Final Report

on the

'IEXAS SMAIL COMMUNI'IY SOLAR

ELECTRIC POWER ALTERNATIVES

Report Prepared

by the

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for the

Governor's Energy Advisory Council Fbrecasting and Policy Analysis Division Austin, Texas under Contract No. IAC -76-77 (1150)

March, 1977

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ABSTRACT

The potential for electric power generation from various solar concepts was assessed from the perspective of communities of 3,000 to 30,000 population. Biomass, concentrating solar thermal, and wind were identified as having the best potential, with projected costs of 30 to 35 mills per kilowatt-hour, 35 to 40 mills per kilowatt-hour, and 45 to 50 mills per kilowatt-hour respectively, for second generation plants based on present technology. Their respective attractive locations within the state are discussed.
Because long-term energy (thermal or electric) storage is not

considered economically feasible, both solar thermal and wind concepts would necessarily be integrated with an electric utility grid or an onlocation fuel-powered plant for auxiliary. As such, they would operate essentially as fuel savers; thus, the cost of the backup facility or the cost of auxiliary electric energy would need to be casted into the average price of electricity. Considering the demand schedules of typical Texas electric utilities and the availability of solar energy, for specific cases there appears to be merit in integrating a solar electric plant with an electric utility grid to reduce the normal late afternoon peak load.

The fuels/electricity from biomass concept appears economically attractive, and, because its nature permits long-term energy storage, the concept appears particularly attractive to small communities in Texas. Since none of the concepts has been developed or tested on any reasonable scale, there is a lack of hard cost, operating, and performance

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data. Thus none of these can be considered commercially attractive alternatives at this time. However, with the present and projected demonstration programs, significant data should be available in two to four years.

In this report factors considered relevant to community assessment of solar power alternatives are enumerated and discussed. An in-depth tabulation of present data for all existing communities of 3,000 to 30,000 population in the state has been assembled, and an annotated bibliography is included. Implications for the state and communities are evolved, and recommendations pertinent to future solar energy developments in the state are presented.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Study Objectives

The primary purpose of this study is to assist the State of Texas Governor's Energy Advisory Council in providing guidance to state and local officials and to communities desiring to explore the near-term solar electric alternative.

The study includes:

- 1. A survey and evaluation of potential concepts
- 2. Economic comparisons with conventional power
- 3. Applicability of the concepts in Texas based on various factors
- 4. General implications for state and local officials regarding development of solar power

B. Overview of Solar Power Utilization in Texas

The future of solar electric power generation in Texas, as in the nation, depends to a significant extent on the development of solar power alternatives and incentives to use solar energy initiated at the federal level. Essentially all of the research and development work being conducted on solar electric power generation is being supported presently by the federal Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). There are at present significant technology and demonstration programs funded by ERDA to develop "solar" electric power.

The major programs are in solar thermal electric and wind energy conversion although there is significant activity in photovoltaics and biomass energy. Of particular importance for near-term modest-scale

electric power generation are the development and testing of the 5-mega watt (thermal) solar thermal pilot project at Sandia Laboratories and the design of a 10-megawatt (electric) plant for which management proposals were recently solicited by ERDA for the beginning of construction in 1978. In wind energy conversion NASA/Lewis is presently developing and testing a 100-kilowatt (electric) horizontal axis wind turbine which may be the basis for modest-scale central power stations. A significant portion of ERoA•s solar budget is directed toward photovoltaics, but no significant amount is directed to near-term application to central electric power generation. The development of fuels and electricity from biomass is receiving only modest support but appears to be as viable an option as other solar alternatives for modest-scale electric power generation for Texas.

Although Texas is the richest state in the nation in terms of conventional energy resources, the cost of electric power across the state varies widely, from approximately 25to 50 mills per kilowatt-hour. The higher rates are as high as any in the nation. With the continuing termination of natural gas contracts, rates across the state can be expected in the near future to become more consistent at the higher rates. These rates can also be expected to escalate at least at some modest level of 5 to 10 percent annually.

Largely because of its extent, Texas exhibits various unique geographical/climatological regions which may very likely foster different solar alternatives. Figure 1 depicts the most likely "solar" alternatives for the various regions of the state. In the present study the different solar alternatives considered include the commonly con-

TEXAS SOLAR ALTERNATIVES

sidered solar power concepts (solar thermal and photovoltaic) as well as wind energy conversion and fuels from biomass.

The state exhibits relatively high levels of solar radiation, increasing generally from east to west, and also exhibits regions (Panhandle and Gulf Coast) of acceptably high wind velocity. The only solar thermal concept that appears promising involves concentration of solar energy. Therefore the western regions which receive more direct radiation appear to be most ideal, even with their shortage of water, since it is felt that air cooling could be used without serious efficiency reduction. Central Texas is also considered to have moderate solar thermal potential. The variation of direct normal and total horizontal radiation by months is presented in appendix A. The economics of wind energy conversion systems are strongly dependent upon wind velocity. The potential wind energy areas are the Panhandle and the Gulf Coast region rated one-two. Distribution of wind velocity across the state and by season is presented in appendix B. Biomass energy appears to be attractive in that energy costs appear competitive with other solar alternatives. The concept appears quite environmentally benign, and it does not suffer from the cyclic and intermittent nature of solar energy as do all other solar concepts considered. Its one apparent drawback is a substantial water requirement, and for this reason energy from biomass would appear to have greatest potential in the eastern and southern portions of the state. The water requirement is a drawback, however, only when crops are grown solely for energy. There exists a large potential in use of agricultural and municipal wastes where water is already expended to produce the main product, or in the case of hyacinths, in association with waste treatment plants.

There are or have been two significant efforts directed toward solar electric power generation in the state. The city of Bridgeport (population 3,760) has seriously considered solar electric power generation as an alternative to purchasing electric power. An initially very attractive proposal was made to Bridgeport to install a 4-megawatt (electric) solar power plant using flat plate collectors, thermal storage, and a "novel" engineering concept for approximately \$6 million. However, after more careful analysis of the proposed system it was rejected by the city as infeasible and the project abandoned. The city of Crosbyton {population 2,200), also in northwest Texas, has been working with Texas Technological University and E-Systems, Inc., to obtain ERDA funding for a solar electric plant using the stationary hemispherical reflector-tracking absorber concept. Although not yet funded, this project is being approached in the proper manner and could possibly be the first modest-scale solar electric power plant in the country.

It is interesting (and unfortunate) that none of the "solar" energy alternatives considered herein have been developed or tested on a scale consistent with the present study. Thus the subsequent assessment is based on the most up-to-date design analysis and predictions extracted from the literature.

C. Procedure Used in the Study

The literature pertinent to each solar alternative was reviewed from the perspective of small-scale (1 to 10 megawatt) application, that is power to meet the needs of communities of approximately 3,000 to 30,000 persons. For each solar power system pertinent information was

extracted to provide a review of the general concept and to permit establishment of a cost estimate for that concept. The various solar power concepts were compared on an economic basis and also compared to conventional power costs to assess their viability.

Data for the communities ranging in population from 3,000 to 30,000 were accumulated to permit profiling of community characteristics and to permit analyses of patterns, trends, and factors which might have a bearing on a community's propensity to seek a solar-based alternative.

The process by which a community might assess its alternatives for solar power was examined to find out what information might be necessary or helpful. Based on analysis of the present state of the art and prognosis of the future status of the various alternatives, implications for the state and the communities were derived and recommendations formulated. Selected bibliographic references were annotated and categorized into subject headings for convenience in reference and for guidance to those wishing to delve further. An attempt has been made to keep the discussions in this report fairly general and to avoid unnecessarily technical jargon or detail, to permit reasonable brevity and to provide for a broader audience.

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II. SURVEY OF SOLAR ELECTRIC POWER CONCEPTS

In the assessment of "solar" electric power alternatives for Texas, wind energy conversion and fuels from biomass were considered in addition to the commonly thought of solar energy concepts: solar-thermal conversion (concentrating, flat-plate, and ponds) and photovoltaic. Neither ocean thermal nor satellite solar power was considered because this study deals with the requirements of small communities and it is felt that neither of these alternatives is applicable. A paramount consideration in the application of solar energy is energy storage, and this requirement is also addressed. Finally, a discussion of the integration of a solar system into the community's overall electrical requirements is included.

A. Solar Thermal

1. Solar Thermal Electric Using Concentrating Collectors Concept

The principal concept underlying the use of concentrating collectors is that higher temperatures can be obtained in the working fluid (usually steam) than with flat plate collectors. The higher temperatures achievable are a result of absorbing the energy in a smaller area; tht.s losses are smaller and temperatures are higher. The higher temperatures in turn make it possible to convert a larger percentage of the available solar energy into the mechanical energy which drives the electrical generators. High efficiencies are important because they allow the use of smaller areas of collectors, the most expensive part of any solar energy system.

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The laws of thermodynamics fix the relationship between the maximum temperature of the working fluid in the cycle and the efficiency with which heat added to the working fluid may be converted to mechanical enerqy, as in a steam turbine. This relationship is expressed approximately by figure 2, which shows both the theoretical maximum and an estimate of what can actually be obtained with best present engineering practice. The laws of thermodynamics also require that a machine which absorbs heat and converts only part of it to work must have some way to reject the other part. This rejection is done at a lower temperature, called the "sink temperature" by engineers, and this temperature value is also important in determining the efficiency of the conversion. These sink temperatures are fixed by the temperature of available cooling water, or by the temperature of a spray cooling tower, and are in the area of 70 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Figure 2 is based on a 100-degree Fahrenheit sink temperature.

Figure 2 makes it possible to estimate how much additional expense can be justified for concentrating collectors over flat plate collectors. At present flat plate collectors, as noted in a subsequent section, generally deliver a working fluid at about 200 degrees Fahrenheit, while concentrating collectors can easily deliver 500 to 700 degrees Fahrenheit steam. The actual obtainable efficiency increases from about 9 percent at 200 degrees to 25 to 30 percent at 500 to 700 degrees, and many concentrating collectors follow the sun, thus making more effective use of the area. As a result, only about one-third to onefifth of the area of concentrating collectors will deliver about the same mechanical work (and hence electricity) as is required of flat

Figure 2 EFFICIENCY VERSUS TEMPERATURE

plate collectors. In addition to this, machines (turbines) to convert steam at 500 to 700 degrees Fahrenheit into mechanical work are readily available at reasonable prices and in a wide variety of sizes, while machines to convert the energy from 200-degree water (or some low boiling fluid such as Freon) usually must be specially designed and custom built, which usually results in more expense and less reliability.

Operation of System

Many types of concentrating collectors have been designed, though very few have been constructed and tested on a large scale. For present purposes, only reflecting systems (as contrasted to refracting, or lens, systems) will be considered. Of the reflecting systems, only three will be given consideration: the parabolic trough (distributed system), the spherical section fixed mirror with a tracking absorber (E-System), and the mirror field with a "power tower" (central tower concept). The latter two concepts are illustrated in figures 3 and 4.

Any of these systems can generate steam temperatures in the desired 500-to-700-degree range, and hence are acceptable heat-collecting systems. The principal disadvantages of all types of concentrating collectors are that they collect only the beam radiation, and at least one component of the system must be continuously oriented so as to reflect the sun's rays onto the absorber. The loss due to collecting only the beam radiation varies from 10 to 15 percent of the total radiation on a clear day, and of course approaches 100 percent during cloudy periods. Although this is a particularly serious problem for concentrating collectors, the performance of all solar systems, including flat plate types, is greatly degraded during cloudy periods.

