

Energy Shift™

January

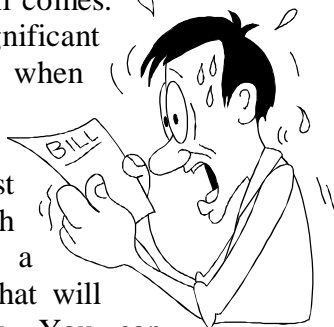
2006

Staying Warm This Winter

Two thirds of the country will experience cold or frigid temperatures most of the next few months. In the south sunny days may dominate, but cool or cold nights will require some amount of heating to maintain comfort. We are told that heating oil and natural gas prices will be up substantially compared to last year. What can you do? Well, there is plenty that can be done.

The cheap and low-tech approach to saving on your heating bills will require nothing more than a little time and attention from you. If your house is empty during the day, turn the heat down (way down, to 62 or 63 degrees), when you get home, turn it up so that it is comfortable (no higher than 68 degrees—you really can be comfortable at lower temperatures—if you dress as though its winter, long sleeve shirt and a long sleeve sweater or sweatshirt, shoes and socks). Turn it down again when you go to bed, but not too far so that morning showers are not unpleasant, if you are miserable you will give up on the routine, only to be even more unhappy when the bill comes. Save the most significant conservation for the times when no one is home.

If you think this no cost approach demands too much attention, invest in a programmable thermostat that will do the adjusting for you. You can purchase these for about \$50 to \$150. You may need to hire someone to install it, which will add to the cost. In either case, a 5 degree set back over an 8 hour period can result in savings of 5% to 12%. So, if your heating expenses are \$1,000 for the season, you could save \$50 to \$120. You will realize a payback period of 1.5 heating seasons and reduced air pollution and consumption of fossil fuels if you purchase the programmable thermostat, total



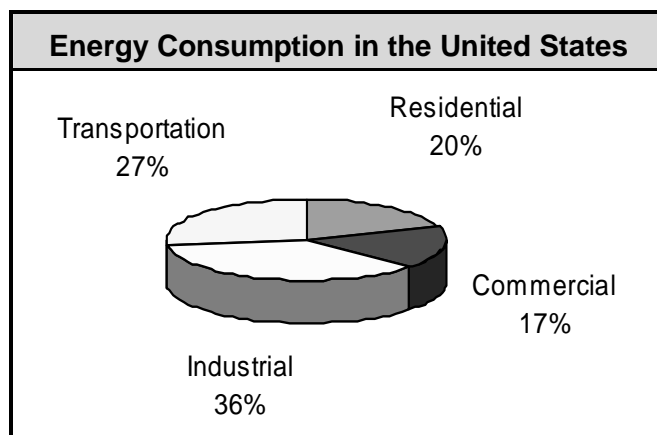
savings if you change the setting yourself. (continued on page 3)

Gasoline Prices Creeping Up Again



Once gasoline prices eased back down under \$3.00 a gallon, many Americans were surprised to find themselves breathing a sigh of relief when paying \$2.25 a gallon to fill their tanks. Perhaps one of the few good things that came out of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is that many of us are more aware of the delicate balance that exists within the energy supply system. How many of us really gave any thought to which ports were the primary delivery locations for imported crude oil? Did you know that U.S. refining capacity had dwindled over the years rather than maintained a steady state or experienced growth? Did you realize that much of our refining capacity is located in the same area that routinely has fierce hurricanes? Most of us did not; but more of us do now.

Now, 2006 has brought a new increase in gasoline prices at the pump. This time it is not due to catastrophic weather but our behavior. The current (continued on page 2)



Each one of us can impact all four of these sectors with simple choices we make each day.

Gasoline Prices Creeping Up Again (from page 1) national average price for a gallon of gasoline is \$2.37. The Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports that continued increases in the price of gasoline are expected for the first six months of the year, to be followed by a slowing or slight drop in price during the second half of 2006. How much will the price increase? Will it then drop significantly? What about the traditional increase in gasoline prices during the summer when demand goes up due to the popular "summer vacation" period? Are the folks at the EIA accounting for an increase in demand for gasoline in June, July and August and predicting a drop in prices anyway? The current explanation for gasoline prices creeping upward is demand. It used to be just our (the US) insatiable demand, now it is the whole world's insatiable demand.

The price of gasoline is a complex thing. On one side there are the factors involved with supply such as: the conditions in many oil exporting countries are unreliable; long distances must be covered to bring the product to the customer; weather can hamper transport and processing; equipment is aging; it costs more and more to find and develop new oil fields, etc. On the other side there just as many factors involved with demand. The United States makes up about 6% of the world's population but we consume about 25% of the world's oil. The U.S. population continues to rise; our per capita energy use continues to rise as well. So there are more of us and each of us is, on average, consuming more fossil fuels today than in the past. Other countries, both developed and developing, are following the same trend—particularly rapidly developing counties such as China. There will continue to be small, temporary interruptions to the upward trend in demand. For example, when the price for gasoline surpassed \$3.00 per gallon, portions of the population decreased how much they were driving and fuel efficient cars became more desirable. But, when the price eased, people grew accustomed to a slightly larger portion of their money going toward filling the tank and life has resumed pretty much unchanged.



