



CRES NEWS

Newsletter of the Colorado Renewable Energy Society

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A Chapter of the American Solar Energy Society

MARCH 2003

RE LEGISLATION PROGRESS IN COLORADO LEGISLATURE - Panel of Experts to Report at Next CRES Meeting

Bush Hydrogen Fuel Cell Initiative

In his latest State of the Union address, President Bush surprised his friends and foes alike by announcing his new "Freedom CAR and Fuel" initiative. He proposed that \$1.2 billion be allocated over the next five years by the federal government for research and development of hydrogen generation processes and fuel cell technology. His goal is to have hydrogen and fuel cells ready to replace gasoline and the internal combustion engine for automotive use by 2020. For starters, in fiscal year 2004 he is asking that \$165 million be set aside for this program; about half (\$87 million) for hydrogen generation research, and the remainder (\$78 million) for fuel-cell technology. The plan will pursue research on a broad portfolio of possible hydrogen sources. It is unclear how much funding will be appropriated to the research of hydrogen generation using renewable energy technologies but it is expected that a large amount will be funneled through NREL.

While this new initiative is to be applauded, there are some questions and misgivings with respect to its execution. It has been pointed out that one of its principal failures is that the path it charts towards hydrogen does not lead simultaneously toward developing renewable energy sources; rather, it diverts funds away from them. According to the White House, only 720 million of the \$1.2 billion Bush pledged for his hydrogen plan for the next five years is new money. The rest, about 40 percent, is comprised of funds redirected from the renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

Also, as most energy professionals view it, the Bush plan is geared toward a long-term energy shift away from fossil fuels; it makes no provision for the short-term. As Ashok Gupta, the lead energy economist for the Natural Resource Defense Council, puts it: "The FreedomCAR is really about Bush's freedom to do nothing about cars today." Little concern is shown for the growing oil crises that we are facing now, and certainly in the future. A more serious plan would integrate this hydrogen initiative with other short-term measures to reduce fossil fuel consumption today -- such as mandating stricter mileage standards for cars and trucks, offering tax incentives for hybrid-engine cars, and encouraging the greater use of alternative fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol.

The real test of this new hydrogen initiative will be to see how many dollars and effort will be expended in researching ways to produce hydrogen from non-fossil fuel sources. The least costly method of producing hydrogen for automotive use today is to harvest it from natural gas. This is somewhat of an environmental improvement over burning gasoline directly in cars, but not very much -- and it does little to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. It would be far better to extract the hydrogen from water by electrolysis using renewable energy electricity from wind or photovoltaics. At the moment, such electrolysis methods are considerably more costly than steam methane reformation, but with further research and development, it is projected that they can eventually become far more cost effective.

The next meeting of the Colorado Renewable Energy Society will be at **5:30pm** on Wednesday, **March 19**. It will be held once again at the **NREL Visitor Center**, located about two blocks west of the Marriott Hotel in the Denver West office complex. Take exit 263 from I-70, or turn north at the Marriott sign on Colfax between Simms and Indiana.

Carol Tombari, head of the CRES Government Affairs Committee, will chair a panel of experts to review and discuss pending legislation at both the state and federal levels. Primary focus will be on HB 1295, the Renewable Energy Standard legislation now working its way through the Colorado legislature. Carol formerly headed the Texas Energy Office and the NREL Office of State and Local Initiatives.

Panelists will include the following (more may be added later):

Matt Baker, Executive Director, CoPIRG - He will provide an overview of the political strategy being employed to win passage of HB1295.

Stephanie Bonin, Energy Analyst, CoPIRG - She will describe the grassroots campaign that took place to build support for HB 1295 and clean energy in general.

Rick Gilliam, Bill drafter, Land and Water Fund of the Rockies. He will give an overview of significant provisions in the HB 1295 bill.

Susan LeFever, Legislative Director, Sierra Club. She will describe the environmental community's new interest in energy issues in general and HB 1295 in particular.

Bob Noun, Deputy Associate Director, External Relations, NREL. He will describe pending Federal legislation and other issues of interest related to clean energy at the national level.

Colorado *Snap Shots*

This column will feature short news items, meeting announcements, personality profiles and other energy matters of interest to Coloradians.

CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

Mar. 12... Sierra Club 20/20 Energy Campaign Meeting. *High Performance Homes Have Landed in Colorado.* 6:30pm, REI Store, 1416 Platte Street, Denver. Guest Speaker: Steve Andrews, E-Star Colorado. For further details call 303-861-8819 or visit www.rmc.sierraclub.org.

Mar 14... N-CRES March Meeting, Renewable Energy Advocacy. 7:00pm, University Club at CSU, Ft. Collins. Guest Speakers: Robin Hubbard, CoPIRG and Ron Larson, CRES. For further details call Alison Mason at 970-493-1295 or send her an e-mail at alison@greyrock.org.

