

HELI GRAPHS

www.IllinoisSolar.org

Newsletter of the Illinois Solar Energy Association September 2005, Vol. 24, No. 3

Environmental, Consumer Groups Tell ComEd to Stop Power Play

CHICAGO - A broad coalition of environmental and consumer groups on Thursday expressed outrage over Exelon/Commonwealth Edison's decision to break its commitment to implement Governor Rod Blagojevich's Sustainable Energy Plan. The groups called on Exelon/ComEd to submit its plan to buy renewable energy and to submit the necessary tariffs to the Illinois Commerce Commission immediately.

Exelon/ComEd notified the Illinois Commerce Commission in a Sept. 6th letter that it was halting plans to implement Gov. Blagojevich's renewable energy initiative unless the State adopted an unrelated Exelon proposal that would raise electricity rates by 20 percent or more.

However, at a Chicago news conference, the coalition, including the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC), Illinois Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), the Citizens Utility Board (CUB), the Sierra Club Illinois Chapter and the Illinois Environmental Council called on Exelon/ComEd to keep their word to the Governor, the Illinois Commerce Commission and the public.

"Exelon/ComEd is holding clean, renewable energy development hostage in order to set up a large rate hike. That's just wrong," said Howard Learner, Executive Director of the Environmental Law & Policy Center. "The Governor's Sustainable Energy Plan would help reduce pollution, generate billions of dollars in economic development,

("Power Play" continued, page 9)

Solar Granted A Major Victory In Energy Bill



WASHINGTON - After years of effort, lawmakers on Capitol Hill finally agreed upon a vast package of federal energy legislation.

For the average American, there are few, if any, items in the cavernous bill that will have an immediate and measurable impact on their lives. The first ever residential tax credit for solar energy in the past two decades, however, is chief among them.

With the Senate's approval vote today of 74-26 and a successful House vote of 275-156 on Thursday, the energy bill is officially on its way to the President's desk to be signed into law.

Despite the many proclamations from lawmakers that the bill could help lower gas prices and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign sources of energy, the bill will do little to alleviate either. And, it will offer few immediate or tangible benefits for the average U.S. citizen.

"If I was a homeowner and flipping through a newspaper story on the energy bill, I would get pretty depressed at the \$14 billion of giveaways for industries that, frankly, are enjoying record profits," said Rhone Resch, Executive Director of the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).

"But the one provision in the bill that all Americans can take advantage of right away is to install solar on their roofs."

("Energy Bill" continued, page 8)

Landlord Looks to the Sun to Reduce Energy Costs

Using solar energy to heat water has always been the easiest and most affordable way to harvest the sun. Five multi-family apartment buildings in Oak Park and Forest Park have recently installed solar hot water systems.

The buildings' owner, Dr. Eugene Anandappa of River Forest, met Solar Service at the 2003 Ogle County Renewable Energy Fair and expressed his desire to help the environment while conserving natural gas.



The five systems range from 8 to 16 Solar Panels per building with 360 or 480 gallons of hot water storage. The combined systems include 50 Solar Collectors and are designed to heat over 3,400 gallons of hot water each day or over 900,000 gallons each year.

The solar water heaters will provide over 70% of the hot water needed annually, with the existing gas heaters taking over automatically when necessary.

In addition to saving thousands of dollars in future energy costs, using solar will help keep rents more affordable for the buildings' tenants and prevent natural gas combustion gases from polluting the atmosphere.

(continued, next page)

With a generous grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Renewable Energy Resource Program paying 48% of the cost plus a 10% Federal Investment Tax Credit (increasing to 30% in 2006), Dr. Anandappa expects to recover his investment in less than seven years.



(The Wednesday Journal of Oak Park and River Forest featured a story on this installation in its 7/5/05 edition.)

SOURCE:

Deny Reynolds, Solar Service Inc.
www.solarserviceinc.com

ISEA Heliographs Earns ILDCEO Grant

The ISEA has been advised by Sara Wilcockson of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (ILDCEO) that the agency is so impressed with our *Heliographs* newsletter that the ISEA will be awarded a \$5,000 grant for expansion.

Beginning with this issue (and planned for four issues in total), the ISEA is increasing its circulation to reach more than 125 influential people throughout Illinois.

This expanded readership includes: Illinois state senators, representatives and community leaders, related public and not-for-profit committees, associations and NGO's, architects, builders, trade unions, editors and more.

We also request our members and affiliates to forward appropriate names and mailing information for possible inclusion with our increased circulation list.

Please forward information to:
info@illinoisolar.org
(type "Heliographs" as the email subject)

Jim Camasto, ISEA Editor

With Washington Failing on Energy, States Must Take the Lead

As the chaos caused by Hurricane Katrina settles, people are asking serious questions about the federal government's preparedness for natural disasters. But Americans also need to ask about the effectiveness and security of America's energy system. If we don't like the answers we're getting from an increasingly out-of-touch federal government, then perhaps we need to turn to our state leaders for action.

In recent years, the world's appetite for oil and natural gas, combined with a squeeze on supply, has sent energy prices on a steep climb with no end in sight. High gasoline prices have already pinched our pocket books, but prices for diesel fuel, heating oil, natural gas and even natural gas-based fertilizer will reverberate throughout the economy for years to come.

America's overextended energy system was already running full steam this summer when Katrina knocked out (for the time being at least) a sizeable chunk of America's capacity to import, extract, refine and distribute fossil fuels. As a result of our nation's lack of preparedness for such a hurricane, Americans can be sure of one thing: high prices at the gasoline pump. But there's more. We can also expect higher prices for natural gas, heating oil and electricity as well.

