

# Insight

OCTOBER 2006

## Enrichment Facility Bringing Jobs, Economic Stability to N.M.

*'America's Nuclear Revival Is No Longer a Concept. It's Becoming a Reality'*

**T**here is nothing small about the New Mexico town of Eunice except its size—population 2,600.

The town proved that in August when Louisiana Energy Services (LES), a subsidiary of Urenco, broke ground on the first major nuclear facility licensed in America in 30 years. The \$1.5 billion National Enrichment Facility (NEF) will provide enriched uranium for the country's 103 commercial reactors. Production could start in late 2008, with the facility in full operation in 2013.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) and Energy Department Undersecretary David Garman attended the groundbreaking ceremony. All three described nuclear energy's value to national energy security and the facility's value to local economic security.

"The NEF will provide a sustainable domestic fuel for our nation's nuclear power plants and further contribute to weaning us off of foreign supplies and encouraging competition within the U.S. market," Domenici said.

"I have been talking over the last several years about the coming of the 'nuclear renaissance' in commercial nuclear energy in America," Domenici said. With construction now under way, southeast New Mexico "will gain a powerful new pillar for its economy," he added.

Said DOE's Garman: "Beginning today, America's nuclear revival is no longer a concept. It's becoming a reality."

LES projects the facility will provide up to 300 full-time and contract jobs, together with 1,000 construction jobs. The facility received a license



PHOTO COURTESY OF LES

*LES officials join Rep. Steve Pearce (center), Gov. Bill Richardson (right) and Sen. Pete Domenici (far right) during a groundbreaking ceremony at the National Enrichment Facility.*

from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in June, the first the agency has issued for a full-scale enrichment plant.

The project's economic benefits will stretch across southeast New Mexico to neighboring Texas, noted Richardson, former secretary of energy in the Clinton administration. "We have to work cooperatively to get projects that are good for our region and state," the governor said.

Uranium ore must undergo four processing steps to convert it to solid ceramic fuel pellets used in commercial reactors. These steps are mining and milling, conversion, enrichment, and fabrication. In the enrichment phase, the uranium's U-235 content increases from 0.71 percent to

between 3 percent and 5 percent by weight.

Rep. Steve Pearce (R), whose congressional district includes Eunice, said the facility "means jobs, but also stability. The economy locally has been very volatile through the decades."

Skip Bowman, president and chief executive officer of the Nuclear Energy Institute, echoed Pearce's remarks. "This state-of-the-art enrichment facility will be the rock of economic stability for decades to come," he said.

"Just as importantly, the National Enrichment Facility will help ensure a competitive, reliable supply of low-enriched uranium for nuclear power plants that are vital to our nation's future energy supply," Bowman noted.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CONSTELLATION ENERGY

## Maryland County Courts Nuclear Plant Project

As Constellation Generation Group considers building a third nuclear reactor at its Calvert Cliffs plant, it is receiving enthusiastic support from the local community. In August, Calvert County, Md., authorized \$300 million in property tax incentives for a new reactor at the plant.

Through UniStar Nuclear, Baltimore-based Constellation Energy is evaluating Calvert Cliffs as one of several potential sites for construction of a new U.S. EPR reactor. If the company builds a third reactor at the site, Calvert County would provide a 50 percent personal property tax credit for 15 years on that reactor, said David Hale, president of the Calvert County Board of Commissioners.

In signing the agreement with Constellation Energy, the commissioners said they recognize the impact nuclear expansion would have on the county through job creation and tax payments. The Calvert Cliffs plant is the largest taxpayer in the county and provides more than 800 jobs. A third reactor would supply an additional 400 jobs, as well as thousands of construction jobs during the five-year construction period.

The tax incentive package, Constellation Energy noted, is "an important consideration" in deciding whether to build a new nuclear reactor at Calvert Cliffs.

## Climate Expert Backs Nuclear Energy

As a boy, James Lovelock devoured science fiction by H.G. Wells and Jules Verne and studied astronomy, chemistry and physics. Nearly eight decades later, the U.K. scientist's intellectual curiosity endures.

The environmental scientist, holder of more than 50 patents, visited the United States in September to discuss his latest book, "The Revenge of Gaia," published by Basic Books. The 177-page work is the latest in a series devoted to Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis that the Earth is a self-regulating entity. Gaia is the Greek goddess of the earth.