As difficult as it may be to accept, an increase in the price of gasoline is a good thing. This triggers industry to develop technology that will eventually replace gasoline. In the past, temporary reductions in demand resulting from price increases, allowed supply to grow and prices to come down a bit. This familiar process may be a thing of the past, however, due to world wide demand and our failure to make significant progress in conservation. If we are unable to create those temporary reductions in demand that allow supply to build and prices to drop, in the future it will be a matter of slowing or speeding up the increase in prices.

It's a New Year— Start it With a New Perspective

The most common New Year's resolutions are usually to better manage our finances; to loose weight and stop some sort of negative behavior. Shifting away from fossil fuel use can help you with the realization of all of these resolutions.



Save money by using less fossil fuel; loose weight by eating fresh foods (more processing and packaging means more energy used to bring that food to market); loose more weight by walking or riding a bike to a mailbox, friend's home or a store. Occupy yourself with an Energy Shift™-ing project (instead of that negative behavior) such as installing a water heater blanket; reading about the effects of coal burning on human health; writing a suggestion to share at your workplace encouraging telecommuting and how it might work; remove clutter from a drawer or closet but instead of throwing items in the trash, take time to see that they are reused or recycled (virtually every item we touch required energy—from the mining of raw materials to its manufacture and packaging to bring to a store near you, and eventually to haul to a landfill—this applies to every thing



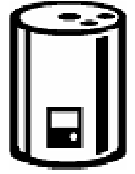
from a paper clip or pencil to an old chair, set of dishes or a cell phone).



Staying Warm This Winter (from page 1)

On sunny days open the blinds and curtains to allow the passive solar energy to supplement the heat in your home. Similarly, once the sun is down, or on cloudy days, keep the insulating properties of the blinds and curtains in place. Again, if you don't want to spend time opening and closing blinds and drapes throughout your home and you are willing to spend a little money, there are other options. You can plant evergreen trees on the northern side of your home to block cold winds; invest in insulated drapes and blinds or draft stoppers* for your windows and doors; and, install insulated outlet covers* on all of the outlets on the outside walls of your home.

Heating water is the third largest energy consumer in a typical home. Insulating the water heater (water heater blankets sell for less than \$25), and water pipes is an inexpensive and cost effective. You can also purchase water heater timers, for \$50 to \$100, to save on heating costs when no hot water is needed. Again, add to that expense if you will need to hire someone to install it for you. Turning down the temperature on your water heater from 140 to 120 degrees will further reduce fossil fuel use. Another approach is to simply use less hot water. Water flow aerators* and products that work in cold water (for example Cold Water Tide) will help you use less hot water. If your water heater is very old, don't wait for it to fail, replace it with a more efficient model.



* Products available for purchase from Energy Shift™

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.

Muscle Burns More Calories, Heat Adds to Comfort in the Home

Many are striving to be more fit—we look better, we feel better, and we are ever hopeful that it will help us to avoid the health problems that plague so many of the people we know and love. We are constantly reading about the increases in diabetes, heart disease, cancer etc attributed to being overweight. The more muscle mass we have, compared to fat, the more calories we burn both at rest and while active. For every extra pound of muscle put on, our bodies use around 50 extra calories a day. This condition has dual benefits: it helps us to continue to reduce the total amount of fat we are carrying around and it allows us to feel more comfortable at lower temperatures in our homes and at work. That's right; the burning of calories creates body heat, which if well insulated (with two layers of clothing, for example) will allow you to turn down your thermostat without feeling deprived of a comfortable home, and to feel and look better and become more healthy.....

Mission Statement:

Energy Shift™ wants to inform individuals about choices they have in how they consume energy. We are dedicated to educating and encouraging energy consumers to make choices that shift energy consumption away from polluting, often imported, fossil fuels to renewable energy sources or more efficient products and practices.

Go to our web site at www.energyshift.us or write us at P.O. Box 6549, Falls Church, VA 22040 with your comments or questions. We would love to hear from you.

Something to Think About

Ask yourself the following question:



What is keeping me from shifting away from fossil fuel use through conservation, use of more efficient products or the use of alternative energy sources?

Now, what can you do to address your inertia? Is it because you are too busy? Are there things you are doing now that are less important than making this change? Can you trade some less positive things (watching TV, shopping, video games, extended internet surfing) for taking small steps?

A Good Book

A book worth reviewing is **The Not So Big House** by Sarah Susanka. A proponent of quality over quantity, she provides thought provoking insight

together with beautiful photos to make her point. On her website she states:

The inspiration for *The Not So Big House* came from a growing awareness that new houses were getting bigger and bigger but with little redeeming design merit. The problem is that comfort has almost nothing to do with how big a space is. It is attained, rather, by tailoring our houses to fit the way we really live, and to the scale and proportions of our human form. Two must-read articles about this topic include [Cultural Creatives: The Rise of Integral Culture](#), by Dr. Paul Ray and a recent interview with William McDonough in Newsweek magazine entitled [Designing The Future](#).

You can read about Sarah and her projects at: <http://www.notsobighouse.com> which includes the first chapter of the book. If you are curious to read more, check it out of the library.



P.O. Box 6549
Falls Church, VA 22040