The long and short term solutions to the problem are obvious and challenging. America needs to wean itself off our unstable and unsustainable sources of energy by dramatically improving the energy efficiency of our homes, cars, appliances and businesses. And most importantly, we need to move towards more renewable sources of energy.

The Bush administration and Congress appear determined to take us in the opposite direction. In a clear example of special-interest- business-as-usual scenario, President Bush included billions of dollars in handouts to the oil industry, the nuclear industry and other energy companies through the energy bill he signed last month. The President has made it a priority to make it harder

for Americans to conserve. He has pushed hard to weaken C.A.F.E. rules and preached a policy of consumption being necessary for the health of the American economy. The President refuses to add aggressive requirements for clean, renewable power, limits on emissions of pollutants that cause global warming (which some believe will contribute to more severe storms in the future) to his energy bill.

It was in this spirit that the President's immediate reaction to the emerging energy crisis after Hurricane Katrina was to open the strategic petroleum reserve to the oil companies and to relax air quality standards for gasoline. Only after the administration realized that these measures would fall short of achieving their goal did he call on the public to conserve.

The lessons of Katrina must not fall on deaf ears. Our precarious position today is a result of failed energy policies that perhaps will now convince Congress and the President of the need for a more sustainable, diverse and secure energy system. But if it doesn't, there's another place that citizens should be able to turn for leadership: the States.

Over the past few years, a growing number of states have begun to move toward a better and more efficient energy system. Texas has pledged to double its commitment to renewable energy over the next decade. Arizona recently joined eight other states in tightening energy efficiency standards for appliances and California is poised to pass the biggest solar power bill in the country. In the Northeast, nine states recently agreed to reduce global warming emissions from power plants, while several other states are doing the same for cars.

Illinois must take action as well to help ensure a secure, clean & economically sustainable future for all Illinoisans. We should adopt a renewable energy standard, as proposed by Governor Blagojevich last February. This would allow us to develop the enormous potential for wind energy in rural Illinois, creating jobs, stabilizing electric rates, and helping our environment.

("States Must Lead" continued, page 6)

You Can't Be Too Rich or Too Thin (Film)

**Keystone Homes:
Partnership to Bring Zero-Energy
Homes to West Garfield Park**



In response to the growing need of local West Side residents for single-family affordable homeownership opportunities, Keystone Baptist Church and Bethel New Life (BNL), in partnership with McBride Kelley Baurer Architects, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, Environmental Resources Trust (ERT), Uni-Solar and Whirlpool near completion on the construction of seven new zero-energy single-family homes.

The homes are built on previously vacant lots in the 3800 and 4000 W blocks of Maypole Avenue. The Keystone Homes provide energy efficient homeownership opportunities to low-to-moderate income homebuyers in Chicago's West Garfield Park community. The energy-efficient features of the homes range from super-insulated walls to cutting edge technology in the form of solar shingles. This is the second multi house development using photovoltaics in Illinois, and the first to use thin-film amorphous solar.

"With gas prices around \$55 per barrel, and with this winter's home heating bills still a recent memory, now is the perfect time to demonstrate visionary technology to build homes that produce as much energy as they consume," said Gov. Blagojevich. "I commend Bethel New Life and Keystone Baptist Church for their efforts to make low-cost, low-energy homes available to low-income residents in Illinois, and I am pleased

that we can further these efforts with a Opportunity Returns grant."

The Keystone Homes utilize a combination of super-insulation levels, high efficiency lighting and appliances, high-efficiency HVAC systems and renewable energy solar panels, so that the homes produce almost as much energy as they consume on an annual basis. DCEO provided funding for the solar shingles for the project through the Renewable Energy Resources Program, with additional support from the U.S. Department of Energy. Each home includes a 2.5 kW photovoltaic (PV) system, with DCEO support of \$10,000 per home.

"By supporting new, renewable energy technologies in this project, we support job creation in new, renewable energy industries, reduce energy costs for the homeowners, and help keep our energy dollars in our local economy," said DCEO Director Jack Lavin.

BNL and Keystone Baptist Church formed this innovative partnership - with BNL contributing its expertise in housing development and sales and Keystone donating the land - to serve as a model of non-profit developer/church cooperation, use of existing neighborhood resources, provision of options to existing residents to stay in the area and creation of a more vibrant, sustainable community. The addition of energy efficiencies such as solar shingles means families will pay less in energy costs, making these homes even more affordable in the long run.

"Zero energy homes are a step in the right direction because they will provide long term societal benefits for communities across this state. Through Gov. Blagojevich's Opportunity Returns program, we're providing a fresh start for our low-income neighbors and the foundation for a better future," said State Representative Annazette Collins (D-Chicago). The groundbreaking was on April 27, 2005.

For more information, contact Holly Denniston at Bethel New Life, 773-473-7870.

SOURCE:
Cecilia Saffold, Bethel New Life
www.bethelnewlife.org

ISEA Fall Membership Meeting

10/15, Saturday, 10am-12pm

Come join the ISEA for discussion and refreshments at the:

**DUSABLE MUSEUM
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY**
www.dusablemuseum.org

**740 East 56th Place
Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 947- 0600**

AGENDA

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:
Mark Burger, President, ISEA

SOLAR ENERGY AT THE DUSABLE MUSEUM, PRESENT AND FUTURE:
Antoinette Wright, President and CEO, DuSable Museum

SOLARGENIX: UPDATE ON CHICAGO AREA INSTALLATIONS:
Russ Reed, Vice President of Manufacturing, SolarGenix

OVERVIEW OF NEW SOLAR TAX CREDITS:
Brandon Leavitt, Founder and President, Solar Service, Inc.

