Pius X High School	\$2,500
Maxwell	Greg Lesiak		
	Gary Loontjer	Lutheran Jr/Sr High School	\$1,750
	Lyle Ziems		
	Edward Lyons	East High School	\$2,500
Oakland	Dean Connelly	Maxwell Public Schools	\$800
	Jason Glenn		
	Aub Boucher		
Ralston	James Mashek	Oakland-Craig Public School	\$2,500
	Beverly McKillip		
	Nancy Meier		
Seward	Carol Englemann	Ralston High School	\$2,500
	Tom Mruz		
	Maureen Olsen		
Wakefield	Jeff Gaston		
	Helen Banzhaf	Seward High School	\$1,750
	Ellie Studer	Wakefield Community School	\$2,500
	Earlene Anderson		
	Kelli Guenther		

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What They Are Saying...

"In Nebraska, we hear a lot about the use of ethanol and the importance of this industry to our state.

"What we don't hear much about is the use of ethanol, or other alternative fuels such as methanol, blends, or even auto gas, in Nebraska's general aviation fleet.

"...with the mandate to remove lead from all fuels, it is just a question of time before 100LL [low-lead fuel] will be replaced. There is growing pressure from the International Civil Aviation Organization for the U.S. to do just that.

"We are growing more dependent on foreign oil, and yet we have the capability to replace much of that

with ethanol. It just seems to make sense that we commit greater time and money for the exploration of this alternative.

"Nebraska has taken on the challenge as well, investing millions in the ethanol industry. We are known internationally as a state, a people with vision, by embracing the value and importance of ethanol and alternative fuels.

"Today the use of ethanol and other alternative fuels is commonplace in surface vehicles. Let's show greater support for continued study and the promotion of these fuels in aviation."

Excerpts from Director's Report in the January 1996 edition of *PIREPS*
Kim Stevens, Director
Nebraska Department of Aeronautics

Editor's Note:

An article in the Spring 1995 edition of the *Quarterly* detailed the effects of proposed federal budget cuts on Nebraskans. Part of the article analyzed the possible sale of the federal power marketing administrations. Western Area Power Administration provides significant amounts of inexpensive electricity to the state's public power systems. This article provides an update on Congressional action regarding the proposed sale.

Cheap Power Continues, But For How Long?

\$50 Million Electric Rate Increase Fizzles in Congress

Strong grassroots support from ratepayers, governors, regional groups and public utility groups such as the National Rural Electric Association and the American Public Power Association forestalled the sale of all but one of the federal hydropower marketing administrations.

Power marketing administrations operate federal hydroelectric dams and provide low-cost electricity to tens of millions of Americans in the South and West.

NMPP Energy estimated that the state's ratepayers could see at least a \$50 million annual increase in utility rates if the sale of the power marketing administrations had been approved by Congress.

Alaska, the smallest of the power administrations, was approved for sale. However, the three administrations that some in Congress had hoped to sell — Western, Southeastern and Southwestern — will remain federally-owned, at least for now.

Congress did authorize a study of the sale of the administrations. The General Accounting Office has begun work on not one, but two studies. The first study will ascertain if all the costs of power production are recovered by electricity sales. The second will examine the operating efficiencies of the administrations. The House of Representatives Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman, John Doolittle of California, has indicated he will schedule hearings on selling the administrations in March or April.

The possible sale of these assets could resurface in Congress this year as part of the next federal budget.

In December, U.S. Senator Max Baucus of Montana told a group of utility executives that the President had stated in a letter to him that the sale of the power marketing administrations would not be included in the Administration's 1997 budget. A U.S. Department of Energy Official in January told a group of public power officials that the Administration

does not intend to insist on the sale of the administrations nor count on Congress to pursue the sale independently.

The Sale Unravels

In early 1995, the sale of at least four of the administrations was believed to be a certainty. The President included the sale of the administrations in his budget. Initially, the House of Representatives reacted positively.

But, as the summer progressed, forces opposed to the sale gathered strength. The issue became a key element of the budget battle since selling the assets could result in an estimated \$4.5 billion or more added to the Treasury.

Three things caused the sale to fail in the House of Representatives.

First, the American Public Power Association proposed that the assets be sold to existing customers — city and regional public power systems, rural electric systems and state agencies — for not more than \$2.5 billion.

Second, because the assets of the Southeast Administration had no value, the sale of dams and lakes in the region was added. A firestorm erupted in Georgia over the possible sale of one large lake. Environmentalists, sports enthusiasts, recreational businesses and electricity interests united to stall the sale of this regional administration.