SPHERICAL FIXED MIRROR WITH TRACKING ABSORBER (E-SYSTEM)

Figure 4

CENTRAL TOWER CONCEPT

In addition to losses already described, concentrating collector systems lose some part of the incoming beam radiation itself, primarily through reflection and refraction at glass surfaces and through inaccuracies in either the geometry of the reflecting surface or the positioning of the sun-tracking device. These losses can run from as little as 5 percent for the best back-surface mirrors to as high as 40 percent or more for poorly finished mirror surfaces. The higher the "concentration ratio"* for the system, the more difficult and expensive is the finishing of the reflective surface, and the more accurate the sun tracking must be. Generally speaking, concentration ratios of 1000 to 1 will give the desired 500 to 700 degree temperatures, and the resulting required accuracy in surface preparation and sun tracking, although clearly difficult to achieve, is not presently thought to be excessive.

The efficiency with which a concentrating collector system delivers the intercepted beam radiation to the absorber for the concentration ratios and steam temperatures described above has been estimated to run from a low of 40 percent to a high of greater than 80 percent. Values actually obtainable in a working system will not really be known until several systems have been constructed on a large enough scale (at least tens of thousands of square feet of intercepted sunlight) to yield meaningful results. We think the low values are unnecessarily pessimistic, and we will use a range of 60 to 80 percent for our estimate of probable efficiencies in small to medium sized power systems.

Combining this figure (60 to 80 percent) with the 25 to 30 percent efficiency which can reasonably be expected from the heat engine yields an overall efficiency factor of 50 to 25 percent for the conversion:

Incident beam radiation on reflectors \rightarrow Electrical energy out

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Note that this is a range of nearly 2 to 1 in the expected efficiency, an uncertainty which makes a tremendous difference in the final economics of any solar power system. The area of collectors required for a 1-megawatt peak plant, with direct normal (beam) radiation at 950 watts per meter (300 Btu per square foot per hour), which is approximately the maximum near midday at any Texas location on a clear day throughout the year, will then be:

- 7000 square meters (approximately 77,000 square feet) if efficiency is 15 percent
- 4200 square meters (approximately 46,000 square feet) if efficiency is 25 percent.

Note that this figure represents the actual reflector area; however, the land area required for the mirror field would be two to three times these values. Taking into account the average number of hours of annual sunshine and the fact that efficiency of the plant will drop off sharply near sunrise and sunset, we can estimate that a 1-megawatt (peak) solar power plant will deliver:

2,950,000 kilowatt-hours per year in the El Paso "sun bowl" region, 2,150,000 kilowatt-hours per year in the Panhandle (Amarillo) area, 2,110,000 kilowatt-hours per year in the Central Texas region (Austin/San Antonio and Dallas/Ft. Worth) l ,910,000 kilowatt-hours per year along the coastal region

with intermediate values elsewhere in the state, roughly following the direct-normal solar radiation contours presented in appendix A taken directly from [33].

Economics

The United States Energy Research and Development Administration has conducted a series of "mission analysis" economic studies on solar thermal generation of electricity using concentrating collectors. These studies first narrowed the type of concentrating systems down to the two which appeared "best": the power tower concept [1, 2] with its field of sun following flat surface mirrors, and the parabolic trough collectors oriented north-south and tracking the sun daily from east to west [2, 3]. In a later study conducted by a private company and since also sponsored partly by ERDA [4], the fixed spherical mirror section with a moving absorber was also analyzed for economics.

The results of these studies gave suprisingly similar costs for a kilowatt of installed electrical capacity. The large component cost in the systems is the large area of reflecting surface and the associated tracking equipment which account for an estimated 60 to 80 percent of the installed capital cost. The estimated costs for the installed mirror surface vary from a low of \$10 per square foot to a high of \$20 per square foot, and considering the nearly twofold variation in overall system efficiency discussed earlier, it is readily seen that final cost estimates of solar thermal power plants may easily vary by a factor of three. The truth us that no one is yet in a position to give a truly reliable cost estimate for the installation of hundreds of thousands of square feet of tracking collectors; and since these costs dominate the economics of solar power, it is clear

that comparisons of the costs of electricity from solar and from conventional plants are tentative at best.

In addition to the domination of costs by the unknown collector costs, there is also the necessity of making numerous assumptions in the economic calculations in an attempt to compare a conventionally fueled plant, which is capable of producing power 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to a plant which produces power 8 to 10 hours a day, and this only on clear days. Several schemes have been produced to overcome or compensate for this defect of solar power plants, but the one most likely to be adopted will be to build a plant somewhat larger than will be required by the expected peak load, and then provide some type of system to store excess energy which may be generated at peak solar fluxes and used later to provide power at night or on cloudy days. Balancing the size of the solar plant with the size and type (thermal, electrical) energy storage facility is a tricky economic and technical problem, one which will be solved only as experience on costs and performance of both the solar plant and the storage facility accumulate.

Reported below are the most recent estimates available on projected costs of solar power plants, in dollars per installed kilowatt of power capacity, and on costs of electrical energy derived from solar plants, in cents per kilowatt-hour of energy delivered. These plants include only minimal storage (approximately 2 hours) to allow for intermittent and minor peak shaving. The costs for the extended energy storage will be treated in a separate section of this report.

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Although the power tower concept appears superior and the distributed parabolic trough the least attractive from the results of the above table, it is also obvious considering that each concept is undeveloped and untested that they exhibit essentially equal potential. The power costs of 3.5 to 4 cents per kilowatt-hour, when designed essentially as fuel savers (i.e., each needs essentially complete backup for inclement weather), are attractive considering that currently power costs across the state vary from 2.5 to 5 cents per kilowatt-hour. However, considering that either an independent standby system will be required or that auxiliary power is supplied through a utility grid, the additional cost of the standby system or possibly peak-priced auxiliary electric power must be accounted for in the construction of the solar plant. This factor will be addressed in the section on integrated solar systems.

Future Outlook

The Energy Research and Development Administration is putting their qreatest emphasis on the power tower concept as the most promising solar electric power alternative. Presently a 5-megawatt (thermal) solar pilot facility is being developed and tested at Sandia Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico. In addition, the design specifications for

a 10-megawatt (electric) solar power tower facility are currently being developed, and in mid-1976 proposals were solicited and received by ERDA from electric utilities for the management integration of a 10-megawatt (electric) solar power tower concept into their electric utility system, the latter to initiate in 1978. Recently ERDA let a contract with Texas Technological University and E-Systems for the finalized design for a fixed spherical mirror-tracking absorber solar electric power system to ultimately be constructed for the city of Crosbyton in northwest Texas.

In general the outlook for concentrating solar thermal electric power generation is good, but it will be three to four years before an operating system is available for performance evaluation.

References--Concentrating Collectors

- 1. Schmidt G.,Urban and Environmental Section, Honeywell, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota. Data presented at solar conference in Austin, Texas, October 1975.
- 2. Powell, J.C.; Fourakis, E.; Hammer, J.M.; Smith, G.A., and Grosskreutz, J.C. Dynamic Conversion of Solar-Generated Heat to Electricity--Executive Summary, Vol II, Honeywell Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Black and Veatch Consulting Engineers, Kansas City, Missouri, August 1974.
- 3. "Solar Thermal Conversion Mission Analysis," Vol. IV, Contract No. NSF-C797, The Aerospace Corporation, January 15, 1974.
- 4. Gapta, Y. E-Systems, Inc., Dallas, Texas, personal communication.

2. Solar Thermal Electric Using Flat Plate Collectors

The term "flat plate" has come to be a generic name for any solar collector which does not concentrate solar radiation and which normally is fixed in position with regard to the daily movement of the sun from east to west. In some cases flat plate collectors may be adjusted periodically to take advantage of the seasonal variations in the sun's altitude. In its original form, the flat plate collector consisted of a metal absorber plate, usually blackened to enhance absorption of the sun's rays, a fluid (often water) circulating in contact with the metal of the absorber plate, and housed in an insulated enclosure with one or more transparent cover glazings. to minimize heat losses to the surroundings.

More recent developments have seen variations introduced into the flat plate configuration, to include honeycombs and evacuation to .suppress convection and/or conduction losses, selective surfaces to reduce radiation losses, and cylindrical absorber surfaces and reflecting surfaces built into the system to obtain small concentration. Thus, it is no longer strictly accurate to group collector systems into only the two categories, flat plate and concentrating. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this report, we will make this division an arbitrary one based on the temperature of the working fluid which the collector system delivers to the heat engine, with approximately 250 degrees Fahrenheit as the upper limit available from flat plate systems, and higher temperatures (up to 900 to 1000 degrees Fahrenheit) available from concentrating systems. While it is true that near-term developments in flat plate technology may result in higher temperature outputs, the

250-degree upper limit is considered an accurate reflection of the present state of the art, particularly for collectors now commercially available. Furthermore, to achieve reasonable collection efficiency, a limit of approximately 200 degrees for flat plate collectors is more realistic.

The advantages of the flat plate (fixed) systems over the concentrating (sun-tracking) systems are numerous. They include the greater simplicity in design for factors such as protection from the elements (wind-loading), simpler maintenance, and an ability to absorb energy from scattered radiation as well as from direct (beam) radiation. While this last factor can add as much as 20 percent to the collectable energy, it is more than offset by the ultimate inefficiency in the conversion device which must operate at the lower temperatures supplied by flat plate collectors.

While there are also several disadvantages of the flat plate systems, one factor overrides all others: the low efficiency with which thermal energy at approximately 200 degrees Fahrenheit can be converted into mechanical, and then electrical, energy. As discussed in the previous section, the theoretical limit on this efficiency is about 15 percent, while the practical limit is considerably less. The actual realized overall system efficiency from stationary flat plate systems will probably be no better than approximately 2 to 3 percent based on daily total radiation. This figure results from a "daily" collection efficiency of 20 to 25 percent and an engine efficiency of approximately 8 to 10 percent. (The collectors' peak efficiency near solar noon may exceed 50 percent but is approximately as indicated based on daily total radiation.) Another problem is that of the lack of efficient machinery (such as the highly developed

modern steam turbine) to operate on low-temperature fluids. However, the major drawback is the excessive cost of the large area of solar collector panels.

There appear to be no detailed engineering analyses available on the electrical power cost for flat plate solar collector powered systems. Thus an estimate was made for a nominal 10-megawatt (electric) peak plant. For this analysis the collectors were assumed to be capable of somewhat in excess of 50 percent maximum collection efficiency at midday and to have a 25 percent collection efficiency based on total daily radiation. The 50 percent efficiency is chosen based on collection at 180 to 200 degrees Fahrenheit for an ambient temperature of 80 degrees and an insolation level of 300 Btu per hour per square foot. Figure 5 presents the efficiencies of several flat plate collectors tested by NASA/Lewis [5] which at this condition vary from 20 to 60 percent with most in the range of 40 to 50 percent. Thus, the chosen value is reasonable. The 25 percent average daily efficiency is a conservatively high result based on numerous in-house analyses. To produce 10 megawatts (electric) (peak) at 50 percent collection efficiency, an insolation level of 1000 watts per square meter and 8 percent engine efficiency, approximately 0.25 million square meters (2.8 million square feet) of collector are required. For Central Texas the average daily total radiation on a surface tilted at the latitude is approximately 5.8 kilowatt hours per square meter per day, which for 0.25 million square meters of collector, 25 percent daily collection efficiency, and 8 percent engine efficiency results in an annual electrical output of 10.6 million kilowatt-hours per year and an average output (over 4000 operating hours annually) of 2.6 megawatts {electric).

