
Energy Shift®

April

2007

Are You Ready to Try a New Mode of Transportation?

As gasoline prices begin their predictable “driving season” rise, it has become clear that it is time to seriously consider how to fit another mode of transportation into our lives. We are not necessarily talking about a smaller vehicle, or a hybrid—although those are both reasonable alternatives to the status quo.

First, look at all of your transportation “needs”: keep a running list of why and when you get in the car during a week (e.g., to and from work, post office, grocery shopping two times, taking a child to an event nine times, a weekend camping trip etc.). A certain percentage of the time you have a legitimate need for a large vehicle or the speed and protection from rain, heat, or cold temperatures that some type of car provides. Other times the distance, the need for exercise, or time to think may all indicate that a percentage of your transportation needs can be met with another mode of transportation.

What are the options?

Two or three are obvious. The car trip can simply be skipped, e.g., the post office is next to the drug store and a decision to put off getting stamps until the next trip to the drug store is one option. You can walk. The post office may be a six-minute drive but only a 25-minute walk. We are told that for optimum health we should get an hour of exercise daily. By going to the post office (and perhaps the drug store, too) and back on foot, you get almost an hour of exercise, the completion of a couple of errands, the opportunity to clear your mind -- and avoid the use of gasoline.

Or you can use public transportation. This is most efficient for trips to and from work in urban areas. Other uses are often viewed as too great a time sink (with walking, the time invested is also providing the important function of exercise) or not practical due to limited service in areas that are less populated.

A third “standard” is to ride a bike to complete an errand. This is viable but realistically, for only a small portion of errands because we might be reluctant to work up a sweat or have a limited capacity for cargo. There are two terrific solutions to this issue. One is to invest in a bicycle that includes a small electric motor. These products are more

expensive than standard bicycles but are not inaccessible for most people. The rider may choose to get some exercise and only utilize the electrical “assist” for uphill portions of the ride, or can use the motor throughout the trip. One well-made and reliable manufacturer we have found is the Powabyke. Check out the different styles that are available within their product line at <http://www.powabykeusa.com>. There are bicycles and tricycles (adult style, for added stability) and some have significant cargo capacity. If you decide to purchase a bike and mention promotion code ES2089, you will enjoy a 10% discount on the purchase price of your selection!



Another “new” option is a modern version of one of the oldest means of travel humans have devised. Canine power. In fact, dogs crave exercise and time with their human family. Using a dog with a harness to supplement a bicycle or scooter for transportation is gaining popularity. So long as the dog is of sufficient size, and the trip is appropriate to the health and fitness of the dog (three miles is a suggested optimum distance to travel), this is a win-win mode of transportation. If you aren’t convinced, look at this video clip, and you will be reassured that this provides a great option and the dogs really do enjoy the ride too <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3196665574499327186>. A sample of equipment providers to help you harness Rover’s enthusiasm (please note: dog experts agree that the single biggest gift you can give your dog is adequate exercise so that they are relaxed and obedient companions when they are indoors with you)

include: <http://www.digglestore.com/dogscac1.html> and <http://www.dogscooter.com/index.html>.

A Segway is another option. More expensive than a bike, but smaller and often easier to store between rides, the Segway is a device that has primarily been used by private companies and some branches of government as an alternative “fleet vehicle” for certain applications. Think of the mail carrier in smaller communities or speedy transportation within a large industrial complex that doesn’t make noise or generate exhaust. If you are interested in considering a Segway, you may find out more about them and their availability at: <http://www.segway.com>. There are numerous models now and you may find one that is tailored to your needs. There are dealerships in most states and many of them have both sales and rental departments allowing you to try one out to see if it is something you could use as a key component of your ongoing energy shift...

Why Are So Many Waiting For Someone Else to Find the Substantive Solutions?

Thanks to Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio, among others, we are all getting to hear a lot more about global climate change and greenhouse gases than we used to. Even the current administration and various icons of conspicuous consumption are beginning to do their part to reduce our collective footprint on the earth. Or are they? Of course, every CFL used to replace an incandescent light bulb helps; just as every item purchased that is made with “earth friendly” methods does. Let’s not kid ourselves, though. There has not been a widespread change in the way we view “stuff” and most people are waiting for someone else to take care of the problems presented by our dependence on fossil fuel.

