

Conservation has big impact

It's the U.S. energy boom that no one knows about. Energy efficiency may be the farthest-reaching, least-polluting, and fastest-growing energy success story of the last 50 years.

But it also is the most invisible, the least understood, and in serious danger of missing out on needed future investments.

In the first attempt to quantify the overall impact of the hidden U.S. energy efficiency boom, a report released in 2008 from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)

shows that U.S. energy consumption (as measured per dollar of economic output) will have been slashed by the end of 2008 to half of what it was in 1970, from 18,000 Btus to about 8,900 Btus.

More can be done. Although efficiency is a proven resource, it remains underdeveloped.

The evidence suggests efficiency can make an even larger contribution towards stabilizing energy prices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions – should America choose to fully develop it.

Given the right choices and investments in the many cost-effective but underutilized energy efficiency technologies, the report indicates the U.S. can cost-effectively reduce energy consumption by an additional 25 to 30 percent or more over the course of the next 20 to 25 years.

Annual investments in energy efficiency technologies currently support 1.6 million U.S. jobs. The \$300 billion invested in energy efficiency in 2004 was three times

the amount invested in traditional energy infrastructure.

Investments in energy efficiency technologies are estimated to have generated approximately 1.7 quads of energy savings in 2004 alone – roughly the equivalent of the energy required to operate 40 mid-sized coal-fired or nuclear power plants.

Total investments in more energy efficiency technologies could increase the annual energy efficiency market by nearly \$400 billion by 2030, resulting in an annual efficiency market of more than \$700 billion – and total additional investments over the period 2008-2030 of nearly \$7 trillion.

The report, *The Size of the U.S. Energy Efficiency Market: Generating a More Complete Picture*, concludes “...our nation is not aware of the role that energy efficiency has played in satisfying our growing energy-service demands...the contributions of efficiency often go unrecognized. The contributions of energy efficiency often remain invisible...”

Your electric cooperative. South Central Power actively promotes energy efficiency and conservation measures. Both aspects need to be part of a comprehensive approach to address the country's ever-growing energy needs and the economic impact of any climate change legislation.

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South Central Power members are encouraged to go to www.ourenergy.coop and begin (or continue) the dialogue with their elected officials in Washington DC about energy policy.

