

ABQ TRIal Balloon

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Finished Testing...

With this, the third print issue of the TRIal Balloon, we are definitely aloft. We are committed to developing www.ABQTRialBalloon.com into a daily online newspaper, and we are determined to publish this free print edition bi-monthly, or more frequently as our financial resources permit.

To augment the efforts of our loyal volunteer newsies, we have contracted with a local firm to distribute the print version widely. Please look for it at your favorite restaurant, grocery store, and wherever fine free literature is offered. (If you don't find it, let us know.)

What we still need is commitment from the community. Please subscribe to the TRIal Balloon by pledging a regular monthly contribution of \$5 or more for the next twelve months. Send your first check, together with your pledge, to Marvin

Gladstone, Treasurer, Albuquerque TRIal Balloon, 429 Montclair Drive SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108. Since the paper is distributed free, your contribution is fully tax deductible if you make it out to "Quote...Unquote Inc." and put "FOAT" in the memo line.

We will not bug you about your pledge, but you will be reminded that you owe for two months every time you see a new issue on the stands. (You may, of course, pay for your full subscription in advance.) We have calculated that we need a mere \$20,000 to produce both on-line and in print for another year, with two paid staffers. Your aid is essential.

Sincerely,
The Board of Friends of the Albuquerque Tribune (FOAT)
P.S. We still need volunteers in every area. Write to ABQ TRIal Balloon, P.O. Box 35058, Albuquerque, NM 87176-5058.

No Fuel Shortage in our Drinking Water

By Leslie Clark

People in Albuquerque need to wake up. That's according to Dave McCoy, executive director of the watch dog group Citizen Action. McCoy was among the audience at the Kirtland Air Force quarterly meeting October 16th at the Cesar Chavez Community Center where Sharon Minchak, an Air Force contractor, detailed the progress of clean-up of a huge jet fuel leak at the Kirtland base. According to Minchak, two extraction engines are now working to clean-up the jet refueling site where the leak was found. About 7500 gallons of fuel have been removed from the soil since the end of July, she said, at a rate of about 300 gallons per day.

But that didn't seem to satisfy the audience. McCoy pressed Minchak to describe the size and depth of the fuel leak. Minchak estimated the plume to be about 14 acres with the depth of the spill unknown. But

McCoy computed the polluted area as closer to 33 acres. "Figuring about .5 acre foot per acre of contamination," he said, "that figures out to about five million gallons of contamination in the aquifer." And with the new data from the recently placed monitors, the New Mexico Environment Department estimates a 40 acre plume or six million gallons. But Minchak reminded the group that calculating the depth of the spill is complicated by the varying porosity of the soil. Ultimately though, she agreed there are millions of gallons of fuel floating on Albuquerque ground water.

Fuel plume larger than previous estimates

Six ground water monitoring wells are now in place to better determine how far the fuel floating on the ground water has traveled. So far the monitors are showing that the contamination plume is bigger than originally thought leaving the extent of contamination to the

northeast unknown. Another five monitoring wells are planned. The Air Force will determine where to put them after the results of the wells now in place are known. Minchak said, "That will move us out into the Bullhead Park area along Ridgecrest Avenue and possibly into neighborhood streets north of Ridgecrest."

At the clean-up rate of 300 gallons per day with the two vapor extraction units now being used, McCoy said it will take 20 years or more to remove the fuel from the ground water. And he said, in a later interview, that it's unknown which pollutants are being cleaned up. Jet fuel contains benzene and ethylbenzene both carcinogens, and toluene, and xylene. "This is going to be enormously expensive," McCoy said, "we could be looking at costs upwards to hundreds of millions of dollars for this." To reduce clean up time, the Air Force is seeking funding for additional extrac-

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No More Coal

By Peter Montague

As the urgency of global warming continues to unfold in surprising ways, the coal industry finds itself in desperate straits. Opposition has developed in completely unexpected places.

This week Google -- the innovative internet giant -- announced it will invest several hundred million dollars in research to produce electricity from solar power cheaper than from coal. And they intend to do it in the next few years, not the next few decades. And a new study this week showed that windmills wired together in a large grid could

provide power as reliably as -- and cheaper than -- coal plants.

Coal technology has remained essentially unchanged since the dawn of the industrial revolution in the early 19th century -- so to have a young, savvy adversary like Google enter the electricity business means that coal and electric utility executives suddenly have reason to fear for their retirement benefits. They must be feeling like a slow-moving leaf-eating dinosaur that suddenly finds itself staring into the eyes of a large pack of hungry leopards.

Coal-fired electric power plants produce 40% of all CO2 emissions

in the U.S. (and even more, worldwide). By itself, phasing out coal would go a long way toward fixing the global warming problem.

That point was made last April in an advertisement in the New Yorker magazine. The ad asserts,

"There is a 'silver bullet' for global warming: NO MORE COAL."

The ad, placed by Architecture 2030, a design firm in Santa Fe, New Mexico, threw down the gauntlet to the coal industry -- but more importantly to all the designers of the built environment, the

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Decentralized Economy

By V.B.Price

Voters have heard virtually nothing this election season about what are sure to be dominant themes in the years ahead -- climate change, renewable energy and a green economy.

Such matters don't lend themselves to savage 15 second attack ads approved by the candidates, nor perk up the beleaguered brain cells of media questioners in national debates.

For many of us, though, it seems a sure thing that we are on the verge of a gigantic rearrangement of both our economy and our way of life in this country, a rearrangement that will be carried along by the riptides of global weather chaos and economic upheavals and insecurity around the world.

Are there any key principles that will help us turn this kind of change into something more than crisis dressed up to look like opportunity?

The principles may not be simple enough for television, but they seem pretty clear. The first principle is the decentralization of energy. The second is the localization of economic interest and activity.

National and regional electricity grids are far too vulnerable to breaking down when they are overloaded. Electricity is sure to become the stopgap fuel of all uses as we move from gasoline to other forms of propulsion. Electric cars will take up the slack to a degree, I think, and overload the system.

Reducing carbon emission to slow down climate change will demand a massive changeover from carbon energy to alternative energies in the generation of electricity. Carbon fuels, like nuclear fuel, require national and regional grids.

Alternative fuels -- such as solar and wind power -- can be localized, and decentralized. Solar power can also be miniaturized to power individual homes and businesses. And wind power can be localized to supply power to towns and even cities.

Decentralized energy is infinitely safer than massive grid systems in times of potential overuse and potential terrorist threat.

None of this will happen overnight, of course. The changes will be gradual, but traumatic. Businesses will fail, new ones will take their places.

As we wean ourselves from gasoline, however, the price of transporting goods from one part of the world to another will grow astronomically. Transport costs have already tripled since 2000.

What that means is that jobs, ultimately, will be returning to this country. And just as global transport becomes prohibitively expen-

sive, so will national transport. And that means a resurgence in local manufacturing, retailing, farming, repairing, recycling and reusing.

The last thing any town or region wants is to have the power go out, or become unreliable, just as it's rebuilding its local retail and manufacturing trades, and getting local farming back to where it produces more food than has to be trucked in.

As in all changes, transitions are where the troubles are. In moving from one fuel base to another, we will see many stopgap measures.

We just don't want the stopgaps to cause more problems than they solve. Eventually cost will determine demand as it always does in the long run, despite false demand created by advertising. Decentralized solar and wind energy, with no dwindling resources or toxic waste to contend with, will become the low cost leaders.

In the meantime, natural gas will be a cleaner alternative than scrubbed-up coal. Perhaps coal can be made clean, but no one has demonstrated a convincing argument as to how that could be done.

Bio fuels that burn food products to run cars will go the way of the dinosaurs in less than a decade. Hydro power remains relatively clean, except for the land destroyed by the dams that make it possible. And with global warming causing increasing periods of drought in the American West, hydropower won't be able to grow enough to replace coal.

Nuclear energy seems to me to be shortsighted stopgap, one that is potentially far more harmful and costly than any good it could do.