Lovelock sees nuclear energy as one of the few technologies that can help curtail carbon emissions, which many scientists believe cause global heating. "We live in a nuclear-powered universe," he said in a Sept. 12 interview in The New York Times. "We're the oddballs by getting energy from burning carbon."

Lovelock's environmental work began in the 1950s, when he devised an instrument for medical research regarding clean air. The electron capture detector measured pesticides and chlorofluorocarbons. Rachel Carson, author of the seminal environmental book "Silent Spring," used Lovelock's findings as the cornerstone for her work.

In his newest book, Lovelock provides this definition of Gaia: "A thin spherical shell of matter that surrounds [Earth's]

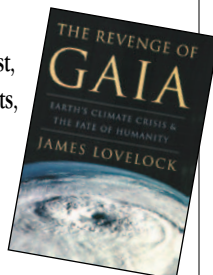
incandescent interior; it begins ... about 100 miles below the surface, and proceeds another 100 miles outward through the ocean and air to the even hotter thermosphere at the edge of space."

Lovelock warned that, if no action is taken, we are "headed straight back to the Earth's second stable state, which is a hot state ... about 14 degrees warmer than it is in these parts of the world now."

Although renewable energy sources will "help a little bit," the author said, "it's no answer at all to the problem" of climate change.

Lovelock writes in his latest book, "There is no alternative but nuclear fission until fusion energy and sensible forms of renewable energy arrive as truly long-term providers. Nuclear energy is free of emissions and independent of imports from what will be a disturbed world."

Lovelock has spoken often about the need for increased reliance on nuclear energy. In a March 2005 article in Reader's Digest, Lovelock wrote, "a lifeline exists" to help address climate change. "By grasping it now, we can rescue the world from both the consequences of global warming and our looming energy shortages," he noted. "It's safe, proven, practical and cheap. Our lifeline is nuclear energy."



*Environmentalist James Lovelock signs a copy of his latest book for Michael Stuart, a senior nuclear instructor at Dominion Resources Services Inc.*

# The Eyes of Texas Are Upon ... Nuclear Energy

Texas already has four reactors that produce 10 percent of the state's electricity, but the state has prospects for several more if utilities and developers continue the projects they have in the works.

Whether any or all of these projects come to fruition depends on many factors—but one thing is clear: Texas is a contender for new nuclear plants.

GE Energy's nuclear business and the STP Nuclear Operating Co. have signed an agreement to study the possible development of, and begin licensing work for, two GE Advanced Boiling Water Reactors (ABWRs). STP is representing NRG South Texas LP in the project. If it proceeds, the reactors would be built alongside two existing reactors at the South Texas Project nuclear plant site near Bay City.

Elsewhere in Texas, TXU Corp. announced plans to file federal licensing applications for 2 to 6 gigawatts of new nuclear-generated electricity capacity at up to three sites. The company expects to bring the new capacity on line between 2015 and 2020.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STP

**South Texas Project's two reactors produce enough electricity to power more than 1 million homes and businesses.**

TXU is looking to site at least one new reactor at its Comanche Peak nuclear plant in central Texas. In addition, TXU will review other sites, including locations in Texas and in other states.

The company is working with General Electric, Westinghouse, AREVA and other nuclear suppliers to select a reactor technology.

Meanwhile, Amarillo developer George Chapman, who formed Amarillo Power, has proposed building two ABWRs at a Texas site, possibly near Amarillo.

Exelon also announced in late September that it is considering building a new nuclear plant in the Lone Star state.

## Strong Majorities Favor Building New Reactors, Polls Show

New public opinion polls show strong majorities of Americans say that nuclear power is important to the nation's energy future, and that new reactors should be built to address rising electricity demand and climate concerns.

A national public opinion survey of 1,000 Americans, conducted for the Nuclear Energy Institute Sept. 7-10 by Bisconti Research Inc., found that 68 percent favor nuclear energy and 81 percent say nuclear power will be important to our energy future.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents agreed that nuclear power plants are "safe and secure" and that used fuel can be stored safely at plant sites until moved to a permanent disposal site. About three-quarters of Americans agree that the federal government should continue to develop a permanent disposal facility for used nuclear fuel at the Yucca Mountain site in the Nevada desert.