Afterwards, members may visit the DuSable Museum (admission \$3), which is open until 5pm.

The DuSable Museum is the oldest museum of its type in the country, and the only major independent institution in Chicago established to preserve and interpret the historical experiences and achievements of African-Americans.

You need not be an ISEA member to attend - so please invite your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues. RSVP's are appreciated so we can gauge how much food to purchase.

For more information, contact:
Ted Lowe, ISEA
info@illinoisolar.org
(630) 260-0424

Batting Last

Letter from the ISEA President

While watching the horrors from Hurricane Katrina unfold, I remember the quote “Mother Nature always gets the last at-bat”. How true I thought. We have spent decades and billions building levees, disrupting the deposit of silt in the Mississippi Delta, costing thirty miles or so shoreline depth, plus the loss of protective barrier islands. After pretty much draining the continental U.S. of cheap oil and natural gas, we rely heavily on what’s extracted from the Gulf of Mexico. We dump umpteen million tons of carbon dioxide and other pollutants into our atmosphere. We develop property right up to swamps and sand bars.

And Mother Nature steps up to the plate. I won’t go into the human and property toll, but I will state one set of losses – the disruption from one storm of **one fourth** of our nation’s oil extraction, **one fifth** of our natural gas extraction and over **ten percent** of our refining. For a period of time, this mammoth output was halted and, as of this writing, much of it is still not operating, and some of it may not be recoverable.

This is not the result of OPEC, or “terrorists” or any boardroom cabal. This is a weather incident, and one that could have actually been much worse, a home run into the upper deck instead of ten rows back. I find it interesting that the difference between a category 4 or 5 hurricane's differences of 10-15 miles per hour is considered “insignificant”. I suppose it so if you compare the difference between falling out of a forty-story window instead of a fifty-story one.

But while I’m in the solar electricity trade, I do remember a bit about wind power and its cube power force. A hurricane increasing from 140 MPH (Category 4) to 160 MPH (Cat 5) is a 14% speed increase, but a 48% power increase. Had the Gulf Coast been hit with that additional force, there may not have been any oil or gas extraction capability, or a New Orleans, left.

Political response to this catastrophe has been admirable on a human level, disappointing on a policy level. The

increase in gasoline and diesel fuel prices has not resulted in a serious attempt to diversify our fleet fuel source and make it more efficient. The response has been a pastiche of ideological and expedient band-aids – hunting for “gougers”, offering a tax “holiday”, tapping the strategic oil reserve, and “relaxing” environmental restrictions on refining.

This can be an opportunity for the growing bio-fuel economy in Illinois. Serious commitment to biofuels, grown sustainably (yes, it can be done), along with a more efficient, productive consumption level, can make us less vulnerable, reduce pollution, and improve our economy. The question may be asked, “How can growing crops, using byproducts and other measures” substitute for fuel sources for an average vehicle fuel consumption of a little over 20 miles per gallon? The short answer is, it can’t. A fleet of 50, 100 or 200 MPG, that’s a different story.

Before Katrina hit, I was going to write about the new federal solar incentives kicking in on January 1, 2006, titling it “after over 20 years of crumbs, crusts of bread look pretty good”. These incentives, modest as they are, and short termed (due to expire December 31, 2007), will grow the market, but the question is, how much, and how much for Illinois? And that ties in to the condition of state incentives.

And this is where Illinois will suffer. The growth in markets, and jobs for solar and wind and related renewable power applications, will still tend to go to states that have serious and long-term incentives that magnify the federal ones

Regrettably, Illinois lacks in this regard. Programs to assist small-scale renewable energy, like solar and wind, have been delayed, scaled back or eliminated. A promising set of electrical rate tariffs designed to fulfill the Governor’s Sustainable Energy Plan, has stalled. There is considerable concern that Illinois, once a leader in renewable power deployment in the early part of this decade, may become a laggard as we get nearer the end.

Meanwhile, I am happy to announce that ISEA has an Event Planner, Carol Gulyas, who will be taking the lead in

putting together events that we stage and participate in.

Speaking of meetings, our next Membership Meeting will take place Saturday, October 15, 10 AM at the DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56 Place, Chicago. Lastly, Heliographs is going out to a couple of hundred more public and non profit sector organizations over the next year, thanks to a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, thanks very much to them, and Hans Detweiler and Sara Wilcockson in particular.

So, please do what you can for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, but keep working to get renewable energy systems to become a serious part of our lives.

Mark Burger, ISEA President

Pumped Up



The photograph on the left, taken on August 21st, illustrates our summer long run-up of gasoline prices, driven by record high world oil markets and refinement facilities operating at maximum capacity.

The right photo (from the same Yorkville gas station) was taken September 2nd in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It shows how quickly a gasoline supply disruption exposes our vulnerability to rapid price increases, and threatens the notion of a future of inexpensive energy.

Jim Camasto, ISEA Editor
Photos - Christopher Sharp, ISEA

ICC Adopts Governor's Sustainable Energy Plan

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Plan Will Protect Consumers and the Environment



CHICAGO - Following more than five months of public comment and deliberation, the Illinois Commerce Commission adopted Governor

Blagojevich's Sustainable Energy Plan. The ICC resolution issued today largely reflects the proposal the Governor submitted to the ICC last February that called for both a Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard.