Nuclear power plants take a minimum of 12 years to come on line. They cost some \$4 billion to construct. They're vulnerable to terrorist attack. Uranium mining, including in situ leaching of uranium ore from ground water, is dangerous to public health, as has been proven over and over again.

Alternative, renewable fuels lend themselves to decentralization, and, therefore, to the growth of local, decentralized economies. Why ship energy gained from sunshine across hundreds of miles, when everyone has enough sunshine to supply at least part of their energy needs? If cloudy Germany is growing its solar power base, anyplace can.

Decentralizing power and strengthening local economies does not mean America will become balkanized into self-contained economic districts. It does mean, however, that local people can begin again to take more control over their economic well being.

That's an opportunity we can't let pass us by.

How Much is a Trillion Dollars?

Mathematician John Allen Paulos puts "million," "billion," and "trillion" in context, likening them to the passage of time in order to understand their order of magnitude. Relate \$1 million to one million seconds and it adds up to 11 days. Liken \$1 billion to one billion seconds and it adds up to 31 years and six months. Compare \$1 trillion to one trillion seconds and it adds up to more than 315 centuries.

Currently the United States' debt amounts to over \$10 trillion.

Deadly Cargoes Are Crossing the World's Oceans

By Wayne O'Leary

The US trade deficit, long a concern to American policymakers, fell in 2007 for the first time in six years. That's the good news. The bad news is that a significant reason for the drop was the sudden boom in American coal exports, which grew in value last year by 19%—to \$4.1 billion.

This country is working to solve its trade deficit, in other words, by marketing one of the most environmentally harmful products in the world and contributing in no small measure to planetary climate change caused by carbon emissions.

Coal Consumption Around the World

We are not the only guilty party. Consumption of coal is up around the globe; it's grown by 30% since 2002, twice as fast as any other energy source. The main reason: More underdeveloped nations are connecting to the electricity grid, and coal is the premier fuel powering electrical plants.

China and India, fast industrializing and modernizing, are building power plants at a record pace, and neither can meet its growing need for carbon-based fuel with domestic resources alone. China is increasing its usage by 10% per year. For its part, India expects to import 51 million tons of coal by 2012 (to produce 76,000 megawatts of power) and 136 million tons by 2022, according to a recent

analysis.

Nor is the insatiable consumption only a Third-World phenomenon. Modern Japan, in fact, is the single largest importer of coal (198 million tons in 2006). In the equally developed United Kingdom, coal is once again the leading fuel for electrical plants, surpassing oil and natural gas in 2003. In Germany, which has invested heavily in alternatives like wind and solar, coal is still the largest source of energy for utilities. And in the US, coal generates approximately half (52% in 2007) of the nation's electricity.

Coal: The Dirtiest of Fossil Fuels

The problem is that the new black gold—prices for power-plant coal are up from \$18 per ton in 1999 to \$50 per ton today—is the dirtiest of all fossil fuels to burn, far dirtier than oil. Coal accounts for a quarter of worldwide energy consumption, but generates nearly two-fifths of energy-related carbon dioxide. In addition, the Sierra Club reports that America's 417 coal-burning power plants each emit 50 tons of toxic mercury every year. Says Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), an opponent of more coal-powered utilities in the US: "There's not a coal-fired plant in America that's clean. They're all dirty." Observing that China and India plan to build 850 such plants over the next several years, Fareed Zakaria, editor of Newsweek International, further points out that those additions alone will produce air pollution

five times the potential savings of implementing the Kyoto Treaty.

At home, Americans are faced with their own inconvenient truth: the uncontrolled national appetite for more and more electricity to run computers and other plugged-in devices is severely degrading the domestic environment. Earlier this year, the Washington Post revealed that total coal purchases of electric utilities in the Washington, D.C. area rose by 40% between 2004 and 2006, a direct result of population growth and "an increasingly wired culture." Moreover, most of the bituminous coal used to service the District of Columbia's power needs was, investigators discovered, a product of Appalachian surface mining, the very worst kind.

Strip Mining and Mountaintop Removal

Surface or strip mining—scraping away layers of earth and rock with giant machines to access coal deposits—has become the mining industry's technique du jour in present-day America, replacing less disruptive, but slower, harder and more labor-intensive underground mining. The process began in the plateau regions of the Far West several decades ago and migrated east to Appalachia in the late 1980s, where it took on a particularly virulent form. Eastern surface mining employs a method called "mountaintop removal"—literally the leveling of mountains in high-elevation places like West Virginia. Besides the creation of a desolate

terrain resembling Mars, by-products include the loss of thousands of acres of forest in site preparation, the destruction of countless rivers and streams through debris waste and toxic chemicals, and the displacement of homes and settlements viewed as barriers to industrial progress.

It should come as no surprise that officials of the Bush administration, the most environmentally insensitive stewards of the federal government in modern history, have little concern with coal's downside. The resurgence of mountaintop removal (temporarily stalled in the late 1990s because of protests and lawsuits) owes much to Bush-inspired changes in environmental rules allowing debris waste to be reclassified as "fill" and dumped into streambeds. The administration has also dropped pending plans requiring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, gutted proposed rules regulating mining-generated substances such as coal dust, and downgraded the "hazardous" classification of mercury pollution emitted by coal-burning utilities.

The Politics of Coal

Campaign contributions had a lot to do with this industry-friendly stance; coal companies gave 88 percent of their political donations in 2000 to the GOP. The quid pro quo was a "balanced" energy policy friendly to Big Coal. Vice President Cheney's 2001 energy task force called for a greater reli-

ance on coal in generating utility power and an increased investment in purportedly cleaner ways of burning it; the focus throughout was not on reducing demand, but on expanding supply.

The upshot is that the US remains, after China, the second-largest producer and consumer of coal in the world and, increasingly, one of its largest exporters after Australia and Indonesia, dubious distinctions in the era of international demands to reduce greenhouse gases. It all comes down to economics: Coal is presently cheaper than other readily available power sources, such as oil and natural gas; and it's less capital-intensive than hydropower, with its massive dams, or nuclear power, with its complex and problematic infrastructure.

If US policy remains geared to encouraging the wasteful consumption of electrical energy at home and to exporting our consumptive way of life to formerly agrarian countries like China and India (in order to benefit American corporations seeking low-cost outsourcing partners and industrial suppliers overseas), the demand for coal will only grow, and those deadly cargoes will continue to cross the world's oceans. Globalization and modernization come with a price, and it's not just in dollars.

Wayne O'Leary is a writer in Orono, Maine, specializing in political economy. He holds a doctorate in American history and is the author of two books.

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people who design and build our cities and towns. They are calling it the "2030 Challenge."

The "2030 Challenge" points out that there are 151 coal-fired power plants currently on the drawing boards and 76% of their energy would go into buildings. So, to solve the global warming problem, let's just modify our buildings so we don't need any more coal plants.

Here's the text of the ad:

Global Warming

Think You're Making a Difference?

Think Again.

There are 151 new conventional coal-fired power plants in various stages of development in the US today.

Home Depot

Home Depot is funding the planting of 300,000 trees in cities across the US to help absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions...

The CO₂ emissions from only one medium-sized (500 MW) coal-fired power plant, in just 10 days of operation, will negate this entire effort.

Wal-Mart Wal-Mart is investing a half billion dollars to reduce the energy consumption and CO₂ emissions of their existing buildings by 20% over the next seven years. If every Wal-Mart Supercenter met this target...

The CO₂ emissions from only one medium-sized coal-fired power plant, in just one month of operation each year, would negate this entire effort.

California California passed legislation to cut CO₂ emissions in new cars by 25% and in SUVs by 18%, starting in 2009. If every car and SUV sold in California in 2009 met this standard...

The CO₂ emissions from only one medium-sized coal-fired power plant, in just eight months of operation each year, would negate this entire effort.

Every Household If every household in the US changed a 60-watt incandescent light bulb to a compact fluorescent...

The CO₂ emissions from just two medium-sized coal-fired power plants each year would negate this entire effort.

Education The Campus Climate Challenge calls for all college campuses in the US to reduce their CO₂ emissions to zero. If every college campus building in the US met this challenge...