For the required collector array at an installed cost estimated at \$110 per square meter (\$10 per square foot), the collector array itself costs \$28 million. Including an additional \$10 million for other direct and indirect costs in an analysis similar to that of [6] and a fixed charge rate of 16 percent, the energy cost for the system is projected to be approximately600 mills per kilowatt-hour. This very high cost is the obvious reason that flat plat solar collector electric power is not receiving any serious attention, and is not a future candidate for electric power generation on a moderate or large scale.

References--Flat Plate Collectors

- 5. Johnson, S.M., and Simon, F.F. 11Comparison of Flat Plate Collector Performance Obtained under Controlled Conditions in a Solar Simulator." NASA/Lewis, Joint Solar Energy Conference, Winnipeg, Canada, August 1976.
- 6.. Powell, J.C.; Fourakis, E.; Hammer, J.M.; Smith, G.A., and Grosskreutz, J.C. ¹¹ Dynamic Conversion of Solar-Generated Heat to Electricity--Executive Summary." Vol. 11, Honeywell Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Black and Veatch Consulting Engineers, Kansas City, Missouri, August 1974.

3. Solar Thermal Electric Using Solar Ponds

Solar ponds are bodies of water exposed to and heated by the sun. They fall into two categories: nonconvective and convective. First, a nonconvective pond is a liquid pond in which the convection that is normally associated with the temperature is prevented by establishing an opposing density gradient with a solute (salt). Nonconvective ponds

include saltwater ponds, ponds with membrane barriers, and ponds containing gels. Second is the shallow convective pond which is saltfree and behaves like a flat plate collector. The shallow solar pond reported in this study is the one proposed by Lawrence Livermore Laboratory [7]. The various pond configurations are described below.

Nonconvective Saltwater Ponds

A nonconvective saltwater pond consists of a saltwater liquid pool with the denser brine near the bottom of the pool so that the thermal energy absorbed at the bottom will be stored there. Thermal energy near the bottom will be trapped because of the opaque nature of water and because of the inabiljty of the solution to convect due to the imposed salinity gradient. Thermal energy is then extracted from the bottom layer by circulating the hot brine to an external heat exchanger where a higher volatility fluid is boiled and expanded in a turbine which drives a generator. This concept has been investigated in reference [8]. (See figure 6.)

One of the most serious problems encountered in nonconvective saltwater ponds is the diffusion of salt, which travels from high concentration regions to regions of low concentration. This considerable diffusion of salt particles to the surface of the pond will destroy the density gradient. To keep the pond stabilized and functioning the concentration gradient must be continuously restored by replacing the salt water at the surface with fresh water and adding salt to the bottom. However, with this pond concept collections of 20 percent to 30 percent are quite possible, and relatively long-term storage is possible within the system itself.

NONCONVECTIVE MEMBRANE POND
Nonconvective Membrane Ponds

A modification on the previous concept is to have a layer of water below the brine and separated from it by a transparent, flexible membrane to help maintain stability. (See figure 7.) The nonconvective component above the membrane is equivalent to the saltwater pond except that it does not contain a bottom convective region. The fluid in the bottom region can move freely with minimum mixing in the upper layer. This mobility would eliminate some possible instability due to energy extraction from conventional nonconvective salt ponds.

Problems associated with membrane ponds are similar to those of the saltwater ponds. Salt will diffuse from the bottom to the surface, and the salinity gradient has to be maintained as dicussed eariler. Generally speaking, the membrane pond is more stable during energy extraction, and fluid can be moved in the convective region freely without excessive perturbation of the insulating layer. This concept as well as another concept called a viscosity stabilized pond has been investigated [9].

Convective Shallow Solar Ponds

Another concept in solar ponds is the shallow (approximately 5 centimeters deep) solar pond composed of modules, each covered by two or three layers of transparent, weatherable plastic film. The modules are connected by plumbing that directs and controls the flow of water through them and into an underground reservoir. (See figure 8.) Typically the water will flow from the reservoir into each module inlet. Its temperature increases in flowing the length of the module, and finally hot water leaves the module outlet flowing back

SKETCH OF A SOLAR POND POWER PLANT

to the reservoir. The continuous rate of water flow will be automatically controlled by temperature sensors. The hot water from storage is used to boil a secondary working fluid such a Freon II to drive a turbine, as depicted in figure 9. The Freon II, after expanding through the turbine, is condensed at about room temperature using water from a conventional cooling tower.

In the study done by Lawrence Livermore Laboratory [7], it was shown that the optimum collection temperature of 70 degrees centigrade results in maximum annual average power and minimum heat losses. Data from the study that was done for Phoenix, Arizona, were correlated in the manner shown in figure 10. By means of figure 10, percent collection efficiencies are calculated for three temperature collections using average weather data for San Antonio. Results are presented in figure 11. Figure 12 shows the ambient temperature, insolation, and power output for a collection temperature of 70 degrees centigrade. It shows that maximum power occurs in June-July, corresponding to maximum insolation and peak ambient temperature.

Size of the Solar Pond

Since there are no completely reliable engineering design data on any of the solar pond concepts because none has been built on a large scale, it will be assumed that all pond concepts have similar performance characteristics. On the basis of this study, it has been shown that the annual average collection efficiency is 0.345 for a collector temperature of 70 degrees centigrade. The corresponding average thermodynamic efficiency (Carnot efficiency) is $(70-15/530)$ = 0.16 for a sink temperature of 15 degrees centigrade, resulting in a

PERFORMANCE EFFICIENCY CURVE FOR A SHALLOW SOLAR POND OPERATING IN SAN ANTONIO

Figure 11

1·101HHLY AVERAGE DAILY COLLECTION EFFICIENCIES FOR SAN AHTONIO USING TEDLAR COVERING AT THREE WATER TEMPERATURES

Figure 12

MONTHLY AVERAGE AMBIENT TEMPERATURE, INSOLATION, AND POWER OUTPUT FOR $T_c = 70^{\circ}$ C FOR SAN ANTONIO

 $\underline{\omega}$

system efficiency of 0.032. The overall system efficiency was calculated by $N_S = 0.58 N_c N_{ca}$ from [7] where N_c is the collection efficiency and N_{ca} is the Carnot efficiency. The constant 0.58 is the product of four quantities: 0.90, the ratio of net power output to generator output; 0.98, the generator efficiency; 0.75, the turbine efficiency; and 0.87, the fraction of Carnot efficiency in the Freon II-Rankine Cycle. Therefore, for an overall efficiency of only about 3 percent and average annual insolation of 430 Langley per day for San Antonio, the size of an average 10-megawatt (electric) solar pond is estimated as:

430 Langley/day = 1581 Btu/square foot-day

Pond size =
$$
\frac{\text{Average Power}}{\text{Insolation} \times \text{Efficiency}} = \frac{10 \text{Mw}(e) \times 3.413 \times 10^6 \times 24}{1581 \times .03} = 17.3 \times 10^6 \, \text{ft}^2 \, (-1.60 \, \text{km}^2) = 4160 \, \text{feet} \, (1.26 \, \text{kilometer})
$$

\non each side

In the case of a shallow pond, this area corresponds to 2,000 modules of 4 meters wide by 2000 meters long.

Solar Pond Cost Evaluation

The essential advantage of the solar pond is the relatively low cost per unit area. The disadvantage of the concept is the low overall conversion efficiency of converting solar radiation to mechanical/electrical energy. This low efficiency is inherent in any heat engine device that operates between narrow temperature limits, that is, the collection temperature attainable in a solar pond and the available temperature attainable in a solar pond and the available temperature for rejecting energy, namely that of the atmosphere or water body. Below is an estimate of a nominal 10-megawatt (electric) solar pond power plant. In addition,

a summary of cost analyses for different pond concepts from [9] is included in table 1.

Future Outlook

Solar ponds will probably see application for other uses where a substantial requirement is low-temperature thermal. However, used primarily as a solar electric plant, this concept does not appear promising because there are other solar concepts which exhibit considerably greater potential.

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Table

10-MEGAWATT (ELECTRIC) SOLAR POND CONCEPT COSTS OPERATING AT 90 DEGREES CENTIGRADE

* Steam refers to the power cycle in which the steam produced by the pond is directly used as a working fluid. The higher cost of this cycle is attributed to the special heat exchanger (i.e., Flash Evaporator) needed. The binary cycle uses hot water from the pond to boil a secondary working medium.

B. Photovoltaic Solar Power

1. General Description

Of the various concepts for direct conversion of solar energy to electricity the so-called solar cell (or photovoltaic cell) is the most common and the closest to practicality. The basic concept in photovoltaic cells is that photons (solar radiation) interact with certain materials (semiconductors) and produce free electrons which will under certain required conditions flow through an external circuit (electricity). The great potential in photovoltaics is the direct conversion from solar energy to electricity without an intermediate
energy form. Materials have been developed that result in a favorable efficiency of 10 to 23 percent. The present major drawback with photovoltaics is the high cost of manufacturing the cells; however, low-cost manufacture also represents one of the major potential breakthroughs in solar technology. Electric energy storage also represents a technological problem, although it is not unique to photovoltaics.

There are various types of solar cells [10, 11]. All, however, have several things in common: a semiconducting base layer with a conducting contact on one side and an electrostatic potential barrier on the other, a conducting grid pattern to provide a low series resistance, and an antireflection coating applied to reduce optical losses. The cell is usually encapsulated to protect the cell from the environment. These basic features are presented in figure 13 which is representative of the pn-junction silicon solar cell.

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SCHEMATIC CROSS SECTION OF A SILICON (pn) SOLAR CELL

When a photon is absorbed in the silicon, an electron-hole pair is produced. In the silicon cell the junction region provides an electrostatic barrier such that if an electron created near the barrier has enough energy to traverse the barrier, it may flow through the external circuit (load) connecting the conducting grid to conducting contact. In the silicon cell the two layers of silicon are mildly doped with different materials (boron and arsenic), resulting in a so-called pn-junction cell, the pn-junction providing a permanent electric field barrier essential to the operation of the device. The conducting grid is a finely evaporated network which picks up the electrical current with low resistance while still not significantly shadowing the cell. The antireflection coating serves to reduce the losses from reflection of the incident solar energy, and the substrate provides a structural support for the cell material.

The common types of solar cells are as follows:

- (a) Silicon: Have the advantages of relatively well-developed technology, relatively good long-term stability of the materials, and moderately high efficiency.
- (b) Cadmium Sulfide: Composed actually of layers of copper oxide and cadmium sulfide with the layer between being the barrier. Cadmium sulfide cells which have been developed concurrently with silicon cells have the disadvantages of being subject to degradation because of water vapor and having a somewhat lower efficiency than silicon cells, but they have the advantage of being cheaper than silicon cells.
- (c) Gallium Arsenide: A more recent development, composed of gallium aluminum arsenide and gallium arsenide. Their

potential advantages are higher absorption of photons and higher operating temperature than silicon, but they are still very expensive.

The current-voltage characteristic of a solar cell is presented in figure 14. To obtain maximum power output, the load must be properly matched to the cell as indicated so that operation is near the maximum power rectangle.