The resolution recognizes the benefits of renewable energy noted in a recent ICC staff report of the Governor's proposal. ICC staff concluded that the plan offers both consumer and environmental protections, noting that renewable energy can "provide a hedge against rising fossil fuel prices and to reduce the amount of pollutants released by the burning of fossil fuels." The staff also noted that energy efficiency can lower electricity costs, improve reliability of the electricity system and even help make energy markets more competitive.

"With oil, natural gas and coal prices at near record highs, the Governor's plan offers Illinois ratepayers a hedge against high energy prices," noted Commissioner Bob Lieberman. "As Illinois' energy needs continue to grow, now is the right time to invest in non-polluting, homegrown energy sources to help meet this growing need while reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels - investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency will deliver these benefits."

"Governor Blagojevich demonstrated great leadership in providing a platform for all stakeholders to reach agreement on a forward thinking and environmentally responsible plan to ensure that Illinois' residents have access to green power and opportunities to save money on their electricity bills," said ICC Chairman Ed Hurley.

Hurley also commended Commissioner Lieberman's stewardship of the process that led to consensus support for the plan among utility companies, public interest groups and other stakeholders.

To implement the Renewable Portfolio Standard, Illinois' electric utility companies will begin acquiring 2 percent of their electricity from renewable sources like wind, methane captured from landfills and crops and organic waste by the end of 2006, ramping up in 1 percent annual increments to 8 percent by 2013.

Under the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard utility companies will create new programs to reduce 10 percent of rising electricity demand by 2007 by helping their customers invest in energy saving equipment and technology. By 2015, these energy efficiency programs will reduce 25 percent of Illinois' increasing energy demand.

SOURCE:
Illinois Commerce Commission
Press Release
www.icc.illinois.gov

Fueling Alternative Energy

At this writing, the price of gasoline has jumped to \$2.99 a gallon in Freeport. By the time you read this, who knows how high it may have soared? Now, more than ever, we must explore every opportunity for alternative energy.

For years, I have been a strong advocate of ethanol, and I will continue to advocate the increased use of both ethanol and biodiesel fuels. These fuel alternatives save energy and support our farming community. I know there are still those who tout a recent report that claims ethanol is not economically feasible. I find that very surprising because there are several other published reports that conclude just the opposite: there is a 25 percent net energy gain resulting from the use of ethanol.

More importantly, Harold Wimmer, the chief operating officer of the American Lung Association of Illinois, stated "use of E85 (85 percent ethanol) fuels helps to reduce toxic emissions and thereby promote lung health through the

reduction of gasoline components such as benzene and other aromatics. We see a possible environmental benefit from this cleaner-burning alternative fuel."

Nollers of Lena already has an E85 pump and truly deserves our applause, as does Stephenson Service Company for installing an E25 pump (25 percent ethanol) in Lena. More than 500,000 flexible-fuel vehicles (E85-compatible) are being produced annually and the availability of flexible-fuel models continues to grow.

The city of Aurora has 50 E85-burning cars and 115 vehicles on soy-based biodiesel, another environmentally friendly fuel. This year, the city pumped 12,000 gallons of E85 at a savings of more than \$8,000.

Ethanol and biodiesel aside, many great things are occurring in the 89th District with regard to other alternative energy sources. Scheidairy Farm of Cedarville owned by Doug, Trish and Dan Scheider, and Hunter Haven Farm of Pearl City owned by Doug and Edie and Tom and Mary Block have installed methane digesters which convert their large dairy herds' manure into methane gas to drive generators that each create enough power to light 100 homes.

I must admit that I marvel as I drive south on I-39 near Mendota and watch the 60-plus windmills generating electricity. There are several smaller wind farms on the drawing board for Stephenson and Jo Daviess counties, and I will be a strong advocate for their development.

Warren, Apple River, Pecatonica and Stockton schools have worked with Commonwealth Edison to install solar panels in school buildings. The students can monitor the energy generated and ComEd is to be applauded for this great energy-saving learning tool.

The rapidly rising energy prices and the tragedy unfolding in our southeastern states, in the path of Hurricane Katrina, will hopefully teach us all to be more energy-conscious.

SOURCE:
Rep. Jim Sacia
www.journalstandard.com

Reflections on the 2005 IREA Energy Fair

From what we observed, the Fourth Annual Illinois Renewable Energy and Sustainable Lifestyle Fair was a huge success. Attendance was up; participants were impressed by the caliber of the speakers; speakers were impressed by the caliber of the participants. It enlightened citizens and provided knowledgeable vendors and presenters a chance to interact with interested participants. Once again we are grateful for the wonderful efforts provided by our volunteers.

The event shone a spark of sunlight into the dark clouds of uncertain energy supplies and prices. While high energy prices are draining family budgets, they also serve to stimulate interest in efficiency and renewable energy. If prices stay high, energy innovations will flow into the marketplace making more sustainable energy practices a part of our culture.

As successful as the event appeared, the environmental, energy and health challenges facing us are immense. While Governor Blagojevich's sustainable energy plan is a significant step in the right direction, the reality of energy practices in this country is devastating. We consume 25 percent of the world's energy supplies and release 25 percent of its greenhouse gases. Our national leaders continue to declare their willingness to have us bear any costs to defend the American lifestyle.

It is a lifestyle based on ever burgeoning urban sprawl consuming more farmland every year, featuring homes of increasing size and amenities and necessitating ever longer commutes in less fuel efficient vehicles. The sheer number and diversity of fuel efficient cars and alternatively fueled vehicles at the Fair provided visitors a glimpse of the possibilities of cleaner, more efficient transportation systems. Presentations on community energy plans provided a vision of how revitalizing our cities would reduce energy and land consumption.