The CO₂ emissions from just four medium-sized coal-fired power plants each year would negate this entire effort.

NY, ME, VT, NH, MA, CT, RI, PA, NJ, DE, MD

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a cooperative effort by 11 Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states to reduce their CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels by 2014...

The CO₂ emissions from just 13 medium-sized coal-fired power plants each year will negate this entire effort.

Congress Congress is considering many climate change bills this year to reduce US carbon dioxide emissions...

The CO₂ emissions from any new coal-fired power plants work to negate these efforts.

THERE IS A "SILVER BULLET" for SOLVING

GLOBAL WARMING...

NO MORE COAL

Without coal, all the positive efforts underway can make a difference. Over an 11-year period (1973-1983), the US built approx. 30 billion square feet of new buildings, added approx. 35 million new vehicles and increased real GDP by one trillion dollars while decreasing its energy consumption and CO₂ emissions.

We don't need coal, we have what we need: efficient design and proven technologies.

Today, buildings use 76% of all the energy produced at coal plants. By implementing The 2030 Challenge to reduce building energy use by a minimum of 50%, we negate the need for new coal plants.

Make a Difference: Protect Your Efforts.

The message is crisp and crystalline: "We don't need coal, we have what we need: efficient design and proven technologies." (And, for anyone who wants a detailed energy plan for the U.S. that avoids both coal and nuclear, one is avail-

able.)

Of course, because we have allowed Big Money to buy influence and run roughshod over common sense in Congress, we're going to have to fight like crazy to keep Congress from propping up Big Coal with a massive multi-billion-dollar bailout subsidy.

Just remember: Every dollar spent to prop up Big Coal is a dollar that cannot be spent creating good jobs with a real future -- renewable energy and efficient use. Every dollar spent propping up Big Coal is a dollar that cannot be spent renewing the U.S. as a world-class industrial leader.

But with innovators like Google and Architecture 2030 nipping at their heels, the coal industry dinosaurs are up to their eyeballs in deep mud -- and with some persistent organizing, many of their servants in Congress may soon suffer their same fate: political extinction.

Reprinted: Rachel's Democracy & Health News #935 www.rachel.org.

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tion engines. Ultimately, though, the financial burden of remediating the spill will fall on taxpayers.

The big picture

For McCoy there are still too many unknowns about the spill. "Some of the things they don't know is how much of the plume is dissolved in the aquifer and is moving with it separate from the amount floating on top of the water, and how deep the dissolved phase of the plume is beneath the aquifer." There's a larger problem according to McCoy. He said that people living in Albuquerque need to understand

that the contaminated plume from the jet fuel spill is just one of many sites on Kirtland Air Force Base and at Sandia National Laboratories that need to be cleaned up. "Sandia, for example, has a plume of TCE (trichloroethylene, a carcinogen)," McCoy said, "in numerous different areas that won't float on the ground water, this will go right into the ground water and move with it." This site and others, including the chemical waste landfill and the mixed waste landfill, haven't had adequate monitoring, according to McCoy, so the extent and nature

of the contamination beneath these sites remains a mystery. "It's a very dangerous situation, potentially for Albuquerque's drinking aquifer," McCoy said. "Currently, the sole source of Albuquerque's drinking water is in the aquifer and a large portion of the aquifer is under Sandia National Labs and Kirtland Air Force Base."

The Air Force, McCoy said, should be applauded for its transparency about the fuel spill and the clean up plan for the plume, but he faulted them for delaying public notification. Baird Swanson of the

NMED has said the jet fuel spill occurred sometime in the 1970s and was discovered in 1999. The Air Force did not notify the public of the water table contamination until July of this year, after clean up began.

For now, the Air Force continues to clean-up the contamination at the site of the jet fuel leak and drill and monitor wells around the plume. Kirtland will report its findings at the next quarterly meeting in January. In the meantime, according to McCoy, the public needs to demand more answers from both the Air Force and Sandia National Labs about

toxic contamination on their sites, the exposure to Albuquerque residents, what is being done to remediate them, and what precautions are being taken now to prevent further contamination of the city's air and water.

For more information about the fuel spill go to: the Air Force news at: www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/08/ap_jetfuelspill_082308, the New Mexico Environment Department www.nmenv.state.nm.us/OOTS/documents/PR-KAFBFinal-8-21-08_2_.pdf and Citizen Action at www.radfree.nm.org/

JIM HIGHTOWER

Bad Timing on Treasury Department Ads

When Corporate America teams up with government, there's no end to the amazing things that can be produced, right?

Consider a cooperative, nationwide advertising campaign developed by the Treasury Department, America's credit industry, and the Ad Council. Its objective is to teach 18-to-24-year-olds the importance and virtue of handling their financial affairs responsibly. Treasury officials proudly launched this instructional campaign on September 16.

Yes, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson rushed out in a panic with a \$700 billion bailout for Wall Street's investment banks that same week. The sky is falling, shrieked the nation's top financial official! These bankers have made very, very

bad credit decisions, he moaned -- so every man, woman, and child in America must now pony up \$2,000 each to rescue Wall Street's greed-heads and boneheads.

Hmmm. That doesn't exactly mesh with the message of personal responsibility that Paulson's own department was delivering to America's youngsters, does it? Indeed, the slogan of Treasury's finger-wagging ad campaign is: "Don't let your credit put you in a bad place." Yeah, a place like a Wall Street investment bank!

One of the designers of the ads said of the 18-to-24 population, "There is a sense of invincibility among this age group. Our job was to disrupt this thinking." Yet, Wall Street and Washington have colluded over the last decade to

remove all limits on financial high rollers, creating a culture of "anything goes." And, when everything crashes, don't worry, for Bush and the Congress will bail you out. See, you can be invincible.

Does the Treasury really think that its little ad campaign is going to be convincing to America's youngsters, when the department's top officials are openly abetting financial irresponsibility on such a massive scale?

Jim Hightower is a best selling author whose new book is Swim Against the Current: Even a Dead Fish Can Go With the Flow (John Wiley and Sons). Distributed by MinutemanMedia.org. To subscribe to his monthly newsletter the Hightower Lowdown, call toll-free 1-866-271-4900.

Local or Loco: Gaps in Coverage

By Astrid Webster

Teachers Talk Back

Enthusiastic applause greeted candidates Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich as they teamed up for a town hall meeting and a rally with local trade and teachers unions. Recounting past successes and accomplishments, both sounded the call for change that nearly every candidate is voicing. Electing just 60 more Democrats, we hear, will make the House filibuster-proof.

Although billed as including Q&A's, both meetings were over almost as soon as the questions began, their scope limited, without controversy. As Albuquerque Federation of Teachers President Ellen Bernstein introduced the candidates at CNM's Smith Brasher Hall, she set the stage for what could have been a valuable exchange of ideas, beginning with a scathing report on the devastating effect that No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) grueling test regimen has on children. Only four people were given time to ask questions. One teacher's conclusion that we "get rid of No Child Left Behind" was answered by thunderous applause. Both candidates, however, missed her point.

When NCLB comes up for renewal in 2009, countered Udall, we have to fix its problems, which admittedly are many. Heinrich's answer echoed Udall, citing the need to fix, not rescind, the legislation. Although Senator Obama cites its main flaw as being lack of funding, the only thing that would make this law worse would be funding its misguided objectives.

Teachers have been most vocal proponents of rescinding NCLB,

urging that we focus on teaching rather than testing children. We should be listening to them. This is what they were trained for and what they do best. As Mr. Udall was leaving CNM, I told him we have to get rid of No Child Left Behind. "No one is talking about rescinding it," he replied. "Then you should start," I said.

Despite deep concern for the growing challenges we face, whether in education, health care, energy, the economy or our environment, candidates typically respond with well-rehearsed but vague and superficial reassurances as with NCLB. Udall and Heinrich were no different at CNM and the Plumbers and Pipe Fitter's Union Hall. Wishful thinking and artful campaigning won't fix our schools. That is not to say these are not the best candidates in their races but rather that we must hold them to a far higher standard.