The effect of temperature on efficiency is presented in figure 15 for three different types (silicon, cadmium sulfide, and gallium arsenide). It is seen that increasing temperature decreases efficiency in all cases, but at different rates for various cells.

The efficiency of solar cells may also be dependent upon the solar flux, as a result primarily of. increased temperature occurring at higher fluxes. However, cells do not really suffer from "saturation." To maintain low temperature and thus high efficiency, it is important to thermally ground the cell to its substrate and to provide an adequately dense conducting grid to reduce internal resistance. Both silicon and gallium arsenide solar cells have been developed and operated at high concentration ratios [10, 11] without serious degradation of efficiency by adequate design.

2. Application and Economics

An up-to-date reference on the theory, applications, and economics of solar cell technology may be found in [12]. Solar cells may be used in flat panels (no concentration), but since cells are very costly (approxmately \$15 per watt at peak sun [13], this application is not very competitive. Because the cells are so costly, any method of more

VARIATION OF THE CHARACTERISTIC CURVE FOR CADMIUM SULFIDE CELLS AS A FUNCTION OF TEMPERATURE

Figure 15

VARIATION OF EFFICIENCY WITH CELL TEMPERATURE FOR THE MAJOR TYPES OF SOLAR CELLS

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effective utilization--even with added expense--may significantly reduce the cost per unit of power. Examples are simply tracking a flat panel (increasing the daily collection per unit area), or using cells in conjunction with a concentrating collector. This latter method has the potential of greatly decreasing the cost per unit of power. A further application is to integrate solar cells into a total energy system where they are allowed to operate at a moderately high temperature (150 to 300 degrees Fahrenheit). In this case the efficiency is not greatly degraded but the temperature of the coolant fluid is sufficiently high to allow it to be used for other requirements, such as water or space heating or even absorption air conditioning.

Table 2 presents an estimated cost of photovoltaic power for the two cases of flat stationary panels and tracking concentrating collector cells with 100 concentration ratio. The estimate in the table assumes solar cells costing \$15 per watt at peak sun (1000 watts per square inch) and with 15 percent efficiency. These figures are consistent with present or very near-term ERDA estimates of cost [13], and the efficiencies are consistent with high quality solar cells which may also be used at moderately high concentration ratios. The cost of the concentrators (individual tracked concentrators or heliostat mirrors in conjunction with a central tower) was based on cost estimates of [14) for the central tower solar thermal electric plant, approximately \$100 per square meter. Costs for DC-AC conversion (\$40 per kilowatt) and battery storage of 1 hour (\$40 per kilowatt-hour) to provide continuous power for shortterm intermittency are included. Note that the comparison is based on equal peak output, and thus the annual outputs differ because of tracking versus nontracking.

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Table 2

COST OF PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER

*Note: Indirect costs were estimated at 20% for the tracked-concentrating system, but the same total indirect cost was assumed for the flat panel system.

The advantage of the system with moderately high concentration and tracking is evident, i.e., 100 mills per kilowatt-hour versus 1320 mills per kilowatt-hour. The large cost of the untracked system is of course the tremendous investment in high-cost solar cells. However, even for the tracked concentrating system, the cost is not particularly attractive. No great advantage exists in going to higher concentration ratios because, even for the present case of 100 concentration ratio, the cost of the cells is estimated to be only about 15 to 20 percent of the concentrator/cell, and higher concentration will undoubtedly require more expensive cells and/or higher quality mirrors and tracking units. The main reason that the concentrated photovoltaic system is less competitive than solar thermal electric (see II.A.l) is that the overall efficiency of the photovoltaic concept is approximately 10 percent compared to approximately 20 percent for the solar thermal. This assumes 70 percent efficiency for collection of direct radiation in both cases, a 15 percent efficiency for the photovoltaic cells, and a 30 percent efficiency for the solar thermal Rankine cycle.

There appears to be potential for photovoltaic cells used in conjunction with concentrating collectors when they are used in a total energy concept. The cells are cooled to modest temperatures of 150 to 300 degrees Fahrenheit such that efficiencies are not greatly degraded, and the coolant temperature is adequately high for use in water heating, space heating, or even absorption air conditioning. To be most advantageous the system needs to be distributed so that the thermal energy can be used effectively for the above purposes. Present interest is directed toward use in residences to meet electrical and

other thermal needs (heating, air conditioning). However, for a community of 3,000 to 30,000, small total solar energy "parks" could conceivably be distributed around the community to facilitate the transport of hot or chilled water for water heating and for heating and cooling of buildings in each area.

3. Future Outlook

The possibility of cost reduction in solar cell production of factors of approximately 30 to 100 is one of the potential breakthroughs in solar technology. The ERDA goal in reducing solar cell cost is from the present value of approximately \$15 per watt at peak sun to \$.50 per peak watt in 1986. If this is accomplished, generation of electricity with solar cells will be cost-competitive with other conventional and solar energy sources. However, it is felt that solar cells will be used in a decentralized generating system when the advantage of a total energy systems can be realized, rather than in a central generating facility.

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- 12. Backus, Charles E., ed., Solar Cells, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Press, New York, 1976.

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- 13. Information from ERDA, Vol. 2, No. 36, Energy Research and Development Administration, Washington, D.C., September 1976.
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C. Wind Energy Conversion

The potential for extracting power from the wind is through its kinetic energy. Figure 16 shows a plot of power as a function of wind velocity where the power varies as the cube of the velocity up to the "design" velocity and thereafter is constant. Note that in this range a decrease in wind velocity of a factor of 2 results in a decrease in the wind power by a factor of 8. Above the design velocity the rotor (blades) would be feathered in most applications because of structural and dynamic limitations, and that would result in a constant output.

Although the power in the wind varies with different wind speeds, only some fraction of this power can be recovered. The fraction depends on the power coefficient of the system. The maximum percentage of power that can theoretically be extracted by an ideal rotor is 59.3 percent.

The actual power recovery from the wind (actual power coefficient) depends on the type of rotor, and for each type the coefficient is a function of the ratio of the rotor speed (tip speed) to the wind speed. Figure 17 shows the power coefficient for several types of wind turbines as a function of the tip speed ratio. In general, smaller ratios require more blades and result in high starting torque

source: Reference 16

TYPICAL PERFORMANCES OF WIND MACHINES

and low rotational speeds. Higher ratios require fewer blades and result in low rotational speed and low starting torque.

In practice, only approximately 70 percent of the maximum theoretical limit is recoverable, meaning the overall efficiency from wind power converted to mechanical shaft power is limited to approximately 40 percent. Considering aerodynamic efficiency, mechanical drive, and the electric generator, the overall conversion efficiency of wind power to electricity will be approximately 30 percent.

1. Types of Machines

There are two basic kinds of aeroturbines: horizontal axis and vertical axis. Each configuration has its advantages and disadvantages. There appears to be no simple solution to the selection of the aeroturbine, and the final choice is influenced by economics.

Horizontal Axis Aeroturbine

There are many kinds of this type of aeroturbine; two of the interesting designs are discussed below. Figure 18 shows a schematic of the 100-kilowatt Mod-O wind turbine developed by ERDA and NASA, which has two blades. It is designed to cut in at wind speeds of 8 miles per hour and achieve its rated 100-kilowatt output at 18 miles per hour. The rated rotor speed is 40 rotations per minute (constant), and the generator speed is 1800 rotations per minute.

Figure 19 shows a photograph of the experimental windmill farm at Oklahoma State University. The multibladed turbine operates at variable speed near the optimum tip-to-wind-speed ratio to maintain a high power coefficient and drives a field-modulated generator to produce a constant frequency electrical output.

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source: Reference 15

ERDA/NASA (LeRC)'s 100-KILOWATT MOD-0 SYSTEM

source: Reference 15

Figure 20

SCHEMATIC OF THE SAVONIUS ROTOR

Vertical Axis Aeroturbine

These aeroturbines are mounted vertically and thus collect wind from any direction. They have the advantages of delivering mechanical power at ground level, having less weight aloft, not being subject to gyroscopic forces due to changing wind direction, and being simpler in construction. Figure 20 shows a Savonius rotor, which consists of an S-shaped metal air foil supported between two circular end plates. Wind impinging on the concave side is circulated through the center of the rotor to the back of the convex side, there decreasing the negative pressure region. Power coefficients of Savonius rotors are very low (around 16 percent; see figure 17) . . They operate at low tip speed ratios and have high starting torque.

The Darrieus rotor has two or more curved airfoil blades in tension and held together at top and bottom. Figure 21 shows a two-blade arr'angement of the Darrieus rotor. The vertical axis rotors are normally supported at the top by guy wires.

Another vertical axis turbine is the giromill, which consists of a set of vertical blades attached to the axis by means of support arms at the top, bottom, and middle. Figure 22 shows an artist's concept of a giromill.

Several other innovative horizontal and vertical axis aeroturbines are being investigated by various organizations. The above types are typical, however, and although there will undoubtedly be further improvements and new designs, it is not felt that there will be any great breakthroughs beyond the present concepts.

2. Economics

Because of the low energy density and the unpredictable nature of the wind, wind energy utilization is fairly capital-intensive for

source: Reference 16

SCHEMATIC OF THE GIROMILL

collection and conversion. This is its major disadvantage. Figures 23 and 24, taken directly from Ramajumar [15], assume a 20-year amortization period with operation and maintenance costs at 5 percent of capital cost per year. Figure 23 shows the generation cost in mills per kilowatt-hour as a function of installed cost and load factor. In figure 24 break-even capital costs are plotted as a function of plant load factor and fuel cost for different interest rates. It is clear that if plant load factor is high and fuel costs continue to escalate, the capital cost of wind energy systems may also be high and still compete.

As an example, consider a wind energy system with a plant load factor of 0.20. If such a system can be built for \$400 per kilowatt, then for an interest rate of 7.5 percent the generation cost is 34 mills per kilowatt-hour (figure 23). This amount is equivalent to a fuel cost of \$3.28 per million Btu or \$19 per barrel of oil.

For a fuel cost of \$2 per million Btu or \$11.50 per barrel of oil, with the same load factor of 0.20, break-even capital cost will be \$262, \$231, \$205, and \$182 per kilowatt for interest rates of 5.0, 7.5, 10.0, and 12.5 percent respectively.

The projected capital cost and capital cost per kilowatt are presented in figures 25 and 26 from reference 16. Even though the capital cost increases with the size and rated output of the machine, the capital cost per kilowatt decreases as is usual in scalings. Therefore, economically, it is preferable to use one large wind machine unit in an application rather than a number of small units. The present and expected turbine costs are shown in figure 27A. To give an idea of a wind energy conversion system cost, the costs for

GENERATION COSTS FOR WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS

source: Reference 15

Figure 24

BREAK-EVEN CAPITAL COST LIMITS
FOR WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS

source: Reference 16

CAPITAL COST OF SMALL CONVENTIONAL WIND MACHINES

source: Reference 16

Figure 26

CAPITAL COST PER RATED KILOWATT FOR SMALL CONVENTIONAL WIND MACHINES

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source: Reference 16

A. Expected Wind Turbine Selling Price Versus Size

source: Reference 16

Figure 27

WIND TURBINE PRICE AND LOAD FACTOR CONSIDERATIONS

the experimental and production units of the NASA 100-kilowatt system are presented in table 3.