Mar. 26-28... Aspen Clean Energy Roundtable X and Workshop. *Investment in Sustainable Energy and Transportation.* Presented by Montreux Energy. Hotel Jerome, Aspen, Colorado. For further details, visit www.MontreuxEnergy.com or call 303-534-0193.

Apr. 8... N-CRES April Meeting. *Biodiesel.* 7:00pm. University Club at CSU, Ft. Collins. Guest speaker: John Long, BlueSun Biodiesel. For further details call Alison Mason at 970-493-1295 or e-mail her at alison@greyrock.org.

April 24-25... Colorado Sustainability Summit. *Forging Solutions at Colleges and Universities.* U of Colorado at Boulder. For further details visit www.colorado.edu/ecenter.

Moving Forward - by Paul Notari

On March 29, 1996, Ron Larson and myself sent out a letter to some 150+ renewable energy professionals and advocates living in Colorado asking them to join a new, yet unnamed organization, aimed at advancing renewable energy technologies throughout the state. On April 8, the first meeting of the group was held and the name "Colorado Renewable Energy Society" was established. At that meeting, I was named "Temporary Treasurer" of the Society; two months later I was formally elected to the office and the "temporary" tag was removed. Since that time I have continuously held this office and have served on the CRES Board of Directors.

At the February 19, 2003 Board meeting, I formally resigned as Treasurer and member of the Board. I did not do so without some regret. During my seven years on the Board, I have been in the company of some of the finest individuals I have ever known and have enjoyed my service as your Treasurer and Board member immensely. I've seen this fledgling organization gain immeasurably in numbers and stature and become a strong voice in legislative and other matters throughout the area. But it is time I turn over the reins to newer, younger members of the organization. We need new, young blood to move this Society forward for the years ahead. I believe we "oldtimers" launched this organization in the right direction...now its up to you youngsters to keep it going that way. I have every confidence that you will. Good luck, and I'll see you around!

Survey Shows RE Support in Colorado

A recent survey by the Wells Fargo Public Opinion Research Program at the University of Colorado showed that residents would prefer new electrical generation from renewable sources, such as wind and solar, by a 3 to 1 margin over all other sources, mainly coal and natural gas. The survey covered all age groups, political party members, and regions of the state and had a margin of error of only 4.1%.

Wind was cited by 37.5 percent of the respondents as the preferred method of generating electricity; solar was cited by 36.2 percent. Survey participants did rate coal as the best fuel for reliability and affordability but gave it the worst rating for environmental damage. The survey will be used to support HB 1295 that has now passed the Colorado House and is currently being debated in the Senate (see story in last issue of CRES NEWS and learn more at the next CRES meeting - see page 1).

6th Annual Colorado Renewable Energy Conference



June 27-29, 2003

Montrose Pavillon
Montrose, Colorado

www.cres-energy.org

CALL FOR ENTRIES

2003 Renewable Energy in Buildings Award

The Colorado Renewable Energy Society is pleased to announce its Call for Entries for the 2003 Renewable Energy in Buildings Awards for designers, contractors and builders.

- Awards will be presented at the Colorado Renewable Energy Conference in Montrose
- Press releases will be sent to state and local media

Entry forms and full details are available at www.cres-energy.org

or call Doug Seiter at 303-275-4810

CRES CORNER

Annual Meeting and Party

Seventy-nine people attended CRES' Annual Meeting and Party on February 22. The event was held at the Lakewood Heritage Center's *Country School House*, a unique venue that boasted plenty of room to eat, smooze and dance. A four piece "smooth jazz" band including several CRES members and led by Morey Wolfson, provided the entertainment for the evening. The deserts and refreshments were great and the formal meeting short. The later included short briefings of CRES activities by Past President, Megan Edmunds, New President, Thom Johnson and Treasurer, Paul Notari. The evening was capped off by a "Silent Auction" run by Craig Cain which netted CRES almost \$1,000. By all measures, the evening was a major success. Much credit should go to organizers Morey Wolfson and Maria Finley and to our Executive Director, Sheila Townsend.

New CRES Treasurer Elected

Larry Sherwood was elected CRES Treasurer to replace Paul Notari at the Board meeting of February 19 (see Notari's parting note on page 2). Larry, who was the Executive Director of ASES from July 1988 until February 2001, has extensive experience with all financial aspects of nonprofit association operations and will be most capable of taking over the duties of the CRES treasurer.

N-CRES Progress

N-CRES (CRES Northern Colorado subchapter) held its first Organizing Committee (OC) meeting on February 22 and unanimously approved by-laws proposed by Peggy Plate and Jim Manuel. Following the OC meeting, a general membership meeting was held and approved the bylaws. A slate of nominations for the N-CRES Board of Directors was also chosen at the meeting for later vote by the membership.

Colorado Renewable Energy Bill

HB-1295, which requires renewable energy to be included in any additional generation capacity expansion by utilities in the state, has been strongly supported by CRES and several other sister organizations. It has now passed the Colorado House and soon will be considered in the Senate. House Majority Leader Lola Spradley (R-Beulah) and Minority Leader Jennifer Varga (D-Denver) sponsored the bill in the House. Ken Kester (R-Las Animas) and Terry Phillips (D-Louisville) are sponsors of the bill in the Senate. The bill has good support in the Senate, but not as strong as in the House. All CRES members should contact their local state senator **immediately** and urge him/her to vote for the bill.