Still Loco

Factual inversions, or standing the truth on its head, are found outside of school too. The most troubling example is asking the state's nuclear weapons labs for a new Manhattan Project for energy. Had either of New Mexico's national labs wanted to trade weapons of mass destruction in for implements of mass restoration, they'd have done so decades ago. Sandia Labs, rather than shrinking its solar energy department virtually out of existence would have made that a national security priority. Were a change of mission in the cards for Los Alamos, their new three billion dollar design-as-you-build facility would be a solar, wind or geothermal facility rather than a new plutonium pit factory to

detonate yet another generation of nuclear madness.

New Mexico's nuclear labs have stayed too close to their fundamental training and mission, creating and maintaining nuclear weapons, their roots too tied to the Atomic Energy Commission, to develop the kind of expertise and infrastructure needed to bring us renewable, environmentally friendly energy. Rather than fixing a little of this or a little of that while still heavily funding coal, oil and nuclear, those who will represent New Mexico in the House and Senate need to invert the funding pyramid, giving wind, solar, biomass and geothermal, whose experts and technology already exist, the largest share.

New Mexico politicians have built their careers on the myth that the federal dollars invested in the nuclear weapons labs have enriched the state when the most likely beneficiaries were their campaign chests. As the state's nuclear weapons infrastructure has grown, its indicators of well-being have fallen. Talk of how fortunate we are in our scientific wealth, when related to weapons of mass destruction, is an inversion of truth.

Much greater wealth lies beneath the surface of this state. Far from the rhetoric of politicians is the striving of one person at a time to use less energy, to oppose war and its weapons, to become self-sufficient and to help others become so. We'd get there a lot faster with the help of those we elect. What we need is a way to get them to listen.

Astrid Webster is a local bicycle and renewable energy advocate and a Los Alamos Study Group board member.

Ausra Opens US Solar Thermal Plant, Hopes First Of Many

REUTERS: *Editing by Nichola Groom and Marguerita Choy*

LOS ANGELES - Solar thermal power developer Ausra Inc on Thursday opened a 5-megawatt demonstration plant in California that it says will prove it can deliver on its promise of providing clean energy cheaply.

Ausra, the first to erect a solar thermal plant in California in nearly 20 years, is among a handful of so-called concentrating solar power (CSP) developers that say they will deliver utility-sized solar plants in the next three to five years that will be able to sell power at prices comparable to dirtier natural gas- and coal-fired plants. "A lot (of companies) make a lot of claims of things they're going to do," Chief Executive Bob Fishman said in a telephone interview. "We're putting power on the grid."

Solar thermal developers like privately held Ausra say that while CSP is dwarfed by photovoltaic solar panels in generating electricity, solar thermal technology allows large plants that compete with conventional generation.

The new plant in Bakersfield, which the company says can power about 3,500 homes, brings Ausra's total output at two plants to only 7 MW. But Ausra and its backers, led by venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, are hoping the company will build dozens of big plants by 2020.

Ausra already has one in the works -- a 177-MW project it is building for California utility PG&E.

Ausra's system is relatively simple. Long mirrors concentrate the sun's light onto water-filled tubes that are then superheated to create steam that turns a turbine.

Four months ago, Ausra opened a manufacturing plant in Las Vegas, Nevada to make components for its systems. Palo Alto, California-based Ausra plans to make 100 to 200 megawatts worth of solar

components annually in Las Vegas, and can ramp that up quickly if demand rises. The main limit on Ausra's growth will be a backlog of orders for turbines, Fishman said. **Sunshine during a credit crisis**

With the credit crisis threatening to curtail access to financing, even for companies in the high-flying solar sector, Ausra said it isn't hurting for project money -- for now.

"We're good well into next year," Fishman said, adding that the company would need to secure financing for two yet-to-be-announced large projects in the second half of 2009.

"I hope things simmer down" by the time of those financing efforts, he said, adding that Ausra is in a better position than many emerging companies because "project finance markets secured by power purchase agreements with credit-worthy companies will come back before general unsecured debt."

In addition, a new eight-year federal subsidy for solar power allows investor-owned utilities to claim a 30 percent tax credit for solar projects, which Fishman says will lead many utilities to own solar plants rather than simply buy the power.

Utilities, with their easier access to the capital markets, may find it more favourable to have companies like Ausra build the plants and then buy them, Fishman said.

Until utility companies begin ordering large-scale solar plants, Fishman said, Ausra will strive to sign pacts for smaller-scale plants for making steam for natural gas power plants and other industrial plants. Fishman said Ausra wants to sign pacts for four or five of those projects in 2009, totaling between 100 and 150 megawatts.

"There is a potential that customers will slow down their orders...which would delay our implementation," Fishman said, adding that "we have not seen any signs of that."



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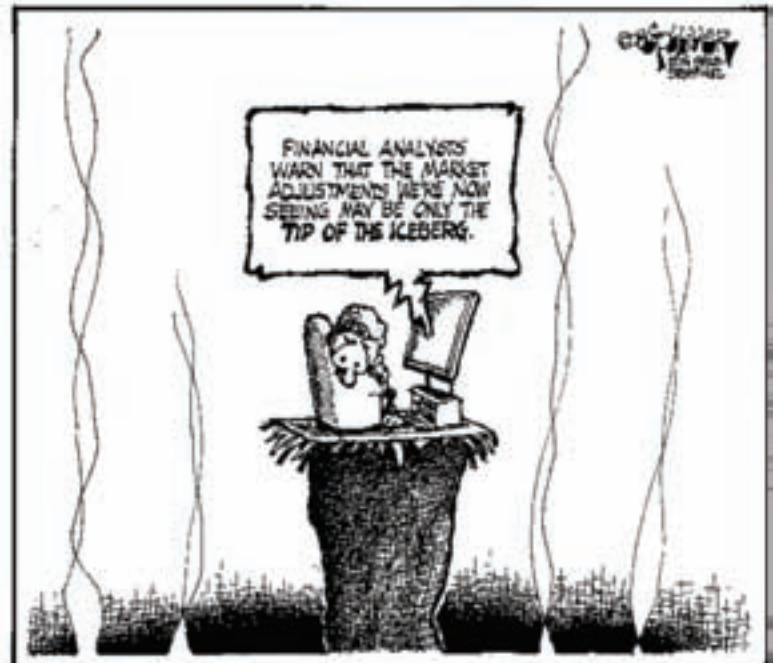
return. Articles and letters will be edited and published at discretion of editors.

Get in touch through our P O Box, or our list-serve, Save-AbqTrib@yahoo.com

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Rants

By Harry Willson

The Life-Style Problem

Decades ago the following accusation was hurled at me: "Harry, you have left off preachin' and gone to med-dlin'!" My sermons were questioning the ethics, yes, the "Christian ethics," of families who made their living inventing and constructing weapons of mass destruction.

[It is very strange how those words -- "weapons of mass destruction" -- have become a phrase to be applied to others, who shouldn't be allowed to have any, while our stockpiling of them and on-going upgrading of them and use of them is passed over as acceptable and even admirable.]

[It is also very strange that a person who dropped bombs on little children from thirty thousand feet in the air can then be regarded almost universally as a great hero.]

Anyway, I'm going to risk it again -- meddling, that is. Here goes: The greatest problem facing the world is the American life-style. There you go again, Harry. Meddling. Butting into other people's business. The root of the American imperial scourge on Planet Earth is not the Pentagon, or "energy" or Christian fundamentalism -- it is the American life-style. We Americans, almost all of us, use up too much, vastly too much, of the world's stuff, including energy.

There are exceptions. I know a couple of them: Don Schrader and Chuck Hoskins, right here in Albuquerque. Neither of them has a car, or a computer. They have very modest living quarters, and make very slight use of electricity.