The final blow to the sale was delivered by the Senate when 64 of the 100 senators signed a letter putting the body on record opposed to the sale of any of the three administrations.

One-Seventh of the Electricity

In Nebraska, Western Area Power Administration, based in Colorado, supplies about 12 percent of the state's electric needs every year. In 1994, three Nebraska electricity suppliers, Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Nebraska and Omaha Public Power Districts ranked second, seventh and 18th, respectively, out of Western's top 25 customers. Tri-State provides electricity to rural systems in Wyoming and Colorado as well as in Nebraska.

According to Western, 46 municipal electric systems and eight state agencies receive the low-cost electricity in addition to the three regional utility suppliers. ☺



Two-Day June Meeting...

Wind Power Options in Nebraska

A two-day conference in Omaha on June 20 and 21 will explore the fundamentals of wind generated electricity as well as regional and state developments.

Vaughn Nelson, a Texas-based wind researcher, will present a brief, but intensive, one-day session on understanding how wind technology produces electricity.

More than half the second day's session will focus on Nebraska's promising wind resources and what other states in the region are doing with wind energy.

The conference is sponsored by the University of Nebraska, the Energy Office and utility, consumer and alternate energy groups.

For more information or to register for the conference, contact **Deb Derrick** at the University of Nebraska/Omaha, phone 402-554-2980, fax 402-554-3150. ☺

The *Nebraska Energy Quarterly* features questions asked about 6% Dollar and Energy Saving Loans. Loan forms may be obtained from participating lenders or the Energy Office.

Frequently Asked Questions...

6% Dollar and Energy Saving Loans



I recently received a borrower form for telecommunications equipment (Form 8). Can you provide more information on these new loans?

Loans for telecommunications equipment are intended to provide an incentive for borrowers to replace traditional face-to-face meetings with technology. Generally, the new technology links both small and large numbers of people at separate sites, making it unnecessary for everyone to travel to a single location.

State government and educational institutions have been the

largest users of this technology. Four years ago, the state estimated that nearly \$300,000 had been saved in one twelve month period.

Loans are available for equipment to connect computers over a wide-area network, audio and video conferencing equipment, satellite communications access equipment and mobile radio and telephone systems. The purchase of computers with internal modems may be financed with the loans.

Interest rates and terms are identical to loans financing more typical types of energy efficiency improvements.

Number 10,000

On January 3, 1996, the Energy Office issued its 10,000th Dollar and Energy Saving Loan (to a Hastings homeowner for more than \$18,000). Like most of the nearly 9,500 loans made for energy efficiency improvements in homes across the state, the Hastings homeowner replaced a furnace and air conditioner.

Since 1990, the state has provided \$23 million to finance improvements in homes. Private lenders have added more than \$22 million, for a total of \$45 million invested just in home improvements.

Two of every five people getting loans install a furnace, heat pump, or air conditioner.

And best of all, the state used no state or federal taxes to pump tens of millions of dollars into an effort that helps local businesses such as heating and cooling firms.

Editor's Note:

An article in the Spring 1995 edition of the *Quarterly* detailed the effects of proposed federal budget cuts on Nebraskans. Part of the article analyzed the proposed elimination of a federal utility bill paying program for needy Americans. In Nebraska, ten percent of these funds are used to weatherize homes so that future utility bills will be easier to pay. This article provides an update on Congressional action regarding this program.

Nebraska Gets \$8 Million...

Energy Safety Net's Future Unclear

The federal program that pays a portion of utility bills for needy elderly and families — and weatherizes some homes — continues, but at reduced funding levels.

In November, the state's Department of Social Services said that the state would not

The effort by the House of Representatives to eliminate the \$1.3 billion program has been sidelined, at least for now. The Senate proposed keeping the program and providing \$1 billion in 1996.

The two bodies were unable to reach a compromise on the program as well as other issues in the Health and Human Services' budget. As a result, no appropriation bill was forwarded to the President.

A series of continuing resolutions passed by Congress have provided stopgap funding at reduced levels until the issues are resolved.

In December, the federal government transferred \$7.1 million to the state. An additional \$800,000 was released to Nebraska in January. Additional funds may also be transferred in the future.

Down 20 Percent

Based on the funds received by the state to date, the Energy Office should have nearly \$800,000 available for weatherizing the homes of needy Nebraskans. Funds from the U.S. Department of Energy and oil overcharge settlement funds are also used to weatherize homes.

The \$800,000 available for home weatherization from the utility bill paying program is about 20 percent less than last year, but more than the nearly \$700,000 received in 1991, the low point from this funding source.

About 340 homes are expected to be weatherized at no cost by community action agency staff or private contractors in 1996 with these funds. ☺

extend credit to the federal government and spend state funds to pay the utility bills since the state might not be reimbursed by the federal government.