The majority of speakers acknowledged the seriousness of the energy and environmental situation we have created for ourselves. They offered a ray of

hope and optimism about the technological and social changes occurring in various parts of the world, our country and Illinois. While it is difficult to predict how many people will actually implement solar, wind, geothermal and energy efficient practices some individuals did purchase solar panels to use at home. Attendance at solar hot water workshops was especially high leaving two vendors extremely pleased.

While technological changes are essential to achieve a more sustainable society, we also need fundamental changes in our outlook and attitudes toward nature and our personal consumption. The newest and most exciting technologies tend to draw our interest. The more mundane practices such as buying less, driving less, planting a garden and recycling more tend to be overlooked. Pressing global social justice issues receive little attention.

A spiritual dimension was added by Ralph Bronner who told the story of his soul which moved many people close to tears. While a few were uncomfortable with his message, he spoke of experiencing the joy of giving and practiced it by giving soap samples and an occasional \$50 bill to startled fair goers. He encouraged participants to make donations of time and money to local organizations to experience the joy of giving and help efforts thrive.

Jan Woodhouse, a new IREA (Illinois Renewable Energy Association) board member, commented that Lovins, Hopkins, and Pasqualetti painted an exciting picture of numerous diverse global actions implementing sustainable energy practices. She likened our plight on earth to that of a person on horseback who chooses to continue riding the sustainable energy path toward the horizon with the hope of arriving at the destination before the sun sets and we are enveloped by darkness.

Ideally our Energy Fair has inspired many attendees to mount the horse of renewable energy and efficiency and enter the race of avoiding the darkness of despair or resignation.

The Fair was sponsored by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation,

the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Commonwealth Edison.

Editor's note: The Rock River Times owner and publisher Frank Schier has maintained a continued focus on renewable energy for more than five years, including this weekly column by the Vogls, from 8/25/05.

SOURCE:

Drs. Robert & Sonia Vogl, IREA
www.illinoisrenew.org

Rock River Times
www.rockrivertimes.com

Solar Energy Talk 11/9, Wednesday, 7:30-9pm

Come join us for a fun and fact filled talk on Solar Energy given by ISEA director and webmaster Ted Lowe.

The talk will be given at the **AMERICAN HUMANISTS** monthly meeting, held at the DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church:

4 S 535 (old) Naperville Road

For more information, contact:
Ted Lowe, ISEA
(630) 260-0424
info@illinoisolar.org

"States Must Lead" (from page 2)

To help conserve energy resources and save consumers money, the Illinois legislature should support energy efficiency standards for appliances. Illinois policy makers should also look long term at our transportation policy that encourages alternative fuel vehicles, planning that minimizes the number of miles people have to travel and invest in public transportation so people have choices.

As Hurricane Katrina has reminded us, the time to start making those changes is now. Americans can't afford to wait for the federal government to rescue us from the disastrous energy policy decisions of the past. It is now time for the states to lead.

SOURCE:

Justin Kreindler
Illinois Public Interest Research Group
www.illinoispirg.org

ISEA Welcomes New Events Coordinator

ISEA member and volunteer Carol Gulyas left an 18-year career in advertising agency management in 2001 and, after a year and a half buying, renovating and selling houses in Oak Park, she received her master's degree and started a second career as a Reference Librarian. She now works at Columbia College in Chicago, where she is also in charge of the Marketing Committee for the library.

During the last few years Gulyas has been involved in various social and political causes, taking a leadership role in a number of areas, usually involving event planning, campaign management, and communications.

Along with her husband, David, who is an ASID Interior Designer currently acquiring LEED accreditation, Gulyas is now focusing on the renewable energy front, as it appears to her the most unambiguously positive and productive area of focus given today's political and environmental climate.

She looks forward to working with the ISEA and the renewable energy community in Illinois.

Carol Gulyas, ISEA Events Coordinator

Kane County Energy Futures Conference 10/21, Friday, 10am-2pm

ISEA will have a booth at the "Kane County Energy Futures" conference on growth and energy, located at:

**THE CENTRE OF ELGIN
100 Symphony Way, Elgin, IL**

The conference will focus on the release of the Kane County Energy Plan, the culmination of a project to plan for the region's energy future. Participants will include concerned citizens, government officials and planners, utility representatives, and members of local community and environmental organizations.

For more information, contact
lindy@energycooperative.org

Yorkville Takes Solar to the Streets



ISEA member Chris Sharp photographed these solar applications in his home town of Yorkville, Illinois.

Solar power was a key for sighting the streetlight (top right), as the city's power grid was inaccessible without disturbing a neighborhood home.

Sharp made the suggestion of a solar powered unit to the mayor. The city is now studying its performance in the field. Sharp also commented that solar powered traffic control and lighting devices are prolific throughout Illinois.

Christopher Sharp, ISEA

Bureau Co. Wind Farm Gets Spinning

TISKILWA - Sometime today, energy will flow through the landscape of rural Bureau County, produced here from turbines designed to harvest the wind.

Crescent Ridge developers know they have been here before.

Seven months ago, one of the 33 towering turbines tilted during initial tests on the \$80 million project, leaning 1 degree, 16 seconds. The

commissioning process of testing and turning on the wind machines came to a screeching halt, as scientists from around the globe flocked to rural Tiskilwa to solve the problem.

Feeling like Mission Control for NASA, site manager Tim Reder waited anxiously for the green light Wednesday morning as the energy transmission lines heated so crews could begin turning on the first turbine.

"As far as we know, we'll have liftoff today, like the space shuttle," Reder said. "We're starting to turn on the turbines today. It's kind of like a string of Christmas lights, and you turn them on one at a time."