I study the litter on the sidewalk where I walk every morning. The passers-by, who have left that litter, are not affluent. What they leave for others to pick up reveals the problem -- fast-food wrappers, styrofoam, plastics of

all kinds, glass bottles whole or shattered, aluminum cans. Even the non-affluent are displaying a grossly wasteful life-style, which is the underlying environmental and imperial problem. The United States of America has to conquer someone in order to get the oil with which to make all that plastic, which ends up as litter. The litter itself indicates that we have and use too much stuff.

Getting littering stopped won't be easy -- the totalitarian Chinese government can't stop it at their Great Wall. And recycling doesn't really get at what will finally have to be changed. Americans will finally have to begin to use up less stuff, including energy. That will mean a changed life-style. For a while there it appeared that the price of gasoline was going to help, by forcing Americans to drive less, but it now appears that we're adapting, and traffic is as bad as ever.

My wife and I never adopted Don Schrader's life-style. We have a modest little car. We have a computer. Since small publishers can't sell books in book-stores, we have to depend on the Internet. [Find us at www.amadorbooks.com] But it's very modest, believe me, and it has us wondering, "How can our life-style be down-sized much more than it already has been?" We're working on it.

A glance higher up on the social scale makes the problem much more obvious. Here's a lady who received a new wardrobe worth more than what many fellow citizens have spent for a house. It amounts to ten times what many spend for a car. Even though she says that she's not accepting the wardrobe, now that we have taken note, it is too late. The problem has been exposed, one more time.

All the talk of hundreds of billions of dollars for this or that is lost on most people -- except for a dull awareness that it is much too much. It keeps things in perspective, maybe, to remember how the vast majority of our fellow humans live, in Haiti, in Mali, in Bangladesh, in Bolivia, in Nicaragua, in our own inner cities. Our life-style affects them all, and in the long run will have to change.

Sorry to meddle so.

Harry Willson writes a Rant of the Month at www.amadorbooks.com

Email: harry@amadorbook.com

"Flags: Variations on a Theme"

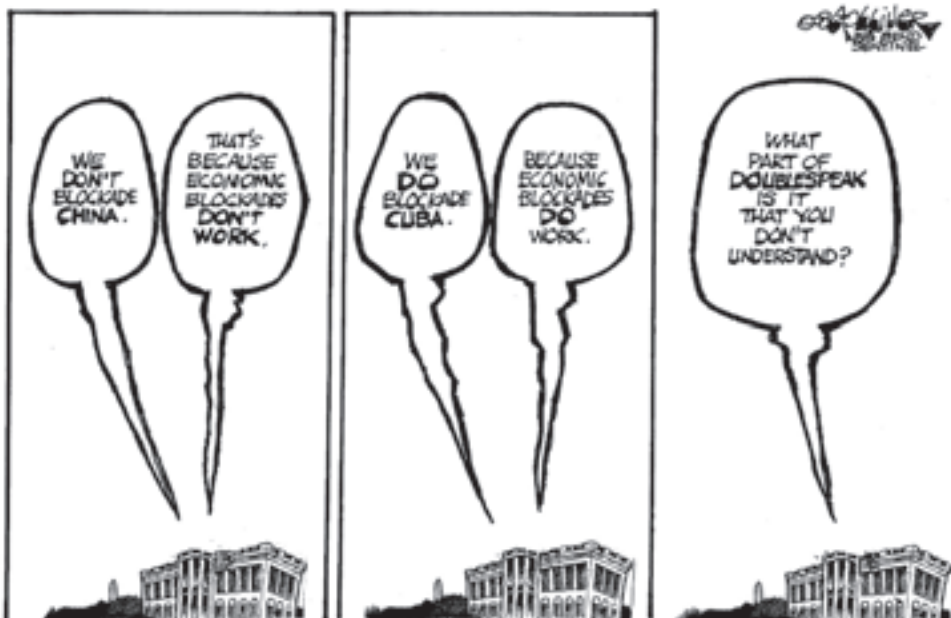
An exhibition of new work in steel by Albuquerque artist Joe Forrest Sackett.

WHAT: Flags are iconic, symbolizing many things to many people, but instantly recognized by all, and capable of arresting the emotional attention of the viewer in ways few other images can. Why do these symbols have such power? Why does the American flag in particular excite such passionate responses in the hearts of so many? The constructions (and deconstructions) in this exhibition are inquiries into the mysterious power of the flag. They are also very relevant to the current political, economic and electoral environment.

WHERE: Harwood Art Center, Front Gallery. 1114 7th NW, on the corner of 7th Street and Mountain Road, north of Lomas in Albuquerque.

WHEN: Exhibit opens November 1 and runs through November 28, 2008. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday 10:00 - 4:00, 1st and 3rd Fridays 10:00 - 8:00.

INFO: Joe Forrest Sackett, 505.247.8679, leftyy@comcast.net.



BOOK REVIEW

Free Lunch: How the Wealthiest Americans Enrich Themselves at Government Expense (And Stick You With the Bill).

By Pulitzer Prize-Winning Reporter David Cay Johnston, published by Portfolio, Penguin Group, Inc. (USA) 2007.

Review by Jack Pickering

This is the most shocking book I have read in my 92 years. I include books on religious persecution, colonial cruelty, and the Holocaust. Those all depicted man's inhumanity to man, first revealed to me in kindergarten years. Johnston's book describes how a small group of businessmen have exploited the rest of us, and have done so in violation of their vaunted principles.

The title clearly is from free-market guru Milton Friedman's dictum that free lunches don't exist. When I was young, saloons dished out cheese and sausage gratis. Of course drinkers unknowingly picked up the tab, as Uncle Miltie makes clear. Likewise gamblers pay for floorshows at casinos. But do you know how many business costs are borne unknowingly by us taxpayers? The cost-shifting tycoons flagrantly violate Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) -- holy writ to most businessmen, even though most have never read it. The great Scot wrote: "People of the same trade seldom get together, even for merriment or diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy

against the public."

To start with a homely example, household alarm systems comprise a lucrative business. Query: when an alarm system is wired to a police or fire station, who pays for the cop cars or fire trucks responding to frequent false alarms? Though this is small potatoes compared with cost overruns by the military-industrial complex, it establishes the principle.

Turning to professional sports, my dad worked at the old Yankee Stadium when it opened in 1923, funded totally by club money. Today every professional sports stadium or arena is paid for with tax dollars, abetted by public domain condemnation.

So far I have reported only the book's coverage of such luxuries as home security and sports viewing.

How about necessities? Take housing: who pays most of the cost of real estate development -- developers or taxpayers? You guessed it. Take medical care, including prescription drugs. Are corporate providers getting more than their share? The author and I think so.

As a result of corporate welfare, the rich get richer; the middle class shrinks; and the poor get poorer. As the author says, "... in 2005 the best-off 300,000 Americans had almost as much income as the bottom 50 million." That's a seismic change. As recently as 1980 the bottom 90 percent "had almost two-thirds of America's income pie, but only about half by 2005."

Human Rights Week

DECEMBER 3-10

By Sally-Alice Thompson

Sixty years ago the apex of recognition of the intrinsic worth of every human being was reached. It culminated in the massive signing of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an inclusive document that outlines the attributes of life that make for truly civilized existence. Unfortunately most, if not all, the items listed in this great and hopeful document have been ignored in country after country, government after government, not excluding our own.

In recognition of the crying need to return to that hopefulness of sixty years ago, when people all over the world desired the fulfillment of material and spiritual needs for everyone, not just a privileged few, the United Nations Association and Veterans for Peace of Albuquerque have declared December 3 through 10 to be Human Rights Week. We are asking any group or individual who can to join us in making that week one

in which Albuquerque becomes aware of the current inequalities that are so debilitating to the human spirit. We are expecting Mayoral and City Council proclamations.

On the final day of the Human Rights Week, December 10 at 6:00 PM, there will be a community gathering at Smith-Brasher Hall on the CNM campus. Participants are invited to briefly tell what they have done to further the cause of human rights for all. City Councilman Rey Garduno will moderate. The keynote speaker will be LaDonna Harris, well known Native American rights activist.