A recent Bloomberg/Los Angeles Times poll found that 61 percent of Americans support the increased use of nuclear power as a source of energy to prevent global warming.

The poll, based on telephone interviews with 1,478 American adults conducted from July 28 to Aug. 1, has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

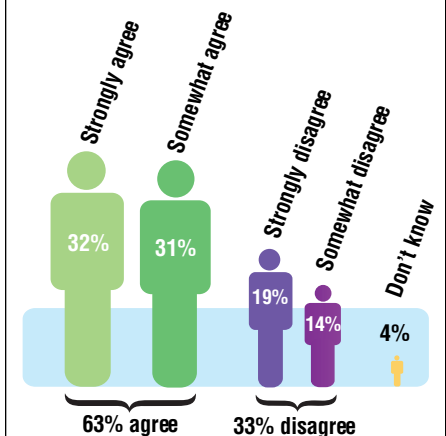
Pollsters informed participants that increasing the use of nuclear energy while decreasing the use of fossil fuels has been suggested as a means of reducing global warming. Participants then answered the question, "Would you, personally, support or oppose the increased use of nuclear power as a source of energy in order to prevent global warming?"

Of the remaining respondents, 30 percent opposed increased use of nuclear energy and 9 percent answered that they did not know.

### Groundbreaking Support

**"Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement:**

*We should definitely build more nuclear power plants in the future?"*



SOURCE: BISCONTI RESEARCH INC.

# Project Green Field: Plant Celebrates Return to Nature

At 10:33 a.m. on Aug. 29, 1997, Big Rock Point's nuclear control operator, Andrew Loe, pressed a red button in the control room to shut down the reactor for the last time.

Nine years later to the day, hundreds of former and current Consumers Energy employees, government officials, as well as business and nuclear industry leaders gathered at the Charlevoix, Mich., site to celebrate the return of the Big Rock Point nuclear plant site to "green field" status, essentially restoring the site to an undeveloped state.

"As the first commercial nuclear plant in Michigan, Big Rock Point and its workers were pioneers in safely employing the atom for electrical generation," said David Joos, Consumers Energy's chief executive officer and a former Big Rock Point employee. "The plant and its workers continued that leadership throughout decommissioning and site restoration by again employing a number of innovative practices and processes to safely return the site to a natural state."

Consumers Energy operated the plant for 35 years, then decommissioned and restored the plant site. After approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, about 475 acres and 1.5 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline will be available for unrestricted use.

During decommissioning, workers removed all the nuclear plant structures.



Attendees at the green field celebration received a memento made from the plant's containment sphere steel.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONSUMERS ENERGY



Consumers Energy CEO David Joos, left, and Senior Vice President Robert Fenech accept a tribute to the plant from Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.).

"Consumers Energy has fulfilled its promise" to return the property "to a condition much as we found it more than 45 years ago," said Robert Fenech, Consumers Energy's senior vice president of nuclear, fossil and hydro operations. "While this milestone truly is one to be remembered and celebrated, we also are here to remember and celebrate the significant contribution that this small, 67-megawatt plant made to the entire nuclear industry and the contribution that the plant workers made to this community."

Big Rock Point was a small reactor by today's standards. Many commercial reactors average about 1,000 megawatts. Built in just two years, Big Rock Point was the nation's longest-running and oldest operating nuclear plant upon closing.

"Big Rock Point had so many reasons to be proud," said Paul Genoa, the Nuclear Energy Institute's director of policy development and a former Big Rock Point employee. "Its focus on nuclear fuel research provided a significant contribution to the industry. Big Rock also was an early

pioneer of probabilistic risk assessment techniques that are now routine industry practices."

In addition to electricity, the plant also produced cobalt-60 to treat cancer patients, which officials estimate saved more than 120,000 lives, Genoa said.

He added that Big Rock Point also reached an extraordinary safety milestone: Plant workers went more than 23 years without missing a day of work because of injury.

During decommissioning activities, Big Rock used innovative radiation survey techniques and highlighted model license-termination practices that will become the industry standards.

The only remaining evidence that Big Rock Point was once a reactor site is the plant's used nuclear fuel, now stored in dry fuel storage containers located on Consumers Energy property near the plant site. It will remain there until the U.S. Department of Energy meets its obligation to dispose of used fuel from commercial nuclear plants.