CRES Member Replies to Anti-RE Legislation Editorial in Rocky Mountain News... The following "letter to the editor" from CRES member Bolko von Roedern was published in the February 10 issue of the Rocky Mountain News and is worth repeating here:

"It is ironic that the News ran its *Wind Bill isn't Consumer Friendly* editorial on a day when complaints about fossil fuel prices crossing some "pain thresholds" abounded. The writer did not have his facts straight. Wind power is cost competitive at today's natural gas prices, predicted not to come down in two years, even when one megawatt of wind power requires, per Xcel testimony, two-thirds of a megawatt of "dispatchable" power as backup.

Fossil fuel prices are high because supplies are insufficient (or deemed insufficient) and the energy market is very inelastic; i.e., large price increases cause only a small reduction in the consumption necessary to accommodate the shortage in supply. Consequently, small reductions in demand may then effect a large reduction in the price of the commodity. Wind power can do this for us."

CRES NEWS

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CRES MEETINGS

Unless otherwise specified, CRES meetings will begin at 5:30pm and will be held at the NREL Visitor Center located off the Denver West exit of I-70 just past the Marriott hotel.

March 19 - General Meeting -

This meeting will feature a panel of experts who will inform the audience about the status of RE legislation winding through the Colorado legislature. See Page 1 for further details.

April 23 - General Meeting -

Guest Speaker: Howard Geller, Director of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project. He will summarize the experience of energy efficiency bills in the 2003 Colorado legislature.

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303-806-5317

CRES INTERNET NOS.

e-mail: info@cres-energy.org

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RENEWABLE ENERGY BRIEFS

Canadian Firm to Begin Production of New Thin-Film PV Cells... Automation Tooling Systems, Inc. (ATS) of Cambridge, Ontario Canada is to begin commercial manufacture of its next generation of thin-film solar cells which will utilize a proprietary photovoltaic technology called "Spherical Solar Technology." This revolutionary new PV cell consists of thousands of tiny silicon beads bonded in an aluminum foil. Based on technical design enhancements made over the past year, the company believes that they have achieved a sun-light-to-energy ratio that is comparable to conventional multicrystalline cells at far less cost per watt. ATS is currently in the process of constructing a highly automated production facility and intends to begin commercial production by as early as this Autumn.

Toyota Premieres New Fuel Cell Concept Car... Toyota Motor Corp. unveiled its *FINE-S* hydrogen fuel cell hybrid-electric concept vehicle at a press conference at the recent 2003 North American International Auto Show. The concept vehicle was touted as "high in styling and high in performance." It boasts a special design that allows fuel-cell components to be modularly installed throughout the vehicle permitting electric power to be individually applied to all four wheels.

Blair Proposes Strong Measures to Curtail Greenhouse Gas Emissions... On February 24, British Prime Minister Tony Blair outlined a sweeping plan to combat global warming. Blair called for the UK and the European Union member countries to cut carbon dioxide emissions 60 percent by 2050. This reduction, which radically exceeds the amount recommended in the Kyoto protocol, is of a magnitude that scientists agree could save the planet from the most dire consequences of the greenhouse effect. In his speech, Blair also criticized President Bush for backing out of Kyoto and failing to propose a meaningful alternative. Environmentalists praised the Prime Minister's vision but reserved final judgement until the Prime Minister comes out with more concrete policy proposals.

Bush Administration Reveals Voluntary Steps Being Taken to Curb U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions... On February 12, Administration officials announced modest agreements with a number of industries for voluntary controls on emissions of greenhouse gases. Utilities pledged to reduce the intensity of emissions by 3 to 5 percent by 2012; the chemical industry by 18 percent; and the auto manufacturing industry by 10 percent. Nine other industries also joined in but to a lesser degree than the foregoing three.

CRES CLASSIFIEDS

POSITION OPENING - Sierra Club is seeking a person with organizing skills to fill a special grant position of limited duration (ends 11/25/03). The title for the position is *Regional Conservation Organizer*. The person selected will work with regional field staff and chapter/group volunteers to organize support for grassroots campaigns and to generate turnout for campaign visibility events. He/she will also work with appropriate staff to integrate the regional field programs with the goals and objectives of the Sierra Club's Environmental Public Education Programs.

Salary is \$2,233/month plus benefits. For further information contact Susan LeFever at e-mail address slefever@vanion.com. Refer to Job No. R1066Z.

POSITION OPENING - Part time Research Analyst for start-up hydrogen energy communications company. Skills should include managing/maintaining databases, extensive knowledge of hydrogen and energy industries, excellent writing and organizing abilities. Part time with potential for full time. \$15/hr to start. E-mail resume to info@hydrogen.com.

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