Two important factors in determining the capital cost of a wind machine are the load factor and the rated wind speed. By definition, load factor is the average output of any system divided by its rated power output. Load factor varies with the ratio of average to rated wind speed (figure 278), and is seen to increase as the wind speed ratio increases. The reason that the load factor is less than one even at an average to rated wind speed ratio is that in actual operation wind speed is variable.

To minimize the capital cost per average kilowatt of capacity (i.e., the capital cost per rated kilowatt divided by the load factor), the load factor must be increased. But for a specific location, an increase in the load factor would require a decrease in the rated wind speed (figure 27B) which consequently decreases the rated power output. This smaller rated output increases the capital cost per rated kilowatt according to figure 26 rather than decreasing it. Therefore, there exists a trade-off between capital cost per rated kilowatt and load factor that results in a minimum energy cost of a wind system.

The busbar price (cost of electricity as produced at the generator) can be calculated as follows:

Busbar price (mills per kilowatt-hour) = $\frac{CC \times FCR}{LF \times 8760}$ + O&M Where $CC = capital cost per rated kilowatt$ FCR = fixed charge rate (about 15 percent) $LF =$ load factor $O\&M =$ Operational and maintenance costs (=2 mills per k i1 owatt-hour) 8760 = hours in a year

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Table 3

SUMMARY OF COSTS FOR NASA 100-KILOWATT (RATED) EXPERIMENTAL

WIND ENERGY CONVERSION SYSTEMS (12 mph average wind speed)

source: Reference 16

Consider the NASA wind energy system rated at a velocity of 18 miles per hour and 100 feet high operating in the region of Amarillo-Lubbock with annual average wind velocity of 13 miles per hour. The ratio of the average wind speed to rated wind speed is then calculated:

ratio $\frac{\text{average wind speed}}{\text{rated wind speed}} = \frac{15.5}{18} = .86$

Where the 15.5 mile per hour average wind speed is the average wind speed of 13 miles per hour at the height of 100 feet (appendix A). Therefore, by use of figure 27B, this ratio results in a load factor of about 0.55, which with a capital cost of \$1490 per kilowatt (table 3) results in a busbar price of apprqximately 48 mills per kilowatt-hour.

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D. Fuels From Biomass

1. Introduction

The use of biomass as a fuel is not new. In fact, until about 100 years ago, biomass (primarily wood) was the nation's primary source of energy (see figure 28). The conversion of biomass into more suitable fuel forms, such as methane, is likewise not new, but the process is currently receiving increased attention since the product provides a substitute for natural gas. The use of biomass declined as a result of

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availability of low-cost fossil fuels that had greater versatility and were easy to transport, store, and use. Now, with rapid escalation in costs and threatened exhaustion of fossil fuels it is logical to reconsider use of replenishable biomass energy where practical.

Current production of biomass worldwide (much of it in uncontrolled growth) has been estimated at 146 billion tons [17]. Five percent of the total world biomass could supply energy equivalent to the world's oil and gas demands, and about 6 percent of the United States' land area could provide the energy equivalent to its oil and gas requirements. The amount of land required could be reduced through careful selection of the plants to be grown. The yield of different species ranges from 10 to 20 tons of dry organic matter per acre per year for farm crops to 60 tons per acre per year for algae, grass, and other high yield crops. Generally, marine plants such as algae, kelp, and water hyacinths offer the highest growth rates. Problems of growth, collection, storage, and conversion to suitable fuel forms are the subjects of most current investigations.

Several researchers have proposed large energy crop farms [17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23] sufficient to power central generating stations of 1,000 megawatt capacity, requiring approximately 250 square mile tracts of land. This approach is interesting and may have some potential for parts of Texas, if one is willing to accept the ecological consequences of intensive cultivation and the competition for land and water with other uses. The large-scale production and utilization of biomass are beyond the scope of this report, which is directed toward small-scale application available to communities.
The potential for biomass production and utilization may be even more interesting from a small community perspective. The necessity to transport and store the product is minimal, and the possibility exists for multiple use of certain facilities. Some communities in Texas have water and land resources which permit serious consideration of biomass as a renewable solar energy converter to reduce their consumption of natural gas. It is from this viewpoint that various concepts will be discussed that may have applicability for certain regions of Texas.

One of the prime attributes of biomass utilization is that the cost of energy storage is minimized. Unlike other solar technologies, conversion and storage occur simultaneously, thus eliminating the high cost of thermal or electrical storage.

An overview of the options a community might have for use of biomass resources for power generation is shown in figure 29. The availability of resources, of course, varies widely from region to region. The technology for conversion to fuels is essentially available, although only limited community experience is available. Some of the processes are more familiar than others. Figure 30 shows three typical biomass fuel conversion systems. The digestion of municipal wastes is a common practice, but the methane produced is often used only for power in the waste treatment process itself. Similarly, the bagasse produced as a by-product of sugar refining has been used only for in-plant power production in Texas, although it is used more extensively for power production elsewhere, such as the Philippine Islands and Hawaii. The newer approach of growing crops specifically for energy production,

COMMUNITY BIOMASS OPTIONS

The Three Processes for Gasification of Nonfossil Carbon A.

Source: Reference i7

B. Schematic of SNG-from-Nonfossil-Carbon Processes

Typical Fermentation System for Production of Methane C .

Figure 30

TYPICAL BIOMASS FUEL CONVERSION SYSTEMS

though logically conceived, has not been extensively demonstrated. It is from this approach and from recovery of currently wasted resources that the major potential exists.

Table 4 shows some potential plant biomass resources for Texas. It lists some current agricultural wastes and includes estimated data on two species of marine plants which, although not cultivated at present, might be considered for energy production. Some features of certain species are not readily apparent from the table. For example, cotton trash resources are centrally collected. Bagasse from sugarcane milling is now used to supply power to a sugar refinery in Santa Rosa, Texas. This year 50,000 tons in excess of that needed for power production will be produced [24]. The marine plants offer high productivity per acre and can be most economically produced in conjunction with a sewage treatment facility. The resource requirements of sugarcane-based 1- to 10-megawatt power plants are given in table 5.

Agricultural wastes can be used directly as a solid fuel for power production (such as with bagasse), or the wastes can be converted to methane as with municipal wastes and shredded hyacinths. Methane conversion is the preferred method since the product is a replacement for currently used natural gas, and the sludge residue is more suitable for use as a fertilizer. This process provides the methane needed for fuel, yet permits recycling of the organic residues back to the land or pond to aid the ecological balance.

2. Cost Comparisons

Table 6 shows an estimate of the production and conversion of nonfossil carbon to methane on a considerably larger scale than is

Table 4

POTENTIAL CROP SPECIES FOR BIOMASS CONVERSION IN TEXAS

^aBattelle Columbus Labs, Systems Study of Fuels from Sugarcane, Sweet Sorghum, and Sugar Beets, under contract for ERDA, April 14, 1976.

 b Texas Department of Agriculture, 1975 Field Crop Statistics.

cu.S. Bureau of the Census, "Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1973.

 d Melvin Calvin, "Solar Energy by Photosynthesis," Science (April 19, 1974): p. 377.

 e Jack Nelson, General Manager of W.R. Crowley Sugar House, personal communication, August 23, 1976.

 6 Clinton Kemp and George Szergo, "The Energy Plantation," from Hearings on Bioconversion before the Subcommittee on Science and Astronautics. June 13, 1974, p. 92.

 $\mathcal G$ John Alich and Robert Inman, "Effective Utilization of Solar Energy to Produce Clean Fuel," from Hearings on Bioconversion before the Subcommittee on Science and Astronautics. June 13, 1974, p. 239.

 h G.W. Woodwell, Scientific American (September, 1970): pp. 64-70.

 ℓ "IGT Weighs Potential of Fuels from Biomass," Chemical and Engineering News, February 23, 1976.

 j Samuel Walters, "The Amazing Hyacinth," Mechanical Engineering, June, 1976.

Table 4 continued

 k W.J. Oswald and C.G. Goulueke, "Solar Power via a Botanical Process," Mechanical Engineering, February, 1964.

 l Dr. Wayne LePori, Department of Agricultural Engineering at Texas A&M University, personal communication, September 17, 1976.

mTexas Department of Agriculture, Texas Cotton Statistics, 1975.

 n Texas Department of Agriculture, Small Grains Bulletin, 1975.

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 $^{\sigma}$ Farno L. Green, <u>Energy Potential from Agricultural Field Residues</u>, paper for the Special Non-Nuclear Technology Session of American Nuclear Society, New Orleans, June 9-13, 1975.

Table 5

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUGARCANE POWER PLANT (Based on 30 tons/acre-yr productivity, 80% capacity, 33% plant efficiency)

* includes cooling water requirements

Table 6

ESTIMATED COST TO PRODUCE 1 BILLION STANDARD CUBIC FEET PER DAY OF SYNTHETIC NATURAL GAS FROM NONFOSSIL CARBON

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a Assumed yield of nonfossil carbon form on dry basis.
Assumed fuel value of biomass on dry basis.

⁹ Assumed fuel value of biomass on dry basis.

From Figure 2, which assumes an overall thermal efficiency of 35%

from the nontossit carbon form to SNG.

^d Based on \$217/acre as the average price of farm land in the U

This
and on Biogas Plant investment of \$1.50/CF of digester capacity
including gas cleanup at a loading of 1.0 lb total solids/CF-day financed
at 7% over 25 yr,
 \bullet Changed at 3% of land purchase price/yr.
A Based on est

solids.
If includes supervision, maintenance, insurance, and miscellanceous expenses.

Source: Reference 17

indicated for communities. Starting from this estimate, however, allowing for cost escalations since that time and adjusting for scale of operations, it is reasonable to estimate smaller scale production of methane at about \$2 per million Btu. This is competitive with current spot purchases of natural gas. The economics would appear even more favorable where agricultural and municipal wastes are used since the production and collection costs are already incurred and not necessarily attributable to the resource recovery process. In the case of direct combustion of dried and sized biomass wastes, only the costs of collection, sizing, and storage are attributable to the fuel preparation process. The fuel cost for this application is therefore estimated at about \$1.50 per million Btu.

Using these fuel cost estimates, the power production costs can be estimated.

Using direct conversion of the biomass, a power plant similar to a coal power plant could be used at a current capital cost of about \$750 per kilowatt. This amount is approximately equal to 34 mills per kilowatt-hour busbar cost of electricity assuming 80 percent capacity factor, 2 mills per kilowatt-hour operating and maintainence expense, and 16 percent annual cost of capital. On the same basis, for use of the biomass after conversion to methane, a gas power plant could be used at a current capital cost of about \$350 per kilowatt. Using the same assumptions as above, the busbar cost of electricity would be about 30 mills per kilowatt-hour.

These costs are favorable when compared to other solar technologies. The costs can be further reduced in the case of existing facilities for

power production. The estimates are conservative since usually the capital cost for municipal financing is considerably lower than that used for the estimate.

3. Future outlook

The ERDA research and development program for biomass conversion is shown in table 7. Since the publication of this program, the budget for this area has been increased substantially by Congress, but with the same elements involved. Current research and development on smallscale applications, particularly the NASA (Bay St. Louis) work with hyacinths [25], show good promise. Small-scale applications could be demonstrated much sooner than what is indicated for the large-scale systems.