## A Proud History of Innovation and Service

- Conceived in the late 1950s as part of the Power Reactor Demonstration Program of the Atomic Energy Commission, the plant was the world's first high-power-density boiling water reactor. Research there led to development of more efficient nuclear fuels.
- The plant's reactor produced radioactive cobalt-60 for medicine and industry for 11 years.
- In 1977, Big Rock Point set a world record for 343 days of continuous operation.
- The American Nuclear Society named Big Rock Point a Nuclear Historic Landmark in 1991 for its contributions to the nuclear energy and medical industries.
- Big Rock Point became the longest-running nuclear plant in the United States in 1993.

# Nuclear Plants Boost Local Economies

**W**hen a national pollster surveyed communities near nuclear power plants last year, one message was clear: The plants and their operation impress local residents. In fact, nearly 90 percent have a favorable overall impression of their nearest nuclear power plant.

Two new economic reports from the Nuclear Energy Institute may help explain those favorable impressions. In studying Exelon Corp.'s three nuclear plants in Pennsylvania and the Salem and Hope Creek plants in New Jersey, analysts found that the quintet of electricity powerhouses has a substantial impact on each facility's local economy.

In 2004, the operation of Exelon's Pennsylvania plants increased the state's economic output by \$229 million. The economic impact of these facilities is most significant in these counties:

- \$13.6 million in Montgomery County, where the Limerick Generating Station is located
- \$5.8 million in Dauphin County, home of Three Mile Island 1
- \$6 million in York County, where the Peach Bottom plant is located.

Adding the value of each plant's electricity generation brings those amounts to \$2.6 billion for the state, and \$981.5 million, \$947.3 million and \$383.6 million, in Montgomery, York and Dauphin counties, respectively.

Exelon's nuclear plants in Pennsylvania employ 1,903 people in jobs that pay substantially higher salaries than the three-county average. For instance, Peach Bottom workers who reside in York County earned an average of \$70,338, while the average salary for workers in the county was \$53,090.

Local New Jersey and Delaware communities near the Salem and Hope Creek plants experience similar impacts. The stations contributed almost \$22 million to the economic output of four counties surrounding the plants (Salem, Cumberland and Gloucester counties in New Jersey and New Castle County in Delaware) in 2004. Adding the direct value of the plants' electricity generation brings the local economic output attributable to Salem and Hope Creek to \$1.2 billion. Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) and Exelon own Salem, while PSEG owns Hope Creek.

The Salem and Hope Creek complex is one of the largest employers in the four-county area, with 1,976 workers. During 2004, the plants paid \$146 million in compensation to employees living in the four-county study area.

The plants made significant purchases in the four-county study area, where they spent \$245 million in 2004. The plants' overall purchases totaled \$413 million, including nearly \$88 million in Pennsylvania, \$55 million in New Jersey and \$14 million in Delaware.



*Hope Creek Generating Station is a major contributor to southern New Jersey's regional economy.*

## Now Hear This ...

*A growing number of Americans also seem to recognize that nuclear energy, while not without risks, is on balance a 'cleaner' and better alternative than the same old, same old."*

—"America's Nuclear Dark Age"  
Orange County Register editorial  
Sept. 7

*No pun intended, but it brightens our day to learn that nuclear power has not been forgotten. ... Nuclear power is, except for harmless water vapor, emission-free. You'd think environmentalists would see it as a blessing, but many won't let go of their reflexive judgment that it is a curse."*

—"A Nuclear Era"  
Investor's Business Daily editorial  
Sept. 5

*[Removing used fuel from the nation's nuclear plant sites] is the industry's top priority, and it is the federal government's statutory and contractual obligation to do so."*

—Skip Bowman  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Nuclear Energy Institute  
Sept. 14 Senate testimony

# Nuclear Ensures Energy Security, Manufacturers Say

Keeping America's economic engine running requires energy—and lots of it. Where are manufacturers turning to help ensure that supply? Nuclear energy.

U.S. manufacturing generates \$1.4 trillion, or 12 percent of our gross domestic product, accounting for three-fourths of our nation's exports and more than 20 million high-paying jobs.