Testing each turbine will take four to eight hours. Every system will be checked to make sure there are no electrical short circuits. Technically, Reder said, workers could push a single button to start the nearly 400-foot tall machines, "but that wouldn't be wise. A mouse could build a nest in an electrical box. We're out in the country, so you have to look for everything."

The tilted turbine, which has about a 4 1/2-foot lean at the top of the tower and weighs some 500,000 pounds, will not be straightened for about two weeks. Extensive safety precautions are necessary and preparation work at the foundation is under way, said Reder.

Commissioning of the other 32 turbines will continue about the rate of one a day at the 2,200-acre site. Once spinning, each turbine immediately begins to produce energy on the Commonwealth Edison transmission line.

Workers completed precautionary foundation reinforcement at each of the other 32 turbines. Scott Jensen, a landowner who also works in quality assurance for the project, has said a sand mixture poured into the foundation caused the turbine to tilt. And while Reder said the sand is a possible cause, the costly problem likely will be a subject of litigation and cannot be discussed further.

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The No. 1 turbine leaned on Dec. 18 during rapid stop testing. "About six months ago, we were at this same point ... before the tower lean," Reder said. "It was the second week in December when the tower leaned.

"That was a black day for us."

At just before 10 a.m. Wednesday, however, Reder seemed excited as the energizing process from the substation to the turbine transformers neared completion. "We have to let them what they call "soak" - basically heat up, reach operating temperature," he said. "Once that's up, then we can start the instrument testing inside the turbine. And once that's done, they turn them on and they spin away merrily."

Stefan Noe, president of Midwest Wind Energy (formerly Illinois Wind Energy), which is co-developing the Bureau County project with owner Eurus Energy America said he's glad to finally see all his hard work come to fruition.

"It's been a long time coming, and now I think people can expect to start seeing some turbines coming online," Noe said. "That is good news and we're obviously - after all of our work - pleased to see the project come online."

SOURCE:
Jessica L. Aberle, *The Peoria Journal Star*
www.pjstar.com

"Energy Bill" (from page 1)

For the first time in two decades solar technologies were granted a federal investment tax credit that will promote all forms of solar energy. This includes solar thermal systems that provide for a home's hot water, photovoltaic systems that provide electric power, solar-hybrid lighting technologies and even to the commercial developers of industrial-scale Concentrating Solar Power plants of the likes that were constructed in the California Desert in the late '70s and early '80s.

Specifically, the bill increases the existing 10 percent investment tax credit for commercial solar installations to 30 percent for two years with no cap on the amount of the credit. This applies to all property placed in service after December 31, 2005 and before January

1, 2008; credit reverts to the permanent 10 percent credit thereafter.

What could have the most impact for typical Americans, the bill also creates a new 30 percent tax credit for residential solar installations for two years; capped at \$2000; applied to all property placed in service after December 31, 2005 and before January 1, 2008. Likewise, all solar technologies will be eligible but solar thermal, and solar PV are expected to make the most gains.

"If consumers have been waiting for a tax credit for solar, now is the time to do it," Resch said. "It coincides perfectly with electricity and natural gas prices skyrocketing, and if you think prices will go down, you're mistaken."

A number of other provisions included in the final bill that will greatly benefit solar, including federal loan guarantees for large-scale "innovative technologies," government solar purchase authorizations and energy service performance contracts.

Other items that can have an immediate and tangible impact for consumers across the U.S. are tax breaks for investments in energy efficiency appliances and an extension of a \$2000 hybrid vehicle tax break.

The solar tax credit may appear small in relation to the majority of the bill's focus on the traditional fossil and nuclear industries but it's a major victory for solar and possibly a sign of shifting attitudes towards solar.

"I can't emphasize how much this is a huge precedent for the solar industry," said Resch who added that fuel cells were the only other non-traditional energy technology to gain a 30 percent investment tax credit.

"I had folks from Exxon coming up and saying 'how did you do this' and 'you came out of left field,'" Resch said.

And how they did it was to intensely focus the solar lobbying effort like it's rarely, if ever, been done before. Resch said the solar industry has traditionally been a fractured industry, unable to agree on a specific and focused set of policy goals. He took lessons and experience he learned in his time prior

to SEIA when he was Senior V.P. of the Natural Gas Supply Association. He knew if solar was to gain anything out of this energy bill they would all have to agree on one policy goal.

"People sometimes expect for us in the solar industry to come out with that fractured face," Resch said. "It was a massive team effort where the entire solar industry pulled together to make this happen. It was the singular message, that's why we got the 30%."

Solar provisions that would benefit all forms of solar were not included in any of the previous congressional efforts to enact an energy bill. Resch said the inclusion of this credit shows recognition that Congress feels that solar is an important part of the energy mix and that they want to see it grow.

At least one Congressman agrees. "The 30 percent solar credit for consumers is great news for this nation's future energy independence," said Congressman Charles Bass (R-NH), a key negotiator of the final energy bill.

"This provision will one day be viewed as the most significant renewable energy policy shift in more than two decades. Consumers driving the industry to meet high expectations and pushing the nation toward self-reliance will produce far greater results than other incentives aimed at producers and utilities."

SOURCE:
Jesse Broehl, Editor
www.renewableenergyaccess.com

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Membership information, updated information, and assistance in locating other resources can be obtained on the ISEA website: www.illinoisolar.org

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"Power Play" (from page 1)

and create thousands of jobs, according to a Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity study. It would also help protect consumers against volatile gas and coal prices. Exelon/ComEd should reconsider this anti-consumer, anti-environmental breach of their commitment."