Last year, 34,277 Nebraskans each received up to \$249 to help pay for heating bills. A smaller number of people also received about \$100 to help pay for cooling bills. Ten percent of the funds are also used by the Energy Office to weatherize homes.

What They Have Been Saying...

"The tendency in the United States has been to go merrily on our way as if there is no potential problem to world oil supply until it is too late. Sadly, the consequences can be devastating."

Donald P. Hodel

Former Energy Secretary

New York Times interview January 30, 1996

A \$2.1 Million Savings Potential... State Building Lighting Project Saves \$40,000

The state's largest office building saved nearly \$40,000 in lighting expenses in the past year by using more efficient lights and ballasts.

"These are just the type of savings I had hoped we could achieve when I enlisted state government in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Lights program in 1993," Governor Nelson said. Green Lights is a partnership which utilizes the latest in lighting technology to save dollars and energy and prevent pollution. The Energy Office and Task Force for Building Renewal lead the state's Green Lights effort.

According to the state's building division, only three types of

lighting improvements were made in the State Office Building in Lincoln. "We changed fluorescent light bulbs, ballasts and exit signs," Ralph Newell, Building Renewal Task Force Administrator said. "By using the latest lighting technology, we were able to increase brightness, but decrease energy use by 35 percent."

"It's a program that shows big potential for cutting utility bills," said Bob Harris, Director of the Energy Office.

"It's a little bit more expensive up front," Harris said, "but it pays for itself very quickly because they (energy-efficient bulbs) last longer, use less energy, and they are a lot brighter."

The cost of the improvements came from three sources: a \$52,301 grant from the state's building renewal task force, \$52,301 from the Building Division's operating funds and a \$104,601 no-interest loan from the state's Energy Office. The loan will be repaid within six years from the savings.

More Savings in Other Buildings

Newell said the savings could be even higher in other state buildings. "The state government complex in downtown Lincoln benefits from exceedingly low electrical rates," Newell said. A few state government buildings receive their electricity from federal hydropower sources. "The state pays only four cents per kilowatt-hour," Newell said.

According to the Energy Office, the average residential customer in the state paid 6.33 cents per kilowatt-hour in 1994. Rates for industrial and commercial customers were nearly four and 5.6 cents per kilowatt-hour, respectively, during the same period.

Most state buildings received recommendations from the Energy Office on how to improve their lighting systems. Statewide, annual estimated savings totaled \$2.1 million. ☺



Training — The Green Lights Way

Lighting surveys on 1,260 state-owned buildings covering 24.6 million square feet have been completed. The surveys recommended cost-effective improvements to the buildings' lighting equipment, which will save electricity and reduce atmospheric pollutants that would have resulted from the production of electricity.

The state has used engineering and architecture students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to perform the surveys.

"Using interns is a good idea for government," Harris said. "You get them at a very reasonable cost, they're

enthusiastic and usually put in a very good workday."

Because of the Energy Office's success with student interns, the agency received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to produce a manual instructing others how such an effort could be duplicated.

Over the past year, "how to do it" workshops were held in Washington, DC; Portland, Maine; Denver, Phoenix, Boston and San Francisco. The Energy Office also helped establish similar intern projects in the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Arkansas.

Nebraska Governor Ben Nelson is the 1996 chairman of the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission. The Commission is an organization of 36 states with a common interest in oil and natural gas production in the United States.

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from Governor Nelson's speech at the Commission's annual meeting in December. Contact Jerry Loos in the Energy office for copies of *Fuels for America*.

Finding Common Ground...

Oil and Natural Gas Issues Come to The Fore



"In so many ways, Americans are at an energy crossroads. We can continue doing things as we have in the past, or we can strive for something better. The challenge is indeed immense. There are many issues to resolve, many problems to overcome and the stakes are high. Our dependence on foreign oil has moved us from the world's largest creditor nation to the largest debtor. We were once the leader in oil field technology. Today, the development of new production technology has slowed, and thousands of marginal wells in America face a premature death.


"Throughout my year as Chairman, I will concentrate on finding broad-based solutions to these very difficult problems. One such solution to the nation's energy future could be *Fuels for America*. This initiative would reverse two trends of the past 20 years: the collapse of the domestic oil and natural gas industries,


and the ballooning trade deficit, mostly caused by petroleum imports.