Expansion of nuclear energy is one of several steps the nation must take to create "a plentiful, flexible, diverse and affordable energy supply," John Engler, president of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), said Aug. 28 when unveiling the association's annual Labor Day Report.

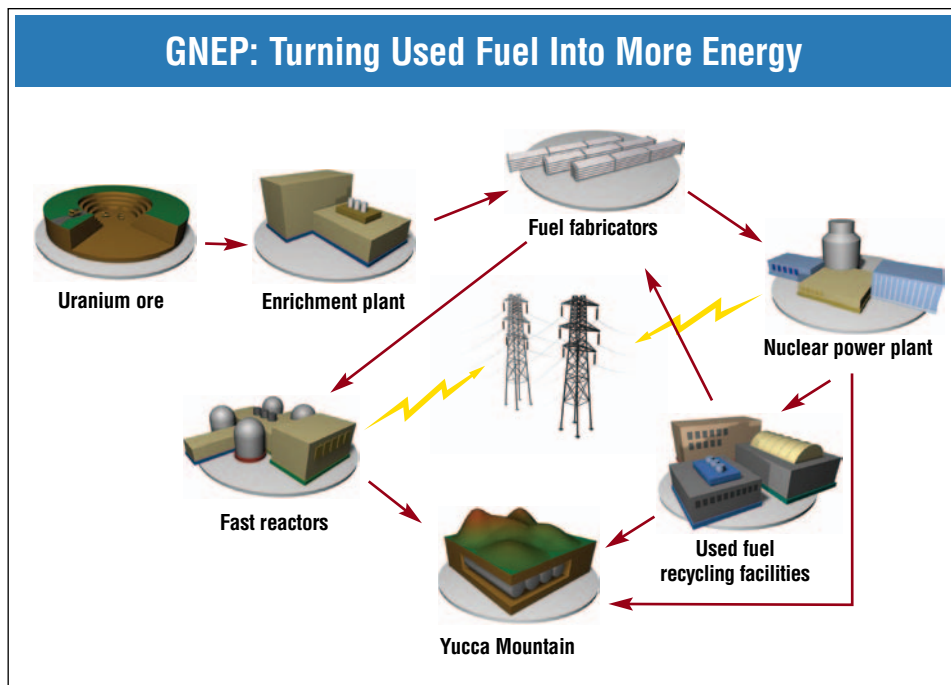
The report, "Energy Costs: Shrinking the Pie for America's Workers," provides a snapshot of the American economy over the past year, revealing the damage of rising energy costs to an otherwise strong economy—and to worker pocketbooks.

Although factory wages have risen 1.2 percent over the past year—the fastest pace in six years—energy prices, which have risen 23 percent, cut the buying power of those wages by 0.5 percent from the previous year, the report found.

There is no single "silver bullet" solution, said Engler, a former Michigan governor, but the nation can take several steps to build energy independence. One is providing "for the expansion of nuclear energy by establishing a national repository for nuclear waste."

Engler also called for research and development of nuclear fuel reprocessing in collaboration with international partners to develop technologies that are "cleaner, more efficient, less waste-intensive and more proliferation resistant."

"Our nation was galvanized around the Manhattan Project; we put a man on the moon; and 50 years ago, we created the Interstate Highway System," Engler said. "If we marshal that same national spirit of cooperation, unity and focus, we can ensure energy security."



*An advanced fuel cycle envisioned by the U.S. Department of Energy includes recycling used fuel to produce more energy and reduce waste toxicity and volume.*

## DOE Envisions Advanced Fuel Cycle

The U.S. Department of Energy has taken steps to advance its Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) to promote the expansion of nuclear power globally and further the nation's nonproliferation goals. GNEP focuses on developing an advanced fuel cycle for the next generation of reactors, including recycling enormous energy that remains in used reactor fuel after its initial use.

In August, DOE named Paul Lisowski, deputy director of advanced nuclear energy systems, to head the GNEP program.

The department has issued a request for proposals for host sites for fuel cycle facilities related to GNEP that has drawn numerous preliminary responses. DOE plans to spend \$20 million to study possible locations for the GNEP facilities.

GNEP has strong support in Congress overall, but some prominent members have expressed concerns that it could divert resources from the Yucca Mountain used fuel repository program.