Our Love Affair With Things: If anything, the new attention being paid to “being green” and “sustainability” has the marketing and manufacturing sectors working overtime to come up with products and services that the public’s growing interest in things green can buy. The good news is the growth in awareness of important topics occurring among the population. Also good is the genuine improvement in the quality and methods used to manufacture the things we need. The not-so-good news is that the solution to these problems is not simply throwing things out to buy a new greener version of the same thing. There is a virtual avalanche of goods being touted as the responsible choice. This is only true if you need the item to begin with! Everything we have, from a pair of shoes to a coffee table to a computer keyboard involved complex systems to bring raw materials together to the

manufacturing process. These items were then packaged and transported and purchased. Each of the steps along the way was totally dependent upon the use of energy. Letting go of our things only to rush out and get more things is to waste energy at the highest level. Fortune Magazine reports that while Americans have doubled the rate of solid waste recycling (cardboard, cans and bottles at the curb, for example) in recent years, we have concurrently added tens of millions of tons of additional solid waste to the total amount that we generate.

Our Reliance on Political Solutions: Certainly we need the large industrialized “systems” that account for the majority what keeps our world functioning to change. However, it is not nearly enough to sit back and wait for “them” to come up with a “solution”. Current discussion revolves around things like increasing the average miles per gallon of the U.S. fleet of cars to 35 by 2012 and the reportedly “tough” goal of reducing our energy consumption 20% over the next 20 years. This is not a tough goal to meet. It is a goal that seriously underestimates what we could do if individuals took responsibility now. We can’t wait for changes to be dictated by government mandate (which will take months or even years to develop and would rely on compliance schedules stretched out over more years) or for business to determine that it is finally “profitable” to invest in alternative energy development -- while individuals literally suffer the consequences of little or no alternatives in the meantime.

Our Fear of Damaging the Economy: Many of us are hesitant to “make do with less” because of the perception that if we are not constantly buying things someone somewhere will lose their job. This can happen, but it is much more complex than that. There are many jobs that are generated through the development of new technologies, and the promotion of new ideas and ways of doing things. While some sectors of the economy may face job losses (or virtually disappear over the long term) there are others that will develop in their place. Similarly, business models need to evolve to accommodate and recognize a different kind of success. For example, rather than counting “units sold” as a key factor; the production of better quality items, that last longer and as a result bring in a comparable or higher profit level and increased customer satisfaction could be among the new goals.

Take Responsibility Now: Make choices in your life each day that support moving away from fossil fuels. Recognize that an energy shift is more than simply minimizing the use of oil, gas, and coal. Devote your precious time to the things that matter most to you—prioritize. We are all busy.



If climate change, saving money, economic security, protecting our precious resources matter to you, then making small changes is not “difficult” -- it is rewarding. Soon, the behavior changes will be automatic and new ones can be added.

Energy Shift Introduces a New Product—EcoForm™ Plant Pots

Energy Shift has selected a new item that gives you another tool to use in your quest to move away from consumption of fossil fuel. The things that we promote may be in the form of knowledge and information or products that reduce or eliminate our demand for products formulated with petroleum-based materials. Maintaining our focus on simple, inexpensive items, we continue to introduce small changes in everyday living that cumulatively can have a huge benefit.

We are pleased to share with you another option for your potted plants. The EcoForm™ plant pot is an ideal substitute for plastic planters. Knowing that plastic is derived from the same barrel of oil that gives us gasoline, massive trade deficits, air pollution and the destruction of our planet—we hope that you are as excited as we are about another opportunity to turn away from the fossil fuel version and toward a new and better version of an ordinary household item that so many of us use.