"As energy-producing states, we should take time to sit down with diverse, domestic interest groups such as American agriculture and domestic renewable industries to listen and learn — and to realize we share common goals: wise use of our resources, improved job opportunities, reduced dependence on others for our energy supplies, and a vibrant and stable economy." ☺




The Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission maintains an electronic bulletin board named DEREK. Internet users can access DEREK via TELNET [iogccbbs.oklaosf.state.ok.us](telnet://iogccbbs.oklaosf.state.ok.us). Other users may access the system directly via modem at 405-525-0206.

The **Alternative Fuels Hotline** provides general and specific information on alternate vehicular fuels including fuel performance and availability.


 Alternative Fuels Hotline
 P.O. Box 12316
 Arlington, VA 22209

 Phone between 9am-5pm CT,
 Monday-Friday. **1-800-423-1363**
 Call for information on modem and Internet access.


The **Biomass Energy Alliance** is organized to accelerate the development and use of biomass sources in the production of energy.

 Biomass Energy Alliance
 1001 G Street, N.W. Suite 900 East
 Washington, D.C. 20001
 Phone **1-202-639-0384**
 Internet address:
<http://www.biomass.org>

The **Comprehensive Oil & Gas Information Source** provides energy data to subscribers on Internet.

 For more information, call
1-202-586-8800 between
 7am-4pm CT, Monday-Friday.




The **Department of Energy's** Home Page on the World Wide Web provides general information about the federal agency and identifies starting points with pathways to other information. According to *PC Computing*, the agency's Home Page is one of the top 1,001 of all the sites on the Internet.

 Internet address:
<http://www.doe.gov>


The **Electric Ideas Clearinghouse** offers a free source of commercial and industrial energy information and downloadable software on electronic bulletin board.

 Modem access:
1-800-797-7584.



The **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse** provides fact sheets, brochures, videos and publications on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

 Energy Efficiency and Renewable
 Energy Clearinghouse,
 P.O. Box 3048,
 Merrifield, VA 22116
 Phone between 7am-4pm CT,
 Monday-Friday. **1-800-363-3732** or for
 the hearing impaired call
 **1-800-273-2957** 8am-6pm.
 Internet address:
ENERGYINFO@delphi.com
 Modem access at **1-800-273-2955**




The **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network** or EREN is a world wide web site on Internet and a gateway to energy efficiency and renewable energy information sources.

 Internet address:
http://www.eren.doe.gov
 (SLIP connection required).



The **Motor Challenge Information Clearinghouse** provides research, software, technical assistance and education materials on electric motor systems efficiency.

 Motor Challenge Information
 Clearinghouse,
 P.O. Box 43171
 Olympia, WA 98504-3171
 Call between 8am-7pm CT,
 Monday-Friday. **1-800-862-2086**



The **National Energy Information Center** provides data and projections on energy production, consumption, prices and supplies.

 National Energy Information Center
 U.S. Department of Energy
 Forrestal Bldg., EI-22,
 Room 1F048
 1000 Independence Ave. S.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20585
 Phone between 7am-4pm CT,
 Monday-Friday. **1-202-586-8800**
 Internet address: **infoctr@eia.doe.gov**
 Modem access at **1-202-586-2557**



The **National Materials Exchange Network** provides advice on recycling and reducing disposal costs, 24 hours per day.

 General assistance at **1-509-466-1532**
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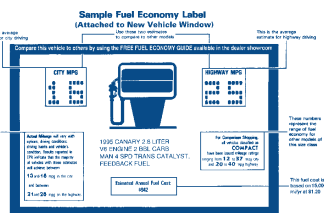
The **National Renewable Energy Laboratory/Technical Inquiry Service** offers free technical information on solar and other renewable technologies for scientific and industrial professionals.

 Technical Inquiry Service
 National Renewable Energy
 Laboratory
 1617 Cole Boulevard
 Golden, CO 80401
 Phone between 9am-6pm CT,
 Monday-Friday. **1-303-275-4099**

The **Wind Information Network** provides updates on wind technology via EcoNet, a nonprofit electronic service for the global environmental community. For more information contact Tom Gray at the American Wind Energy Association.

 Phone **1-202-383-2500**
 Internet address: **tgray@igc.apc.org** or
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Free 1996 Fuel Economy Guides



Free copies of the U.S. Department of Energy's *Fuel Economy Guide* for 1996 motor vehicles are now available.

The *Guide* can be used as an aid to consumers considering the purchase of a new vehicle. The estimates of miles per gallon listed for each new vehicle have been provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

To secure a copy, contact **Jerry Loos** in the Energy Office.

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This material was prepared with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Grant No. DE-FG47-92CE0410. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE.

Nebraska Energy Office
 Box 95085
 1200 N St, Suite 110
 Lincoln, NE 68509-5085
 Phone 1-402-471-2867

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