"I support GNEP as a responsible solution to addressing our spent fuel needs. I also believe this strategy must be closely aligned with the development of Yucca," Subcommittee Chairman sen. Pete

Domenici (R-N.M.) said during an August hearing on used fuel management issues.

"In the near-term, I would hope the federal government lives up to its commitment under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and begins to take responsibility for waste stored at reactor sites nationwide," Domenici said.

Although industry leaders share the concern that GNEP could divert the federal government's focus from meeting its used fuel obligations, many are bullish on the initiative.

"GNEP has the potential to vault the United States into a position of leadership in the global nuclear industry," said Alan Hansen, executive vice president, technology and used fuel management at AREVA. Hansen added that recycling could serve as a "complementary strategy to the development of a repository."

Kelly Fletcher, sustainable energy advanced technologies leader at General Electric, said his company is "especially interested in GNEP because it provides the policy framework for solving two of the more serious challenges impacting the nuclear industry today: waste disposal and proliferation."

# Progressive Think Tank Thinks About Nuclear Energy

Nuclear energy is part of the strategy for combating climate change in an energy security plan released this summer by the Center for American Progress, a progressive think tank.

“Energy Security in the 21st Century: A New National Strategy” recommends that the United States establish a national “renewable portfolio standard” mandating that 10 percent to 25 percent of domestic electricity be produced from renewable resources and nuclear energy by 2025.

The standard should stay in place until the country establishes a national cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, according to the plan.

The renewable portfolio standard is part of a

strategy the center’s National Security Task Force on Energy developed as an alternative to Bush administration policies it considers ineffective in ensuring global energy security and addressing climate change. The task force includes former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle.



MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

Another part of the strategy for addressing climate change calls for the United States to continue research “into the development of safe, cost-effective nuclear power that addresses the problems currently posed by the threat of proliferation; the management of nuclear wastes; the perceived safe-

ty, environmental and health risk; and the high relative cost of production.”

In addition to climate change, the center’s energy security plan focuses on four other issues:

- decreasing U.S. dependence on foreign oil
- eliminating proliferation threats associated with nuclear technologies
- protecting and modernizing the global energy infrastructure and distribution channels
- coordinating policies for a more cooperative energy security environment with traditional U.S. allies and potential partners.

The report is available on the center’s Web site at [www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org).

## Hydrogen Production at Nuclear Plants?

### Department of Energy and Industry Work Together to Provide Answer

The U.S. Department of Energy and the nuclear energy industry are joining forces to study the economic feasibility of producing hydrogen at commercial nuclear power plants.

The agency will provide \$1.4 million for two projects. Electric Transportation Applications will head the first team, which also includes DOE’s Idaho National Laboratory and Arizona Public Service Co. The team will study the economics of producing hydrogen at nuclear plants using commercially available production technology.

GE Global Research will lead DOE’s National Renewable Energy Lab and Entergy Corp. in studying the feasibility of hydrogen production using alkaline electrolysis powered by nuclear energy. Their proposal centers on the low-cost alkaline electrolyzer technology that GE developed in part under DOE’s Hydrogen Program.

