

Coal:

Pa. looks to new techniques to become self-sufficient with its fuel source

By HEATHER MALARKEY
Collegian Staff Writer

Anywhere you dig a hole in Pennsylvania you will find coal. But mining and purifying costs of the fuel are not worth the electricity it would produce, said the acting director of the coal research section of the University.

Alan Davis said about a 200-year supply, 21 billion tons, of bituminous coal is not being mined because of the cost of pre-mining preparations such as underground exploration, mine plans and mining permits.

Before any means of burning the coal can be utilized the coal must be brought up to the surface. This is the major problem facing Pennsylvania at the present time and is a major deterrent facing financial backers, coal mining, and production, Davis said.

Many backers are not willing to put up that kind of money without some kind of guarantee of a profit, Davis said.

Even as several coal burning plants are being built in eastern and central Pennsylv-

nia, there are still many technical problems that need to be addressed, other than the flat cost of construction, he added.

The construction of these plants would enable the use of coal as a source of cheap fuel, costing very little to mine, Davis said.

The plants being built now will use old coal compiles located near the Earth's surface which still have large amounts of coal that can be mined at a much cheaper cost.

These plants are able to clean the coal by creating a combustion with limestone to soak up the sulfur contained in the coal, he said.

The purifying of this sulfur is another expense the coal industry finds a problem, said the Information Officer of Fossil Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy, Robert Porter.

This is in part because the coal contains a high percentage of sulfur that when burned produces a gas containing pollutants. The cost to filter these pollutants from the gas is an added expense for industries, Porter said.

The state has been working for nearly 15

years on a new way to use this coal by washing out the sulfur.

As far as underground mining is concerned, the Waits Mill Project, a plant that converts coal to electricity in Madison, has been conducting extensive research into a coal-gasification combined cycle since the early 1970s.

The coal-gasification combined cycle is a more economically efficient process that cleans sulfur from coal gasses before they enter the atmosphere.

The key to the coal-gasification combined cycle is in the way it eliminates the pollutants from the gas. The plant burns the coal into a gas, the gas can be cleaned of 80 percent of its pollutants within the gasifier, Porter said.

By cleaning the gas within the gasifier, outside filters are eliminated along with the cost to keep the filter clear, he said.

Utility companies are urging the development of the plants because they are modular units. These companies are required to predict the amount of electricity that will be needed to service the public. Since it takes as long as 10

years to build an electricity plant, utility companies must predict electricity consumption at least that far in advance, Porter said.

With the installment of the coal-gasification combined cycle, utility companies need only predict the amount of electricity necessary for the year ahead. The new plants can be built to produce smaller amounts of electricity than the larger coal burning plants. If the companies need to produce more electricity, these new modular coal-gasification plants can be added on to already existing plants, rather than building a separate plant, Porter said.

These plants produce 525 megawatts of electricity annually. The United States uses 700,000 megawatts of electricity a year. Half of that energy is produced by coal.

If the coal-gasifier is instituted in Pennsylvania by no later than the 23rd century, the state would reassume the role of one of the nation's top leaders in coal production, Porter said. If these plants are built throughout the country, the United States as a whole can be self-sufficient in coal heating.

Deep freeze hits South

By The Associated Press

A river of biting cold air poured into the heart of the Deep South yesterday, threatening Florida citrus and vegetable crops with temperatures lower than readings in New England.

At least eight deaths were blamed on the weather from New York into Georgia as hundreds of vehicles slid out of control.

Snow flakes were spotted at Jacksonville, Fla., but not enough to measure, residents and meteorologists said.

Florida citrus farmers flooded their groves, prepared oil heaters and banked soil around young trees as they got ready for freezing temperatures they feared could prove as damaging as the killer frosts of 1983.

USG Senate:

New department directors to be discussed

By STEVE WILSON
Collegian Staff Writer

The Undergraduate Student Government Senate will vote on three nominees for department directors at 7 tonight in 225 HUB.

Last weekend the USG executive branch nominated: Danielle Y. Mowery for director of the Department of International Affairs; Jennifer S. Emry for co-director of the Advertising Department; and Neal L. Slikin for co-director of the Department for Political Affairs. All three have to be

approved by the senate before taking their posts.

In addition, the senate will consider approving an executive recommendation to eliminate the assistant director position in the advertising department and make the present assistant director, David J. Kiesling, a co-director of the advertising department.

The three current directors, as well as Tony Wilson, director of Minority Affairs, announced at the beginning of the semester that they would be resigning because of class load and

an increased workload at the USG.

All the USG departments will also get an invitation, in the form of a bill, from senate President David Rishel, to draw up formal guidelines for their departments.

Rishel said the bill will not call for any specific guidelines but is designed to get the departments moving toward better organization. The departments will be asked to develop their own guidelines, which will then be approved by the senate.

The bill may make some reference

to keeping records on projects undertaken by the USG, Rishel said, with some assessment of how successful those programs have been.

Rishel added he does not want the bill to pass tonight but would spend the senate and departments rather at least a week evaluating criteria for the departments.

The legislation is a result of a report by Rishel at the first meeting this semester calling for enforcing senate rules and making regulations more specific.

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