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Table 7

 $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{A}}$

FUELS FROM BIOMASS

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Source: Reference 26

- 22. Szergo, George C., and Kemp, Clinton C., "Energy Forests and Fuel Plantations.'' ChemTech, May, 1973.
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E. Energy Storage

The intermittent nature of solar energy creates a severe problem in the design of a solar thermal power plant if the power plant must be ready to supply electrical energy on demand. This problem can be circumvented by simply choosing to use solar-generated electricity only when it is available, while relying on a conventional fuel-powered plant when it is not available. This is the "fuel-saver" concept of solar electric power. While it does avoid the difficult storage problem, it creates economic problems from the necessity of having a full-sized conventional plant available for only part-time duty, or political problems in purchasing stand-by power from another utility or power grid. These problems will be dealt with in more detail in the section on integrated solar systems.

If either economic or political considerations require that the solar power plant provide a large portion, (75 percent or greater), of the total annual power demand, the plant design must include some form of energy storage. Not only that, but the economic factors in storing and recovering the energy play a significant part in the design of the overall plant. The selection of the type of storage to be used, the size of the storage facility, and the percentage of total demand which the combined solar plant and its storage must supply are all options which are available to the designer. These options, however, create a difficult problem in selecting a "best" design, since the technology of a large-scale energy storage is very limited at present. There is essentially no experience for guidance in any of the suggested storage approaches except in the pumped hydro, a method which is unfortunately not available to the large majority of Texas towns and cities.

It is beyond the scope of this project to develop the economics of specific combinations of solar electric generation and storage modes. Therefore, the concepts involved in selecting among the various systems are reviewed, and brief descriptions for the principal proposed storage technologies are presented.

As stated earlier, it is the intermittent nature of solar energy which creates the storage problem. This intermittent nature has two origins, one the daily and predictable pattern of day and night, the other the irregular and highly unpredictable cloud cover during the day. It is very difficult to design for this latter effect, although statistical data on cloud cover over many years make it possible to estimate

the probability that a certain number of successive sunless days may occur.

In general, however, the philosophy adopted by most studies of solar power has been to design either for very long periods (months as with biomass) or for very short periods (hours, for overnight, or brief daytime periods from passing clouds). Long periods of sunless days are a problem only in the latter case, and they are covered by purchased power or standby fuel-powered plants. If the provision for full capacity standby power is made, either from an owned plant or purchased from a supply grid, then the storage problem becomes simply the economic one of minimizing the cost of delivered energy. This approach is almost like the "fuel-saver" concept mentioned earlier. It differs only in that an excess of solar capacity will be installed along with an energy storage facility, but only if the storage facility reduces the cost per kilowatt-hour.

How these economics will work out can be determined only after enough experience on actual operating solar plants and energy storage facilities has been accumulated to give the cost factors of each. From most of the paper studies to date, using assumed costs for both the solar electric plant and the storage, it has been generally concluded that only a very few hours of storage (two to three hours) can be justified economically, and that only to protect boilers and turbines against unexpected and sudden shut-down. The principal reasons for this conclusion are the large cost of storage to effectively reduce standby capacity and the fact that energy placed in storage and later retrieved, regardless of the form in which it is stored, inevitably suffers significant

losses of 25 to 30 percent.* Solar-generated electricity taken directly from the plant is at present not considered economically competitive with fuel-powered plants, and hence cannot afford the additional penalty of storage cost and inefficiency.

A number of storage technologies have been proposed, and each has been analyzed for economics in studies financed by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and ERDA [27]. Thermal energy can be stored in hot molten salt masses, and at a high enough temperature to operate a steam boiler with some superheat, say 400 to 500 degrees Fahrenheit. This form of energy storage is most often proposed for short periods of unexpected cloud cover, just to keep the boiler and turbine operating at steady state. It is not anticipated that energy can be stored in this manner for overnight or several days of operation.

Electrical energy can be stored in batteries; or it can be converted into other forms of energy, such as the potential energy in pumped hydro, mechanical energy in spinning flywheels, energy in the form of compressed gas, or into chemical energy such as hydrogen gas liberated from water. All of these are called "higher forms of energy" by thermodynamicists, since unlike heat they can be used to regenerate electricity at very high efficiencies (70 to 90 percent) instead of at the low (20 to 30 percent) efficiencies with which heat can be converted.

Of these, only the battery is really a potential near-term method of storage, and of the many types of batteries considered, only the

^{*}The term "round-trip efficiency" is often used to describe the precept of an original quantity of energy placed in storage and later retrieved; as noted, it runs 70 to 75 percent with most proposed storage methods and present technology.

familiar lead-acid cell is likely to be used in the near term. Lead-acid cells especially designed to operate for long periods (10 to 20 years) and to undergo the daily charge-discharge cycle for thousands of times are available at substantially higher costs than the typical automobile battery. Large-scale storage facilities, with megawatts of capacity, are presently being developed under sponsorship of the Electric Power Research Institute and the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration, and results on these operations should be available in the next three to four years. The latest technical data on projected costs and performance for battery storage have been obtained from ERDA [28], and are presented below:

Battery Costs: \$35 to \$40 per kilowatt-hour

AC-DC Conversion Equipment: \$70 per installed kilowatt capacity (approximately \$40 for DC-AC and \$30 for AC-DC)

Other Auxiliary Equipment: \$30 to \$35 per kilowatt-hour Round-Trip Efficiency: 65 to 70 percent

Life Expectancy: 14 years, or 2,000 cycles

It should be noted that such costs will add from 10 to 15 cents per kilowatt-hour to the cost of solar power, and thus essentially double the cost.

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F. Integrated Solar Systems

l. Comparison of Solar Concepts

The summarized projected cost estimates (mills per kilowatt-hour) for the various solar electric power options are presented in table 8, and for comparison the range of prices presently charged by utilities across the state is included. It should be noted that these solar costs, except for the biomass case, are based on minimal energy storage (two or three hours), and hence are pertinent only when the solar plant is built into a hybrid system, where it acts as a fuel saver. Furthermore, these costs represent the predicted costs of each system based essentially on present technology, but the assumption is that several would be built to achieve these cost goals. It is important to realize that none of these concepts has been developed or operated even on the scale consistent with the needs of a small community.

In any case, three concepts appear to have relatively good near-term potential: concentrating solar thermal, wind, and biomass. All of these fall into the 30 to 50 mills per kilowatt-hour range and therefore compare favorably with the range of electricity costs across the state. The other concepts are judged not to have any near-term potential for small community electric power production. Considering the relatively small difference between the three concentrating solar thermal concepts and the fact that none has been developed or operated, they for all practical purposes exhibit similar potential. Because they operate on direct-beam radiation, the potential for concentrating solar thermal increases the further west the location; far West Texas is a prime location, and the western half of the state exhibits good

Table 8

SUMMARY OF PREDICTED COSTS OF BUSBAR ELECTRICAL ENERGY FROM MEDIUM-SIZED SOLAR POWER PLANTS IN TEXAS

Note: With exception of biomass, these costs represent systems with minimal energy storage and thus are fuel saving solar power plants.

*Utility rates in general vary from 25 to 35 mills/kwh with the high figure represented by Austin.

potential. Wind energy conversion is considered to have excellent potential for the northwest region of the state, which possesses the highest average winds, and good potential in the Gulf Coast region of moderately high winds. Otherwise, the rest of the state has little potential. Both solar thermal and wind must be considered fuel savers.

Biomass (fuels/electricity from biomass), considering its projected low electric cost and inherent storage capability, exhibits the best potential, particularly for application to small communities in Texas. Agricultural wastes represent one source of biomass,and both the Rio Grande Valley and Panhandle regions exhibit potential in this case. If biomass is grown primarily for energy, the eastern half of the state is considered to have the best potential because of its generally adequate water supply.

2. Discussion of Integration Options

Because of the intermittent nature of solar energy, it is unlikely that any solar system for providing electrical power on a demand basis can stand alone. A possible exception is the biomass scheme, for which very long-term storage is an inherent part of the system. For any other approach, either some form of thermal or electrical energy storage must be provided on a large scale, or an auxiliary source of electrical energy must be provided and be available on a demand basis.

As described in the previous section (II.E}, it is clearly not practical in the near future to provide large-scale thermal or electrical energy storage. Thus, any decision to use solar-generated electricity in a demand situation will have to involve another energy source. This can be either fuel-generated electricity from a locally owned plant, or purchased electricity from a tie to a power grid. In either case, the resultant solar-plus-auxiliary combination is called an integrated, or hybrid, system. The economic analysis of such a system will have to include, in addition to the solar plant, the generating costs of the auxiliary plant and fuel, or the contract cost of any purchased power.

Power purchased from a nearby large utility power grid as a supplement to a local solar plant can present political problems which arise from the nature of the requirements. To the seller, the municipality with a solar plant will normally be considered a customer with a highly unpredictable demand, one which may occasionally require 100 percent auxiliary during normal peak demand periods because of intermittent weather conditions, and then none at all for several days. This means that the selling utility must make the investment to provide the additional capacity without any assurance of its being used more than a few days a year--something which utility executives are understandably reluctant to do. The solution to this pricing problem has yet to be resolved, although there has been recent legislation in Colorado [29] providing higher-than-standard rates to the utilities when power is provided on a standby basis to solar users. Widespread adoption of such a pricing policy would of course be detrimental to the development of solar thermal power generation.

There is an unusual set of factors in Texas which may alleviate this problem to some extent, however. Because of the heavy air conditioning load in summer, the peak demand for power nearly coincides with the peak in solar availability, with perhaps a three to four hour lag (that is, peak demand after peak solar availability). There is thus

the possibility that a localiy owned solar power system could purchase only off-peak power, hopefully at reduced rates, to cover the night and part of the morning loads, while relying exclusively on solar plus a minimal storage to meet the afternoon and early evening peak. While there are no economic studies of such an integrated system, it is a possible development for the state when solar thermal power costs on a "when-available" basis compete favorably with electric utility prices.

As an example of load distribution, that of the City of Austin is presented in figures 31, 32, and 33. They show the peak demand by week during a year (November 1974 to October 1975), the hourly gross system load for the week of August 18-24, 1975, and the hourly load for August 21, 1975. The installed capacity is determined by the July-August peaks (figure 31). It is also seen that the maximum to minimum demand (figures 32) is slightly in excess of 2. The maximum and minimum loads occur at approximately 4:30 p.m. and $5:30$ a.m. (daylight savings time), respectively, for the August period.

To show how a solar electric power plant may be integrated into a larger fuel powered system, these Austin load data have been normalized to a lOG-megawatt peak demand (figure 34). Assume that a community within the service area, comprising 10 percent of the utility's demand, decides to install a solar electric power plant with a peak generating capacity of approximately 11 megawatts (electric) (as shown), and to purchase auxiliary power from the utility. (Here the time is "solar time," which occurs approximately one and one-half hours later than daylight saving time.) The solid curve, when read on the left scale, shows the original demand made on the large utility, and when read on the right scale, shows the demand made by the small municipality alone.

PEAK DEMAND BY WEEK OVER PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 1974 THROUGH OCTOBER 1975

Figure 32 AUSTIN GROSS SYSTEM LOAD VERSUS TIME FOR WEEK OF AUGUST 18 to 24, 1975

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GROSS SYSTEM LOAD VERSUS TIME OF DAY FOR AUGUST 21, 1975

Figure 34

EFFECT ON CONVENTIONAL ELECTRIC PLANT DEMAND WHEN INTEGRATED WTH A SMALL SOLAR ELECTRIC PLANT WITH MINIMAL ENERGY STORAGE

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The dotted curve shows the power available to the small municipality from its own solar plant build to 10 percent above its own peak capacity (i.e., ll megawatts (electric)). This slightly larger than required capacity enables the solar plant to store sufficient energy (10.6 megawatt-hours) between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. solar time that it may continue to operate without purchasing outside power until approximately 6:30 p.m. solar time, at which time both loads are declining sharply. The resultant load curve for the large utility is shown by the dashed curve.