In a statement Thursday, the governor said he was not deterred by Exelon/ComEd's threat.

"We will not let Exelon/ComEd's decision to pull out of the state's renewable-energy plan change our opposition to Exelon/ComEd's quest for higher electricity rates, nor will we let it deter our efforts to find alternate sources of energy," Gov. Blagojevich said. "In this time of crisis, it has become abundantly clear that we need to develop and use alternative sources of energy. I strongly urge Exelon/ComEd to reconsider their decision."

Other members of the coalition echoed the governor's words.

"Exelon/ComEd is holding the renewable-energy plan captive in an attempt to steamroll its illegal rate hike proposal past state regulators," David Kolata, CUB Director of Policy and Governmental Affairs, said. "The company has broken its promise to move forward on a plan that will reduce pollution and save consumers money."

"Exelon/ComEd is backing away from its commitment to clean, renewable energy for Illinois customers, without regard to how this decision will impact our economy and our environment," Rebecca Stanfield of Illinois Public Interest Research Group said.

"Over the course of this year, Exelon/ComEd has made numerous public promises to implement the goals of the Governor's Sustainable Energy Plan. Now, at the eleventh hour, the company has decided to hold these benefits hostage to a massive, unfair rate increase. Exelon/ComEd should fulfill its clean, wind energy promises and debate its rate proposal separately on its own merits."

The goal of the Governor's renewable energy initiative was to encourage utilities statewide to use cleaner and more efficient sources of energy. Exelon/ComEd committed to the voluntary plan, and this week was scheduled to file a proposal detailing how it would buy 8 percent of its power from renewable-energy sources, such as wind turbines, by 2012.

However, the company reneged on that promise after the governor voiced opposition to a power-auction plan Exelon/ComEd wants to use to set electric rates after a state-mandated rate freeze ends next year.

CUB and other consumer advocates have warned that Exelon/ComEd's proposal would lead to a rate hike of 20 percent or more. Exelon/ComEd's decision to back out of the Sustainable Energy Plan likely jeopardizes much of the wind development in 2006 as wind developers planning to build in Illinois next year will likely send their wind turbines elsewhere.

In a letter to the Illinois Commerce Commission, Gov. Blagojevich urged the Commission to reject Exelon/ComEd's auction proposal, writing that it would circumvent the law and lead to an "unjustified" rate hike.

SOURCE:
Environmental Law & Policy Center
www.elpc.org

Trucking Firm Promotes Use of Biodiesel

NASHVILLE, Ill. - Norrenberns Truck Service is not only using a biodiesel mix for its entire, 162-truck fleet, it is letting others know about renewable fuels.

The company earlier this year had three of its trailers outfitted with sharp graphics proclaiming that the trucks operate on biodiesel fuel. The graphics were provided by the Illinois Soybean Checkoff Board. Norrenberns is the largest truck line in Illinois to go to 100 percent biodiesel, according to ISCB officials.

"This gives greater awareness, not only of soy biodiesel, but of other forms of renewable fuels," said Kevin Brink, vice president of business development at Norrenberns. "We need more incentives to build processing plants." Graphics on the trailers declare, "This truck runs on biodiesel

made from soybeans" above larger print that says, "Soy Biodiesel Powered."

According to Brink, the firm's use of biodiesel translates to 3,500 acres of soybeans grown in the region each year. NOTS, as the company is known, uses 2.5 million gallons of fuel annually. "Anything we can do to make ourselves less energy dependent, the better," he said. "And right now, it's cost effective."

With prices of gasoline and diesel fuel skyrocketing, biodiesel and ethanol blends such as E-85 are becoming more and more appealing, according to Brink. He noted that while mileage is not quite as good with biodiesel as with pure diesel fuel, the bottom line is not affected because the fuel is cheaper.

Norrenberns uses B11, an 11 percent blend of biodiesel with petroleum diesel. Illinois legislation passed in 2003 exempts blends of more than 10 percent biodiesel from sales tax. The recently passed federal energy bill provides for excise tax breaks on the production of biodiesel fuel.

U.S. Rep. John Shimkus, R-Ill., was also present as the trucks were unveiled here. Shimkus is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and has long pushed for tax incentives for use of renewable fuels. He recounted how members of the Illinois Soybean Association began working with him in 1998 on biodiesel legislation.

"We went from 25,000 gallons in a year up to a quarter-million gallons, and it has gone up from there," Shimkus said. "I travel around all over to thank folks for selling renewable fuels. It's a labor of love. These are success stories we need to support. We've been going along in this country with no plan for the future of energy sources. Now we have goals."

Increasing the number of stations offering biodiesel is a key goal of soybean organizations. Dwain Ford, a member of the American Soybean Association board of directors and former ASA president, expressed hope that locations will increase rapidly.

"Nearly 50 percent of farmers are utilizing biodiesel today," Ford said. "And for many who aren't, it's because it's not available to them. If all our farmers used biodiesel, that would require 475 million bushels of soybeans. That's basically all the soybeans produced in Illinois. This is a tremendous market."

