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OFFICE HOURS:
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Keep This Number

When reporting an outage, an automated outage reporting system may answer your call. It may ask for your 12-digit account number to help locate the outage site. This number is found on your monthly bill. It's handy to write it down and keep it near the phone.

Suggestions

Please send your *Country Living* story ideas or comments to the attention of Lisa R. Hooker at South Central's Lancaster office.

SOUTH CENTRAL POWER COMPANY

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Renewables reality check

by Peter Nye with Scott Gates

(Excerpted with permission from July 2008 *RE Magazine*)

In their search for a “magic bullet” that will secure America’s energy independence while also curbing emissions of greenhouse gases, namely carbon dioxide, from power plants, policymakers have turned all eyes on renewable resources — primarily wind, but also solar, small hydro, biomass (including landfill gas, livestock waste, timber byproducts and crop residue) and geothermal.

Unfortunately, many elected officials have overlooked obstacles limiting a “green power revolution,” namely a lack of transmission lines and dependence on federal tax credits that let renewables stay cost-competitive with conventional generation sources.

Of more concern, some see renewables as a viable alternative to base load coal-fired and nuclear power plants in providing a reliable supply of electricity at an affordable price — a goal not possible without significant technological advances and one that even most renewable energy groups don’t advocate.

“Renewables certainly have a key part to play in our nation’s energy future. But contrary to conventional wisdom, they can’t meet growing demand for electricity by themselves. Curbing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from power plants while ensuring that our nation’s power needs are met must include a blend of advanced clean coal, nuclear, natural gas and renewable generation sources. Fortunately, electric co-ops, serving areas linked to resources like wind and biomass, are naturally positioned to take maximum advantage of alternative power options,” comments National Rural Electric Cooperative Association CEO Glenn English.

In a 2007 study, *Electricity Technology in a Carbon-Constrained Future*, the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a Palo Alto, Calif.-based nonprofit consortium whose members include electric co-ops, showed how electric utilities could help the United States reduce carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels within 23 years — even after adding 30 percent more load, half generated by coal — by taking aggressive steps in seven principal areas, including vastly expanding renewable energy supplies.

Leaving hydropower out of the mix, EPRI sees renewables, led by wind, leaping from 24,000 megawatts (MW) produced nationally in 2006 to more than 120,000 MW by 2030 — or from 2.5 percent of kilowatt-hours (kWh) produced today to roughly 7 percent.

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