It is clear that this arrangement creates a significant improvement in the load factor of the large utility, which is of course an economic plus for it. Thus, if it could be guaranteed that the partially solar powered municipality would not demand power from the large utility in the 7:00 a.m. to $6:30$ p.m. period, the large municipality could contract to provide power to another 10-megawatt peak load with no addition to its own capacity. To assess fully the potential of this concept, the interfacing of the solar and utility systems over the entire year needs to be examined to determine: (a) the probability (frequency) that the community will demand power during peak periods and (b) the actual effect on the utility's load factor. This assessment is recommended for future study.

Hybrid systems combining solar with some form of fuel-generated power, or "stand-alone" systems, could consist of any of the potentially attractive solar technologies described in this report in combination with any of the present generating methods (fuel-fired steam, diesel-powered generators, hydroelectric). Because of the size limitations, nuclear

is not a viable technology to combine with solar for municipalities of the size considered here. Calculating the net cost of electricity delivered by such hybrid systems is a complicated economic problem which depends, of course, on the cost of each facility, the relative portion of the load carried by each, and assumed fuel escalation factors. Considering the results in table 8, it is difficult (except possibly for biomass) to justify generating any fraction of the total load by solar at present costs, at least on a purely economic basis.

Again, however, there are special circumstances which may arise in the not-too-distant future, and which may justify adding a solar facility to an existing municipal power facility to create a hybrid system. An existing plant may have a dedicated fuel reserve or long-term fuel contract, and because of growth of the municipality be unable to meet the peak demand. In this case it could be turned into a base load plant by the addition of a solar plant. A complete analysis of a system similar to this has been carried out by Martin-Marietta Corporation [30] for the addition of a 36-megawatt solar generating facility to the Horse Mesa, Arizona, hydroelectric plant, also of 36-megawatt peak capacitv. The average capacity of the hydroelectric plant is limited by constrained water resources to 27 megawatts. After addition of the solar unit, the average continuous capacity of the combined system would be 36 megawatts, an increase of 33 percent, with solar providing 55 percent of the daily average power. There is only a limited potential for combined solar/hydroelectric in Texas, but the econom'c analysis for addition of solar to a fossil-fuel-fired facility would be entirely analogous. Another concept, that of a solar thermal (power

tower) plus biomass system, has been suggested by Professor Otto Smith of the University of California at Berkeley [31].

Probably the earliest and most complete engineering design study of a small-scale integrated solar electric plant will be that for the city of Crosbyton, Texas, contracted from ERDA to Texas Technological University with E-Systems as the subcontractor [32]. The solar system will consist of the fixed hemispherical reflector/tracking absorber concept and will be integrated with Crosbyton's gas-powered electric plant.

Finally, the first stage demonstration plant planned by ERDA will be a 10-megawatt (electric) solar facility to be integrated with an existing public utility. Presently, detailed design studies are being performed for ERDA under four contracts; a 4-megawatt (thermal) pilot facility is being constructed at Sandia Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico; and proposals have recently been solicited and received from nine public utilities to manage the first demonstration plant.^{*} Unfortunately no equivalent integrated demonstration plant is planned for either wind energy conversion or fuels/electricity from biomass.

Although the prospect of solar electric power is promising, it is not considered to be commercially viable at this point. Fuel escalation factors must be closely watched, and projected solar and conventional power costs must be periodically updated. The demonstration plants which are presently planned, as well as others, are urgently needed to provide the operating experience and performance data required before commercial development can proceed.

^{*}The City of Austin Electric Department and San Antonio Public Service Board are included in the nine utilities under consideration.

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III. FACTORS IN COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

A. Community Profile

The map included in appendix C shows the location of communities having populations ranging from 3,000 to 30,000. The intent of the map is merely to show the population distribution of the communities considered in this study. Three patterns are readily apparent. The larger communities (20,000 to 30,000) are located predominantly in the northeastern section of Texas. The remaining communities are distributed fairly uniformly throughout the state, but with lower frequency in the Panhandle region and even more sparsely in West Texas. There is a fairly even split between communities that can be termed urban (within a standard metropolitan statistical area) and those that are rural. These rather broad patterns become more meaningful when considered in conjunction with regional variations in land availability, water resources, and current arrangements for electricity supply.

Nine characteristics of each community are enumerated in the appended table. These data were accumulated to permit profiling of the communities of interest in the study and to permit at least a cursory analysis of patterns, trends, and factors which may have a bearing on the community's propensity to seek a solar-based alternative. Additional data on land and water resources were reviewed but are not included in the appendix.

Both growth characteristics and per capita income give some indication of future power requirements, since electricity demand is normally a function of both population and standard of living. The facilities,

number of businesses, and economic base for the community give some limited indication of demand composition. The nature of electric utility service that the community has, whether or not the community owns the utility, whether it currently generates some of its own power. and the community's relative electric prices are all considered factors in the community's current attitude toward and interest in power generation.

B. Factors in Propensity for Solar Alternatives

Many factors influence the collective community attitude toward solar energy for power generation: its constant and replenishable characteristic. its simplicity, its freedom from well known or publicized environmental effects, current high electricity prices from other sources, dissatisfaction with or credibility of the utility, high public interest, the fact that it is a captive source of power and a "natural" versus artificial source, and extensive media coverage.

Add to this the availability of technical awareness in or near the community, political advocacy of the approach, and the general popularity of the approach, and a community pressure for action may arise which is sometimes disproportionate to the means available to satisfy the desire. Provision of appropriate information to the communities in response to their needs is therefore a difficult, though very important, necessity.

C. Planning Considerations for Communities

The problem of assessment of solar alternatives and planning community actions is complex, but it can be visualized as shown in figure 35. The community needs to know which solar technologies are

OVERVIEW: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT OF SOLAR POWER possible, when they are likely to be viable, and the technical and economic trade-offs, as well as the nontechnical costs and benefits of the technology. These complex factors must be assessed in terms of the unique features of the particular community. Resources, economics, impacts, and attitudes all have a place in such an assessment.

Sequentially, the community decides, based on community interest, to evaluate alternatives. This interest leads to an increased awareness as a result of inputs from national and state programs and other community experiences. Next, a preliminary analysis of potentially applicable technologies ordinarily leads to eJimination of certain options because of current state of the art, resource constraints, and timing requirements. Remaining options may then be considered for an in-depth evaluation in which economic and noneconomic costs and benefits are assessed and the risk of the undertaking evaluated. Unfavorable outcomes of these evaluations lead to a decision to continue the present source of power. Favorable outcomes throughout the assessment would lead to further development of facilities for alternative methods for the generation of power. The simplicity with which the decision can be described obscures the difficulty of the individual steps in the process.

1. Technoeconomic Evaluation

Many technoeconomic factors of the various solar technologies have been presented in the earlier sections of this report. The relative availability of the technology and life cycle costs of various concepts have been made. For a particular community these costs need to be compared to actual and projected cost of power for the power arrangement for the community. In some cases the question of the competitiveness of the solar option is more a question of when it will be competitive rather than whether, since

the cost of energy from fossil-derived sources is in a continuous and unavoidable escalation. Utilization of solar energy is being researched and developed intensively {particularly on a federal level), and its use may be one of only limited choices available in the long run. Thus, communities may be faced with a question of timing and risk acceptance level.

2. Nontechnoeconomic Evaluation

Another facet of the community decision is whether they should be the ones to become involved and take the inherent risks, or whether it should be left to the utilities. The utilities exist and operate under governmental franchise to provide power efficiently anr. at the lowest possible cost. Hence, it becomes fundamentally a philosophical question whether the communities become involved or collectivelv bring about more intensive utility consideration of viable future power production alternatives. The community has the opportunity to view the orogram orovincially and on a small scale. The utility, on the other hand, normally has a broader range of alternatives and the normally advantageous economies of scale.

Various environmental, social, political, and institutional impacts, though not part of this study, also need to be considered in any community decisions regarding solar power utilization.
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

This study consists of an assessment of the potential for solar electric power generation by small communities in Texas as an alternative to present conventional electric power. A comparative analysis and assessment were made of the various solar electric power options based largely on available design studies for specific solar alternatives. With the exception of biomass the comparison is for minimal energy storage. Thus these concepts represent fuel-saving solar plants.

Considering each option as a "fuel saver only (minimal energy storage), the most attractive conversion concept appears to be the fuels/electricity from biomass concept with costs projected at 30 to 35 mills per kilowatt-hour, followed by concentrating solar thermal at 35 to 40 mills per kilowatt-hour, and wind at 45 to 50 mills per kilowatt-hour. Other options, such as flat plate, solar ponds, and photovoltaics, do not appear as attractive in the relatively near term though photovoltaics integrated into a total energy system may be a middle-term option for small communities.

There appears to be little difference in the potential among the three concentrating solar thermal (central tower, fixed reflector/ tracking absorber, or distributed systems). The projected cost variation is only 15 percent, and none of these systems has been built or operated. Concentrating solar thermal has its greatest potential in far West Texas, with less applicability for locations •n the east. Wind energy exhibits more marked geographical variations in its potential.

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The best area by far is the northwestern (Panhandle) area, There is moderate potential along the Gulf Coast, but wind energy is not very attractive in other regions. Fuels from biomass generally fall into two categories: waste materials (agricultural) and plants grown specifically for fuel. The potential for the former (wastes) appears best in the Valley and Panhandle areas where agriculture is more intensive, while the production of fuel from biomass grown specifically for that purpose generally is considered to be applicable to the eastern half of the state where water resources are not considered critical. The fuels/electricity) from biomass concept, in addition to apparently comparing favorably to concentrating solar thermal and wind energy in terms of cost, has the great advantage of having inherently long-term storage.

Based on electric cost variations across the state of 25 to 50 mill.s per kilowatt-hour, the above options appear competitive. However, with the exception of biomass, a solar plant with minimal energy storage will require an auxiliary power source (local power production or electricity from a grid) to *meet* demand at night and during periods of intermittent bad weather, and the cost of the auxiliary energy must be included to obtain the community's average power cost. If obtained from a grid, and if it reduces the utility's load factor, the pricing structure may penalize the community. Alternatively, if power is produced locally, the fuel and amortized cost of the auxiliary plant must be accounted for.

A long-term (one day or longer) energy storage concept has not been developed that does not seriously increase the cost of solar energy, with the exception of pumped hydro, and there is not a significant potential for this option in Texas.

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In situations where an electric utility's load distribution exhibits a significant summer peak in mid-afternoon, there appears to be merit in integrating a solar electric power plant with the uti1ity. With only minimal energy storage required the summer load factor would be increased. If this is done, the solar plant need not be seriously penalized by high auxiliary electric rates because the bulk of auxiliary power is demanded at off-peak periods.

It is emphasized that no moderate-scale solar electric power plant of any of the above options has been constructed to date. Projected costs, operation, and performance.must be verified by pilot plant operation. Fortunately, as a result of demonstration plants, much more reliable data are expected for all three options (concentrating solar thermal, wind, and fuels from biomass) within four to five years and much better component costs within two years. However, solar electric power generation is not considered to be a "commercial" alternative at this time.