YOU are invited to be a part. Let's make this the beginning of a Renaissance, a revival of humanity's striving for true greatness. Please indicate your anticipated participation to Bill Pratt 869-4212 or Sally-Alice Thompson 268-5073, or attend the next planning meeting Nov. 16 at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard SE.

Laguna Pueblo Celebrates Life-long Learning Program

By Katherine Augustine

'Let us take care of the children, for they have a long way to go. Let us take care of the elders, for they have come a long way. Let us take care of those in between, for they are doing the work.' This is the motto of the Laguna Education Foundation (LEF) and the Laguna Rainbow Center (a long term residential home on Laguna Pueblo, one of very few in Indian Country). The Foundation supports life-long learning experience and promotes positive community development on Laguna Pueblo through educating the youth and caring for their elders in various ways. Through the Pueblo's Department of Education, the Foundation supports preschool education and the elementary and middle schools, as well as the Laguna-Acoma High School. Some schools have been provided with classroom supplies, library books, playground equipment and sports equipment.

At the higher education level, during 2006, three Laguna students were granted Governor's Scholarship awards, based on academic performance and area of study.

Since 2006 numerous awards have been granted to qualified tribal members. A selection committee determines recipients of the scholarships, which are the Ola May Hoover, K'awaika Eagle, Gil Sanchez and Rebecca Johnson scholarships.

It has been demonstrated that the Laguna students have performed above the national average for both grade point averages and completion of college programs, with a retention rate of 82%. The LEF offers leadership development and support for graduates looking to achieve meaningful work. Foundation workers also strive to meet the needs of the community and to provide the Pueblo of Laguna with outstanding citizens and leaders.

On November 15, a celebration of Laguna Pueblo's Life-Long Learning will take place at The Albuquerque Museum, 6 to 8 PM. The Pueblo's 4th Annual Art Gala, featuring a silent auction, music, and sampling of wine and cheese, will benefit the Laguna Education Foundation and The Laguna Rainbow Corporation. For further information and tickets, contact Lee Francis at lagu-naedfoundation.org or (505) 563-0765.

The Rio Metro “Get Connected” Regional Transit Plan

By JW Madison

Voters in the counties of Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia will soon be asked to approve the next major step toward a real regional transit system for the metro area.

A three-county regional rail and bus service and funding plan has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (“Rio Metro”). This regional transit plan includes the Rail Runner and additional transit services in the Rio Metro district, comprising these three counties.

Voters in the transit district would need to approve a one-eighth of one-percent regional transit gross receipts tax to fund the proposed services, which, if approved in November, would go into effect on July 1, 2009.

The present temporary funding for the Rail Runner will end in 2009. The above plan would establish a permanent revenue source for this vital service.

The plan will also fund connecting bus routes to 12 Rail Runner stations in the district. It also expands the availability of dial-a-ride service in each of the counties, as well as expanding local transit service.

The 21st Century Transportation Task Force; Rail Transit for Albuquerque?

By JW Madison

In 2006, Albuquerque Mayor Marty Chavez attempted to implement our city’s first Rail transit system in at least 80 years. The first segment of this service, the “Red Chili Line”, would feature sleek modern streetcars travelling daily on double track along Central between Atrisco and Carlisle (“Streetcar”, whether modern, vintage or replica, can be thought of as “Light Rail” for this article).

Initially, this proposal enjoyed the backing of a majority of the City Council. But after a well-publicized outcry, several Councilors backed off, killing the deal. This outcry was not entirely flat-earth auto-centered idiocy; there were some real concerns about the length and location of the route, how to pay for it and the manner in which the proposal was being moved through the political process.

One response to this setback was the establishment of the 21st Century Transportation Task Force. Contrary to impressions fostered by the local media, this Task Force actually worked on other transportation issues besides the Streetcar---notably recommending a significant increase in funding for transit (including the Streetcar), bikeways, and pedestrian improvements.

The 21st Century Transportation Task Force

By Isaac Benton, City Councilor, District 3

The 21st Century Transportation Task Force began meeting in January of 2008 to discuss the City’s Quarter Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax and comment on an independent cost-and-benefit analysis of the proposed modern streetcar transit system. The Task Force met a total of seventeen times over an eight-month period.

The Task Force’s charges, as contained in the Ordinance (O-07-71) that created the Task Force, included the following:

A Develop an understanding of the adopted City policies regarding roadways, public transit, and other multi-modal transportation improvements as contained in the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and in other relevant documents;

B Review the history, expenditures, and the needs associated with the current Transportation Infrastructure Tax;

C Review current plans for expansion of the roadways, public transit system, and other multi-modal transportation improvements;

D Familiarize itself with the Street Car system as proposed;

E Familiarize itself with the relationship between land-use regulation, transit and pedestrian/bicycle use;

F Monitor the progress of the cost and benefit analysis as described above and evaluate its findings and recommendations.

G Generate a report or reports (majority and/or minority if necessary) summarizing the available information and making recommendations with respect to the dedication of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax, the development of a

This simply means that, wherever you live, work or go to school in the tri-county area, you’d have access to transit at or near your doorstep, or within convenient driving or biking distance.

The Rio Metro area is forecasted to experience population and job increases that would adversely affect commuter travel times. The University of New Mexico’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research and the Mid-Region Council of Governments population forecasts predict that the population of the three-county area will increase to 1 million by 2015.

Most of the predicted new jobs will be located in Bernalillo County. With 300,000 people living in the adjacent counties, this means there would be more vehicles on I-25 and I-40 and on roads in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. Travel speeds would be lower and commute times would substantially increase.

In other words, if you have to rely on your car to get to work or school, your commute will become longer and much more expensive.

Note: Studies have shown that tax money spent on regional transit generates a return of about 400 % in energy



savings, safety and other benefits. With Rail in the picture, this figure jumps considerably making a regional transit tax a shrewd investment, not a “cost”.

Information about the Rio Metro “Get Connected” plan can be found at: www.getconnectednm.com.

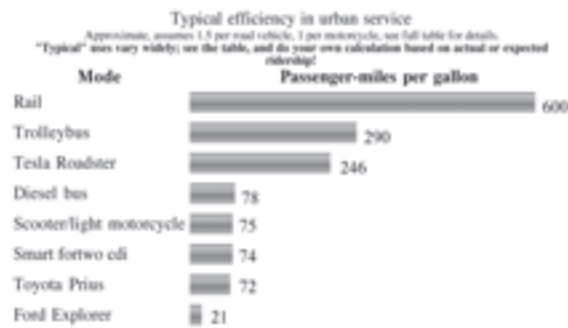
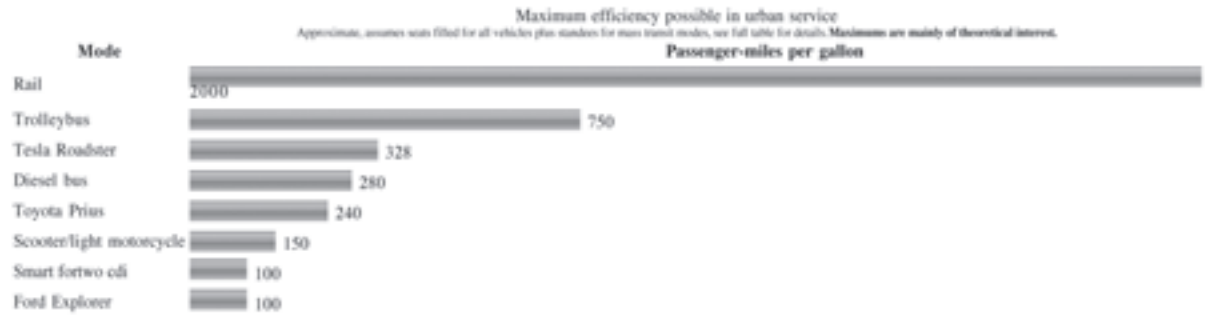
Energy Efficiency of different modes of transportation

If you think passenger rail is a luxury or a waste of the taxpayer’s money, these graphs by Canadian **James Strickland** help to demonstrate why its not. If you want to see the entire article of which these graphs are a part, go to www.nrails.org/visual and click on the last “graphs” entry.