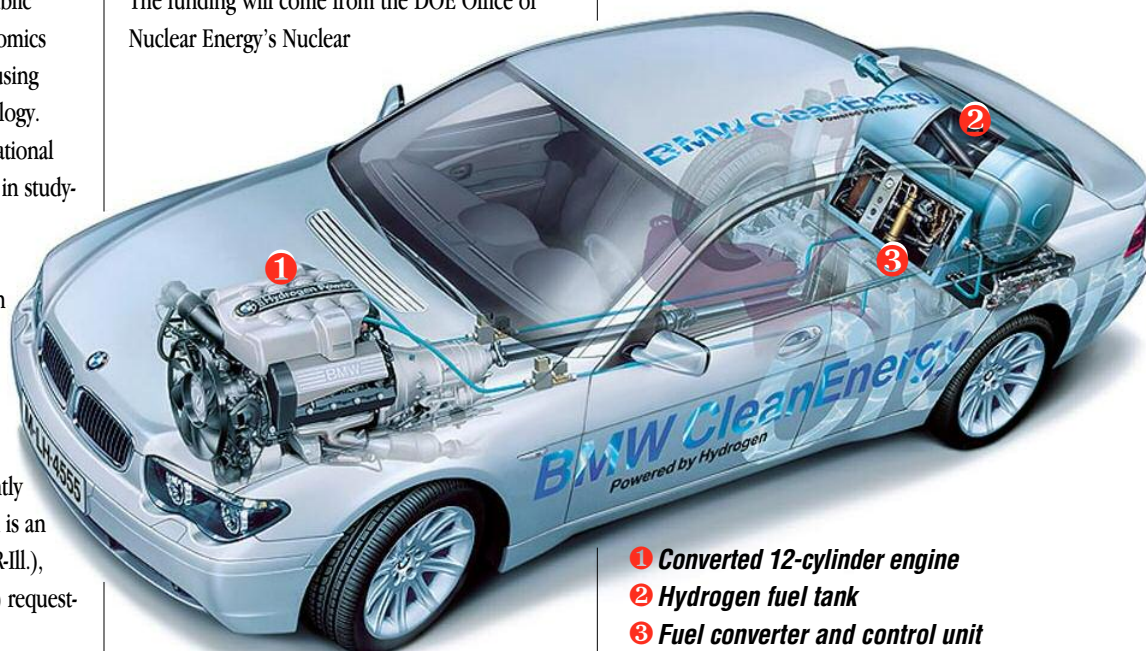
“I have long supported nuclear power as a clean-air electricity producer, and jointly using those facilities to produce hydrogen is an added benefit,” said Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.), who along with Rep. Albert Wynn (D-Md.) requested the DOE studies.

“We need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and move toward a hydrogen economy,” Wynn said. “DOE’s announcement to develop the production of hydrogen from nuclear power is a step in the right direction.”

These studies support President Bush’s Advanced Energy and Hydrogen Fuel Initiatives. The funding will come from the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy’s Nuclear

Hydrogen Initiative, with industry sharing a minimum of 20 percent of the cost.

BMW is one of several automakers that have developed hydrogen vehicles. The company will roll out its hydrogen-powered car in serial production early next year. A 260-hp 12-cylinder engine powers the vehicle.



- 1 **Converted 12-cylinder engine**
- 2 **Hydrogen fuel tank**
- 3 **Fuel converter and control unit**

ARTIST'S RENDERING COURTESY OF BMW

# FPL Milestone: Educating Half-Million About Nuclear Energy

Seeing is believing. That is what third-graders from the F. K. Sweet Magnet School in Ft. Pierce, Fla., discovered during a recent tour of Florida Power & Light Co.'s Energy Encounter.

The energy education center, at the company's St. Lucie nuclear power plant in Hutchinson Island, Fla., marked its half-million visitor milestone in September with Sweet's third-graders. The students were special guests at the Energy Encounter. Celebration activities included a welcome by Hutch, the parrot pirate, and an "Energy Detectives" hands-on program.

The 6,000-square-foot Energy Encounter, which opened in 1991, features more than 30 exhibits on energy, electricity and nuclear power. The center also offers a variety of community services and activities—inviting people of all ages to "come get to know us better," said Vicki Spencer, coordinator of the facility.

About 30,000 visitors every year do just that—including plenty of walk-in traffic from residents



PHOTO COURTESY OF FPL

**Third-graders encountered energy and a lot more as the half-millionth visitors to a Florida nuclear plant.**

and tourists alike. School groups account for a quarter to a third of the total number of visitors each year.

Teacher Marla Liberatore enjoys bringing her students to the Energy Encounter to introduce them to the subject of energy each year. "Students like to do hands-on learning, and the educational

component here is very engaging."

Nine-year-old Erniska Noel agreed. "I learned where the energy comes from and the things you can do with it. I'm having a great time."

Parents also attended the tour as chaperones. Lee Hedrick, the mother of 9-year-old Shaun Hedrick, said, "FPL's Energy Encounter is awesome."



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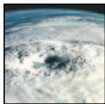
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*Nuclear Energy Insight* is published monthly by the Nuclear Energy Institute for policymakers and others interested in nuclear issues. NEI is the policy organization of the nuclear energy industry. © 2006

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## IN THIS ISSUE



**Environmental scientist-author sees nuclear energy as a "lifeline" to address climate change.** ..... See page 2



**Big Rock Point, Michigan's first nuclear power plant, returns to "green field" status.** ..... See page 4



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