B. Recommendations

*Since fuels/electricity from biomass appears to exhibit significant potential in Texas, the state should participate in the funding of a demonstration program in this area related both to agricultural wastes and biomass produced for fuel.

*Since the state has two regions with significant wind levels and wind energy exhibits good potential in these regions, the state should participate in the funding of an integrated wind energy conversion demonstration program parallel to the present federal solar thermal program.

*There should be a continuing and more detailed investigation of the integration of solar electric into small community power systems, exploring the various options in greater depth and with more detailed engineering design and cost studies.

*A more detailed investigation should be carried out to assess the potential merit of incorporating some fraction of solar electric power generation in a larger utility grid to enhance the load factor.

*There should be a serious attempt to assess the possible effect of electric rate structuring on solar electric power generation and to propose rate structuring or state subsidy to facilitate the development of solar electric power generation.

*Considering the potential for power generation from agricultural products or waste, the concept of continuing industrial uses of primary agricultural products (i.e., alcohol from sugarcane as a saleable product) with power generation from agricultural products should be considered as an attractive option to some communities to provide their own power needs, jobs, and an exportable product.

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- Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies. "Capturing the Sun through Bioconversion." Proceedings of a conference held March 10-12, 1976, Washington, D. C. Presents a collection of speeches and technical papers from *the conference.*
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- Milleron, Norman. Letter to Chemical and Engineering News, vol. 54, no. 32. (August 2, 1976), p.3. *Suggests that the combination of mirror tower, thermal* storage, and long-term biomass storage requires less than ³*squr;_r>e miles of land area per lOO megazvatts* of *installed capacity with busbar costs of electric power less than* $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents per kilowatt-hour.
- Solar Energy Intelliaence Report, vol. 2, no. 16, August 2, 1976. *Contains a brief news item reporting the passage of a law by the Colorado legislature which grants utilities higher* than normal rates for power delivered "on demand" as a *backup to solar systems.*
- Solar Engineering Magazine, vol. l, no. 7, September 1976, p. 5. *Gives a brief summary of the Crosbyton solar electric* $power$ *contract.*

Appendix A

SOLAR ENERGY DISTRIBUTION

The solar radiation (insolation) maps presented in this appendix (figures A.1-A.12) are taken directly from Distribution of Direct and Total Solar Radiation Availabilities for the U.S.A., by E. C. Boes, I. L. Hall, R. R. Prairie, R. P. Stromberg, and H. E. Anderson, a study performed by Sandia Laboratories and sponsored by the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration [33].

These insolation maps for the United States are presented for each month and for both the "direct-normal radiation" and the "total-horizontal radiation." The direct-normal radiation represents the daily direct beam radiation received on a surface at that location if continuously pointed toward the sun and is useful for concentrating collector analysis. The total horizontal radiation is the daily direct plus diffuse (total) radiation received by a horizontal surface at that location and is useful for nonconcentrating, nontracking solar collector analysis.

It can be seen that both the total-horizontal and direct-normal radiations exhibit large seasonal changes and also vary substantially across the state, generally increasing from east to west. While totalhorizontal insolation for far East Texas varies from 15 to 25 percent below that for far West Texas, the direct-normal radiation for far Eas• Texas varies from 25 to 50 percent below that for far West Texas. Because of this large difference, primarily in the direct-normal radiation, solar thermal electric power generators exhibit greater potential the more westernly the location.

Reference

33. Boes, E.C.; Hall, l.L.; Prairie, R.R.; Stromberg, R.P.; and Anderson, H.E.; Distribution of Direct and Total Solar Radiation Availabilities for the U.S.A., Sandia Laboratory, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1976.

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR JANUARY (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR FEBRUARY (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

 $A-3$

Figure A.3

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR MARCH (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR APRIL (kilmvatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR MAY (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR JUNE (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

A-7

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR JULY (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR AUGUST (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR SEPTEMBER (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

A-10

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR OCTOBER (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

 $A-11$

Figure A¹¹

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-
HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR NOVEMBER (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

MEAN DAILY DIRECT-NORMAL (TOP) AND TOTAL-HORIZONTAL (BOTTOM) SOLAR RADIATION FOR DECEMBER (kilowatt-hours per square meter)

A-13

Appendix B WIND DISTRIBUTION

The annual variations in wind velocity for several locations across the state of Texas are presented in figures B.1 through B.5. Data were taken from the U.S. National Weather Service; they are averages over twenty years or more. In considering wind distribution, there are gererally three seasonal periods: winter, spring, and summer. The maximum wind velocities occur during the spring months of March and April; the velocity contours across the state for those months are presented in figure B.6. Minimum wind velocities tend to occur in the summer months of July through September; velocity contours for the state for this period are presented in figure B.7. There is a period of intermediate wind velocities in the winter months of December and January for which the velocity contours are presented in figure B.8. As can be seen from these plots, the northwest regions (such as Amarillo, Lubbock, Abilene) and the Gulf Coast regions (such as Corpus Christi and Brownsville) have the highest wind velocities in Texas.

Major problems in interpretation of the wind velocity data arise because of the heights and locations chosen for the anemometers. If the anemometer is located near buildings or other obstacles, a reduced wind speed can result, or the wind speed can be increased as a result of the Bernoulli effect.

National Weather Service substations are generally located at airports, and the wind speed information is for the benefit of aviation. In the early sixties most anemometers were changed to a height of frnm 20 to 30 feet and were placed near the runways, at least one-half mile away from major obstacles.

 $B-1$

 $g-5$

 $9 - 8$

Figure 8.6

EQUAL VELOCITY CONTOURS FOR AVERAGE WIND VELOCITIES OCCURRING DURING MARCH AND APRIL

Figure B.7 EQUAL VELOCITY CONTOURS FOR AVERAGE WIND VELOCITY OCCURRING DURING JULY, AUGUST, AND SEPTEMBER

EQUAL WIND VELOCITY CONTOURS FOR AVERAGE WIND VELOCITIES OCCURRING DURING DECEMBER

If a wind speed V_1 is known at some reference height H₁, the wind speed V desired at any height H can be calculated by:

$$
V = V_1(\frac{H}{H_1})^n
$$

where n is an experimental exponent which ranges from $\frac{1}{5}$ to $\frac{1}{7}$.

The value of n depends in a rather complex manner on terrain features, thermal stratification of the air, and the distance from the ground. This variation is illustrated in figure 8.9.

Source: Reference [16]

Figure 8.9

EFFECT OF GROUND ROUGHNESS ON VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF WIND SPEEDS

Height and location, therefore, have a large effect on the velocity. The presented velocity contours over Texas are based on measurements obtained near ground level at airports at heights of approximately 30 feet. Therefore, aeroturbines located at height ranging from 100 to 200 feet, experience greater velocities by a factor of approximately 1.27 to 1.46 times the anemometer's recorded wind speed. These factors assume an exponent of approximately 0.2, which is between the second two cases in figure 8.6.

Appendix C

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COMMUNITY DATA

Figure C.1 LOCATION OF TEXAS TOWNS AND CITIES: POPULATION 3,000 to 30,000

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¹Dallas Morning News, Texas Almanac 1975-1976.

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²Dudley L. Poston, <u>Population Projections for Texas Counties: 1980–2000</u>, The University of Texas at Au<mark>stin Population Research Center,</mark> June, 1973.

3_{Department of Commerce, <u>Population and Economic Activity in the United States and Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas</u>, Department
of Commerce, July, 1972.}

4u.s. Department of Commerce, Characteristics of the Population 1970, Tables 107 and 118.

5Electrical World, Directory of Electric Utilities, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1975.

6Figures in parentheses represent peak demand and generating capacity.

7Federal Power Commission, Typical Electric Bills, 1975.

8Texas Municipal League, "Texas Municipal Taxation and Dept., 1976," Texas Town and City, March, 1976.

* Abbreviations used for Electric Utilities

-
- CP&CL CPSB - Central Power and Light Co.
- City Public Service Board of San Antonio
- -Community Public Service Co.
- CPSC DP&LC
- GSUC
- HL&PC
- LCRA Lower Colorado River Authority
- SEPC Southwestern Electric Power Co. - Dallas Power and Light Co.
- Gulf States Utilities Co.
- Houston Lighting and Power Co.
- Lower Colorado River Authoirty
- Southwestern Electric Power Co.
- SPSC Southwestern Public Service Co.
- SPSC Southwestern Public Service Co.
<u>T</u>ESC Texas Electric Service Co.
- TP&LC -Texas Power and Light Co.
- WTUC -West Texas Utilities Co.

* Abbreviations used for Municipal Utilities and Facilities

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Am - Auditorium

- Ap Airport
- C Cemeta ry
- Ce Civic center
- E Electric
- Fg Fairgrounds
- G Gas
- $GC GO1f course$
- H Hospital
- Hr Boat harbor or marina
- L Library
- Lk Lake
-
- P Parking lot
- Ph Public housing
- S Sewer
- Sp Swimming pool T Transit system
-
- W Waterworks
$\sim 10^7$

SMSA - ABILENE. TEX.
THEA CODE NUMBER - 300)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, FISTORICAL AND PROJECTED, SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

See page C-62 for table notes

Source: Population and Economic Activity in the United States and Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas,
Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, July, 1972.

SMSA = AMARILLO, TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER = 307)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED.
SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

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See page C-62 for table notes

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POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PFRSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,

SMSA – BEAUMONI-PORI ARIHUR-ORANGE, TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER – 320)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,
SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

SMSA = BROWNSVILLE=HARLINGEN=SAN BENITO, TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER = 329)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,

SMSA - BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION: TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER - 538)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED.
SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

SMSA = CCRPUS CHRISTI. TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER = 345)

POPULATION: EMPLOYMENT: PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,

SMSA = DALLAS, TEX,
(BEA CODE NUMBER = 346)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED.

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED, SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

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SMSA = FORT wORTH, TEX.
TBEA CODE NUMBER = 368)

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POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,

SMSA - GALVESTON-TEXAS CITY. TEX.
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POPULATION: EMPLOYMENT: PERSCNAL INCOME: AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY: HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED.
SELECTED YEARS: 1950 - 2020

SMSA – HOUSTON. TEX.
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POPULATION: EMPLOYMENT: PERSONAL INCOME: AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED.
SELECTED YEARS: 1950 - 2020

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SMSA - LAREEC, TEX.
(HEA CODE NUMBER - 399)

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POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,

SHSA – MCALLEN-PHAPR-EDINBURG, TEX.
18EA CODE NUMBER – 532)

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POPULATION: EMPLOYMENT, PERSCNAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED.
SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

See page C-62 for table notes

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SMSA – CDESSA, TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER – 440)

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POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED, SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

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SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

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SMSA = SHERMAN-DENISON, TEX.
(BEA CODE NUMBER = 534)

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCHAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED, SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

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(GEA CODE NUMBER – 502)

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SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

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POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,
SELECTED YEARS, 1950 - 2020

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, PERSCHAL INCOME, AND EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY, HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED,

TABLE NOTES

Data may not add to higher level totals due to rounding.

(D) Deleted to avoid disclosure of data pertaining to an individual establishment.

(S) Too small to project.

(*) Total and per capita income are expressed on a residence basis (income of residents of the area). Earnings are on a where-earned basis.