Useful indoors or out, these pots are made from natural ingredients (primarily rice hulls) and get their color from natural binding agents (starch-based, water-soluble binders and biodegradable additives). No pollutants are used or produced at any stage of the manufacturing process. Since

all scraps are recycled in the production process, no materials are wasted. Only a small amount of water is used in the binding formula, and the organic pigments are environmentally friendly. Heat and pressure are used to cement the ingredients and produce EcoForms™. They are designed to last for at least five years and retain their smooth attractive appearance. EcoForms™ are resistant to freezing and thawing damage and have excellent heat insulating characteristics, creating an environment that enhances root development and overall plant performance. EcoForms™ planting pots promote excellent drainage with holes and feet that ensure proper air movement.

Energy Shift strives to provide ideas and products that readers will embrace as innovative and worth trying. Keep in mind that there is great power in numbers. Just as it is unfortunate that hundreds of thousands of plastic plant pots will be used this spring, it is fortunate that an alternative has presented itself and we are here to help promote its use. Small, medium, and large pots for nursery, landscaping and farm use are available as well. The added benefit of the EcoForm™ pots for landscapers, for example, is that the pots will stand up under repeated reuse. The Grower Series is only available in natural and is economically priced for large orders. Contact Energy Shift for bulk orders, should you have needs for this sort of application.



Interconnectedness (in'ter ke nek'tid nis), n. the quality or condition of being interconnected; interrelatedness; the interconnectedness of all nations working toward world peace. [1920-25; INTERCONNECT + -ED + -NESS] From the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, Unabridged.

We are very excited about a relatively new Internet site called One Billion Bulbs. You can get there by clicking the Special Links button at the bottom of the Energy Shift home page. The site was launched in November 2006 with the goal, “to be a catalyst for positive, meaningful environmental change by: educating people about the environmental and economic benefits of replacing standard incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent (CFL) light bulbs; and by encouraging a large number of people to replace standard incandescent light bulbs with CFL light bulbs.”

Where is the interconnectedness here? Well, just take a look at the web site! Equipped with a map of the United States and a map of the world, the site shows you how “we” are doing in reaching the lofty goal of replacing one billion incandescent light bulbs with CFLs. The site features all sorts of good data, not the least of which is instantly seeing how many pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and how many dollars were saved by the bulb change that you record on the site. You also can see how many bulb changes have been recorded in each of the fifty states and every nation on earth. This site simply and clearly illustrates the power of working together -- groups of all kinds have signed up. You are invited to record your CFL use under the Energy Shift group!

The interesting interconnectedness footnote here is that the site was put up by a software engineering firm, not an environmental organization.

Something to Think About

Consider signing up for a daily email tip that is designed to appeal to the “light green” people out there. Not exclusively focused on alternative energy use and conservation, the tips are great no matter what “shade of green” you use to define yourself. We highly recommend subscribing to the clever and funny email tip that appears in your mailbox each weekday anyway. Go to the Energy Shift web site and click on the Special Links button at the bottom of the home page.

A Good Book

Not exactly a book, the Portland Peak Oil Task Force Final Report, is one of the first documents of its kind and is available online at: <http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=145732>. The Report is the final product of the Portland, Oregon City Council’s 12-member citizen task force that looked at the potential economic and social consequences of peak oil (see June 2007 Energy Shift Newsletter for a description of peak oil). The report includes discussion of impacts and vulnerabilities, but, most importantly, it provides recommendations for

managing the impact of rising energy costs and reduced supplies of conventional energy.

Energy Shift wants to help you put words into action. Begin your own personal energy shift! If you are already well on your way, share these ideas with others. Sometimes the best way to help someone get started is to give him or her something useful instead of just talking about making a change.

Place your orders by using the Energy Shift web site, www.energyshift.us or place your order by U.S. mail to:

Energy Shift
P.O. Box 6549
Falls Church, VA 22040

Energy Shift® Newsletters are printed on a quarterly basis; during January, April, July and October of each year. Energy Shift newsletters are a product of Energy Shift™ Corporation. One-year subscriptions are available for \$14.00 per year or as part of the purchase price of an Energy Shift Starter Kit.

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2 Printed in and distributed from Falls Church, Virginia.



P.O. Box 6549
Falls Church, VA 22040