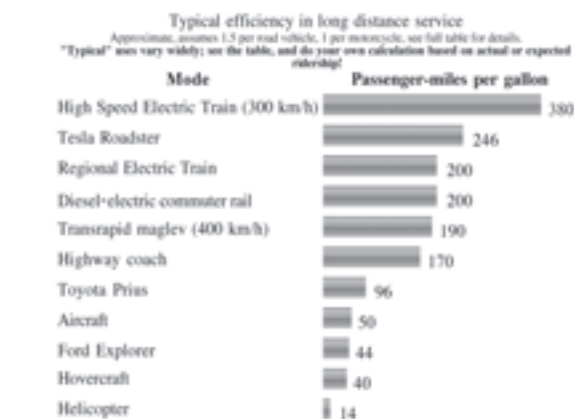
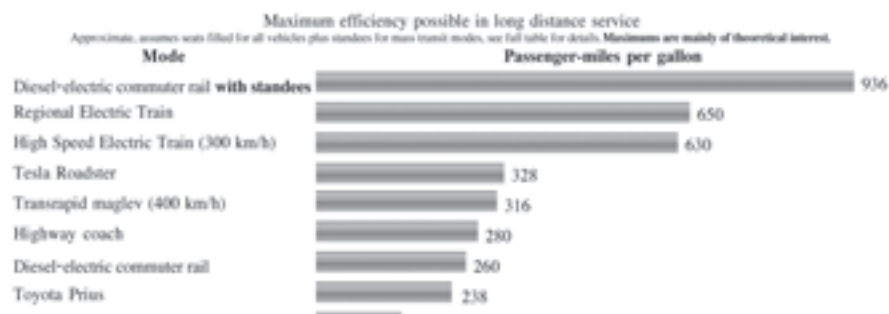
I was once told by a transportation planner that “nobody cares about energy efficiency”. Well, I always have. The rest of the world no doubt will care if the worldwide production of oil falls and demand is met by supply only at “outrageous” prices. (Plus, there’s that other little problem.) The price of crude oil has tripled in the past four years; I do not think it is going to go back down, and continuing to generate the equivalent of that one-time supply of energy is going to be difficult. Thus, as a society we should be rapidly moving towards more efficient transportation systems as soon as possible. Or, if possible, use human power or eliminate the need for urban transportation altogether, by reintegrating work, shopping and residential uses.

Ok, lecture over, here are the pretty graphs. The data portrayed here should be interpreted primarily to give a sense of “order of magnitude”; the “typical efficiency” figures in particular will vary significantly depending on what you consider typical. The “typical” usage is either from ridership data or is estimated. Please see below for the detailed data table supporting the graphs.

Urban service



Long distance service



See **TASK FORCE** on page 7

GUEST EDITORIAL

Natural Techniques Help Farm Profitability and Preservation

By Jacinda Witt



The demand for locally grown and organic foods continues to increase and that demand has created a growing awareness that there are fewer and fewer farms to meet that demand. That awareness is creating a growing need, not only to preserve our farms and farmland, but to revive local agriculture, in order to insure future supplies.

So the question being

asked is, "Why are our farmlands disappearing?" One answer is that selling real estate to developers has been more profitable than small to medium scale, local farming. Of course, there are as many reasons for the disappearance of farmland as there are farmers, but they all need to feed their families and pay their bills, the same as everyone else.

There are farmers whose

yield consistently dwindle despite farming more acreage. At the same time, the costs of farming continue to rise even if their yield does not. This is true of both conventional and organic, or natural, methods.

At a recent agricultural meeting, preserving our farmlands was a main topic of discussion. When it was announced that one of the suggestions for preserving farmland was to make farming profitable again, laughter was among the responses. It was said that the suggestion was too over-arching and idealistic.

It was then asserted that farming can be profitable and that it is not as difficult as most might tend to think. Three ways to improve profitability are to shorten growing time, increase yield, without increasing the acreage farmed, and produce a value added crop. Now you are laughing, right?

There is a farm in our midst that is doing just that. Virgin Farms, in

Albuquerque's South Valley planted seed beginning June 8th of this year. We were harvesting yellow squash only three and half weeks later and acorn squash after only fifty days, instead of the usual ninety. We have produced approximately twenty tons of organic, natural produce off of less than four acres in less than 120 days, without sacrificing nutrition.

At Virgin Farms, our focus is healthy soil. Healthy soil produces healthy vegetation. Healthy soil is a natural deterrent to weeds and healthy vegetation is a natural deterrent to insect infestation. Nutrient dense, meats and produce are a by-product of healthy vegetation and healthy people are by-products of nutrient dense foods.

The nutritional value of the foods produced today, both conventionally and "organically," generally lack nutrient density and, therefore, the nutritional value we are told we require for



good health. The problem is that our soils are severely depleted, mineral and biologically. The good news is it is possible to solve that problem, as Virgin Farms has.

At Virgin Farms we have dedicated ourselves to being a model for profitable farming, and we are achieving that goal by shortening growing time, increasing yield and producing value-added foods, i.e. foods with

actual nutritional value.

Suddenly, idealistic is realistic.

For further information or to arrange tours:

Organic Technology International

13170-B Central SE, #118
Albuquerque, NM 87123
tel: 505-291-1100,
cell: 505-903-3329,
fax: 505-271-1600
www.otiusa1.com
www.technogreencorp.com



FARM FACT

Nearly 1.8 million acres of farm and ranch land have been protected around the country by state farmland protection programs. Such programs, which purchase conservation easements on agricultural land, offer farmers and ranchers an alternative to selling agricultural land for development in areas experiencing intense development pressure. The programs also help to keep land available for future generations of farmers. To learn how much land your state has protected to date, view AFT's "PACE: Status of State Programs" fact sheet at www.farmlandinfo.org or call the Farmland Information Center at (800) 370-4879.

Gift Your Church with a Wildlife Habitat

The first Unitarian Church, located on the southwest corner of Comanche and Carlisle NE, recently dedicated a nationally certified wildlife habitat as part of its campus. The four requirements for certification as a wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation are to furnish food, water, cover, and a place to raise young, and to focus on native plants.

See it for yourself. Visit the habitat on the church grounds.

The habitat is located between the church sanctuary building and Carlisle Blvd. You can follow the path through the habitat to really get a feel for the place. Our aim is to reconnect our children and families with the out-of-doors. (Refer to the wonderful and thought

provoking book, *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv). Third and Fourth graders from the church do a bug count every year to record how fast the habitat is becoming diverse, supplying food for the birds, lizards, and other critters who live there. We've seen children take their parents by the hand and guide them through the habitat.

There is a good chance you can create a certified wildlife habitat on your church grounds or in your backyard. For more information, contact Virginia Burriss (505 255-6772; vburriss1@msn.com) or Nancy Cushman (505 296-1431; njcushman@yahoo.com). Or go to the National Wildlife Federation's web page at <http://www.nwf.org/backyard/>

The Decriminalization of Abortion Upheld by Mexico Supreme Court

By Alexander C. Sanger, the grandson of Margaret Sanger, who founded the birth control movement over eighty years ago, is currently Chair of the International Planned Parenthood Council.

On August 28, Mexico's Supreme Court by an 8-3 vote upheld as constitutional the decriminalization of abortion.

The law, passed in 2007 by the Mexico City Legislative Assembly, decriminalized abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The law also defined a pregnancy as beginning upon implantation and required public health centers in Mexico City to provide abortion information and free services, with an opt-out for doctors with a conscientious objection. With this law, Mexico City joined Puerto Rico, Cuba and Guyana in the Hemisphere as having decriminalized abortion in the first trimester.

The law was immediately challenged by the pro-criminalization forces in Mexican society, as violating the right to life as set forth in the Mexican Constitution. The decision, finding that it did not, was a constitutionally limited one, unlike the broader *Roe v. Wade* decision from the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973. The *Roe* decision found that in the U.S. Constitution there was a right to privacy that required that abortion be decriminalized before fetal viability. The Mexican Court held that the Mexican Constitution permitted, but did not require, the state legislatures of the nation to decriminalize, or criminalize, abortion. One judge said, "It is not up to the Supreme Court to legalize or criminalize abortion." With this decision as precedent, other states in Mexico can decriminalize abortion should they choose to do so.