SOURCE:
Nat Williams, Agrinews (Illinois)
www.agrinews-pubs.com

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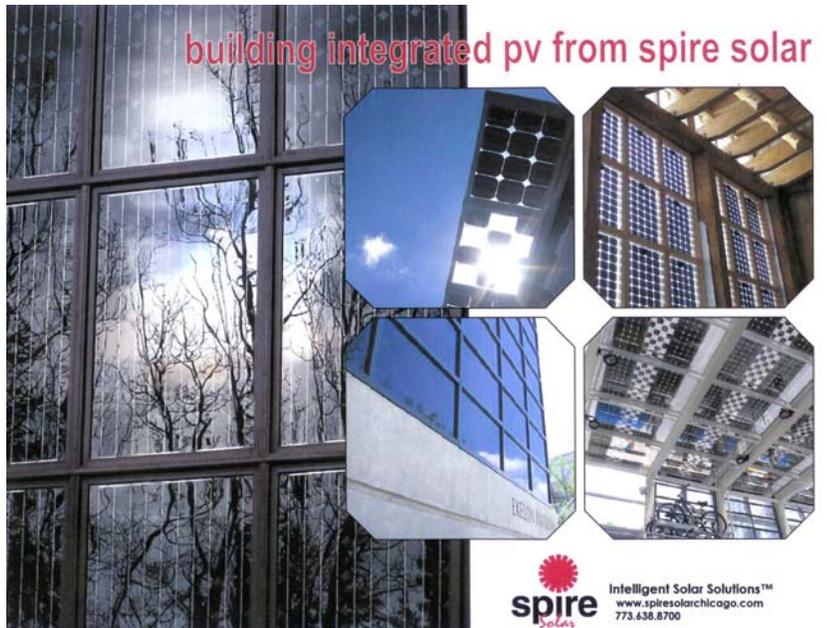
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<p>Chicago Dept. of Environment Sadhu Johnston, Commissioner 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2500 Chicago, IL 60602 Phone: 312-744-7606 Fax: 312-744-6451 Email environment@cityofchicago.org Web: www.cityofchicago.org/environment</p>	<p>Facilities Research Nancy Hamill Governale North Barrington, IL 60010 847-712-6251 Email: hamill@iit.edu</p>	<p>The Field Museum Sherrie Gauley 1400 S Lake Shore Dr Chicago, IL 60605 Phone: 312-922-9410 Web: www.fnmh.org</p>
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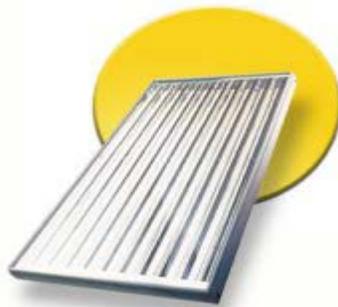
ISEA CHARTER BUSINESS MEMBER SOLARGENIX

WINSTON SERIES COLLECTOR SELECTED TOP-10 PRODUCT

The Winston Series Compound Parabolic Collector (CPC) Solar thermal Collector, manufactured by **Solargenix Energy, LLC** has been selected as one of the 2004 BuildingGreen Top-10 products. This annual award recognizes the most innovative and exciting green building products added to the GreenSpec® Directory during the past year.

This year's BuildingGreen Top-10 covers a wide spectrum of products and applications. Some are used primarily in commercial buildings, others in houses. Some are considered green because they utilize renewable energy, others because they avoid toxic chemicals or are made from recycled or independently certified green materials, and still others because they save energy or water.

A big driver in the development of green products is the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED® Rating System (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), which awards points for certain product characteristics or the energy or water savings they can achieve. Designers of LEED buildings are looking for



green products, and manufacturers are responding, said Wilson.

The Winston Series CPC solar thermal collector is the most advanced solar thermal product on the market. Manufactured at the Solargenix facility in Chicago, the collector is used for solar water heating, space heating, industrial process heat and solar cooling projects. The advanced science that allows the parabolic collector to be designed as a building integrated flat plate collector is the patented non-imaging optics developed at the University of Chicago by Dr. Roland Winston who now is on staff at the University of California at Merced.

The Winston Series CPC collector is the only solar collector used in the Solargenix water heating product line

of active and passive solar heating systems. The aesthetical design, integrated mounting systems and quality materials gives builders and designers flexibility in use and installation of the solar collector array.

GreenSpec is the leading national directory of green building products. The 1,800-plus products included in the directory are selected by editors of Environmental Building News (EBN) based on criteria developed over the past 13 years. Environmental Building News, founded in 1992, is the oldest and most widely respected publication in the green building field.

Manufacturers do not pay to be listed in GreenSpec, and neither GreenSpec nor EBN carries advertising; both are supported by users of the information. This policy of not accepting money from manufacturers allows us to be objective in reviewing products for inclusion, said Wilson. GreenSpec is available as a print directory as well as part of a web resource, the BuildingGreen Suite.

SOURCE:
BuildingGreen
www.BuildingGreen.com
800-861-0954

JOIN US in the common goal of promoting solar/renewable technologies, providing energy education and establishing a sustainable energy network. Your support today can help provide a cleaner environment tomorrow.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 1 <i>Saturday, 10am-5pm</i>	ASES National Solar Tour (An Illinois "Virtual Tour" available on-line)	www.illinoissolar.org
October 15 <i>Saturday, 10am-12pm</i>	ISEA Fall Membership Meeting DuSable Museum of African American History Chicago, IL	See Page 3
October 21 <i>Friday, 10am-12pm</i>	Kane County Energy Futures Conference Elgin, IL	See Page 6
November 9 <i>Wednesday, 7:30-9pm</i>	American Humanists monthly meeting Naperville, IL	See Page 5
November 9 <i>Wednesday 9-5pm</i>	Regional Million Solar Roofs Initiative "Solar Means Safety: How Safe Is Your Community?" Workshop Chicago, IL	<i>(For municipal and state government representatives, & solar manufacturers)</i>
December 10 <i>Saturday, 10am-12pm</i>	ISEA Winter Membership Meeting Chicago Center for Green Technology Chicago, IL	<i>(including ISEA board nominations)</i>

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