The Mexico City abortion law addresses a catastrophic

public health problem: unsafe abortion. There are estimates that there are between 500,000 and 1 million unsafe abortions a year in Mexico, with approximately 100,000 annual abortion-related hospital admissions. From 1990 to 2005, 21,646 women in Mexico died of maternal related causes, with abortion accounting for 537. These figures are probably understated given the illegality of the procedure. Since the decriminalization, there has been one death from abortion in Mexico City.

Additional maternal deaths in the past were in no doubt caused by lack of access to family planning services, which would have delayed pregnancies until the woman was older, spaced out a woman's pregnancies and reduced the absolute number of pregnancies, thereby reducing the risk of death in childbirth. It was heartening to see that 58% of women

seeking abortions in Mexico City ask for an IUD after their abortion to prevent their next pregnancy. Abortion decriminalization must be part of a broad public health plan to bring reproductive health care services to young, poor, indigenous, rural and uninsured women, who otherwise do not have access. About 40% of pregnancies worldwide are unintended. It is these pregnancies that result in unsafe abortion and maternal mortality and morbidity. This can be prevented only by simultaneously attacking gender inequality, gender violence, lack of information and access to contraceptive services, lack of an appropriate contraceptive method for every woman at every stage of her reproductive life, and, finally, the stigma that women face in many cultures in trying to control their bodies and their lives. A big agenda, but Mexico has shown that we can tackle it.

Know Your Rights When Encountering Law Enforcement

**ACLU - American Civil Liberties
Union of New Mexico**

In living rooms, churches and community centers across the state, immigrants' rights groups are running underground campaigns to teach documented and undocumented immigrants to know and protect their rights as residents of the United States.

If you are interested in a presentation or a speaker for your groups or organization, please contact Emily Carey at the southern Regional Office and Border Rights Project at (505) 527-0664 or email ecarey@aclu-nm.org.

The ACLU's *Know Your Rights* booklet provides effective and useful guidance in a user-friendly question and answer format. The booklet addresses what rights you have when you are stopped, questioned, arrested, or searched by law enforce-

ment officers.

This booklet is for citizens and non-citizens with extra information for non-citizens in a separate section. Another section covers what can happen to you at airports and other points of entry into the United States.

The last section discusses concerns you may have related to your charitable contributions and religious or political beliefs. The booklet tells you about your basic rights. It is not a substitute for legal advice. You should contact an attorney if you have been arrested or believe that your rights have been violated.

The free booklet is available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi.

Visit www.aclu-nm.org or call (505) 266-5915 ext. 1003.

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Conscientious Objection**

TASK FORCE from page 5

Street Car in the context of roadway, city-wide public transit, and other multi-modal transportation improvements, and the financing of these improvements by September 1, 2008.

Through a series of presentations from City staff, Mid Region Council of Governments staff, and independent streetcar consultants Leland Consulting Group, the Task Force covered the first six of their seven charges. The final charge – to generate a report or reports – was accomplished through extensive group discussions, the development of a working outline and draft report, and ongoing revision of the outline and draft report with input from all members. All of this culminated in the 29-page Final Report that was recently submitted to Mayor Chavez and the City Council for their consideration.

Brief Summary of Recommendations:

Continuation of the 1/4 Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax: The Task Force unanimously recommended continuation of the 1/4 Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax.

Policy Recommendations for 5 Programs of the Tax: The recommendation to continue the tax is tied to new comprehensive policy recommendations for each of the tax's five programs: road maintenance, road rehabilitation, road deficiencies, trails & bikeways, and transit.

Dedication of the Tax: The Task Force recommended that the original percentages allocated to the five programs of the tax be adjusted as

follows (see charts):

Road Rehabilitation: Decrease from "Not less than 32%" to 31%

Road Maintenance: Decrease from 12% to 10%

Road Deficiencies: Change from "Not more than 32%" to 15%

Trails & Bikeways: Increase from 4% to 8%

Transit: Increase from 20% to 36%

Modern Streetcar: A two thirds majority of the Task Force supported the concept, further analysis and development of the Modern Streetcar. However, the majority position recommendation would limit use of the transportation infrastructure tax to a minimum of 14% of the total proceeds, and only if leveraged on a 3 to 1 basis with other sources. These could include State and/or Federal support, private sponsorships, and a Tax Increment Development District (TIDD). The minority position on the Streetcar was supportive of the idea of developing rail transit in Albuquerque, but recommended against using any revenue from the Transportation Infrastructure Tax.

In order for the recommendations contained in the Task Force's report to become policy, the City Council will have to adopt legislation to specifically address enactment of the recommendations.

The work the Task Force accomplished was an important first step, but ongoing efforts are needed to educate the public and establish policies to guide the future of the city's transportation and transit systems.

JW Madison Rails Inc.

RESPREAD THE WEALTH

By Marvin H. Gladstone

In the waning weeks of the presidential campaign, Obama's utterance of the phrase "spreading the wealth" provoked the kind of outcry which suggested an abysmal ignorance of our witnessing of the greatest re-concentration of national wealth and income since the Gilded Age. Among the world's developed countries, the United States now stands behind only Mexico and Turkey in boasting the widest gap between rich and poor. For 30 years, but aggravatedly during the past eight, America's majority taxpaying middle class have seen its assets and income redistributed to, and concentrated in, the tax-avoiding wealthiest one percent – indeed, worse, to the top one-tenth of one percent. The latter are, of course, the loudest resurrectionists of the dreaded "S" word, while advocating trillion-dollar publicly-funded bailouts of failed and failing brokerage houses and banks.

Is such a "system" worth salvaging? If so, a fundamental restructuring will be required.

As between (a) a society wherein each is expected to contribute to the commons according to his ability, the anticipated recompense being commensurate with the contribution, and (b) one wherein self-interest is the sole motivator for one's contribution, and the expectation is to maximize his advantage

irrespective of the unfairness to his neighbor, is there any rationale which can morally or ethically justify a preference for the latter over the former?

It is, or should be, self-evident that to the extent that you take more than you give, another must give more than he receives. To the degree that you wrest the disproportionately greater benefit of the bargain, your victim, be he outwitted, outmaneuvered or defrauded, loses an exactly equivalent amount. For each "winner" there is a "loser".

"But", one retorts, "if self-interest is the primary motivator of human behavior, then the universal need for its gratification will drive each to maximize his perceived advantages at his neighbor's expense, thereby increasing the sum total of energy expended in pursuit of those selfish expectations."

Perhaps, but is not the expectation of reward commensurate with contribution of equal or greater force than that foreseeable from superior bargaining ability, if not bullying, fraud, chicanery or accident of birth?

If history is any guide, the answer is "yes". There are as many anecdotal examples of self-sacrifice as there are of self-aggrandizement. At least as many of us are gratified by our contributions to the commons, as we are by pecuniary self-enrichment.

"Who, however, determines the

value of a contribution or, for that matter, a distribution? And by what objective standards can either be measured? And if we claim from each according to his ability, how do we evaluate relative abilities?"

The question is difficult, not insoluble; but the answer starts with what such values are *not*. One will argue in vain that one man's contribution is worth 1,000 or 10,000 times that of another. Or that the superexploitation of the planet's finite resources, including its human resources, by the *uber* rich, while hunger plagues great masses, is an acceptable state of affairs. We need not debate whether an hour's worth of one man's labor is worth nine dollars or ten or fifteen dollars to conclude that it's not worth 1,000 times any such amount.

And while such measures as a livable wage, lifting the cap on social security and a steeply graduated income tax will not suffice to bridge the inequality gap, these reforms – well-tested prior to the "Reagan Revolution" – would be a big step toward achievement of such a praiseworthy goal. There is no reason why those who benefit grossly disproportionately from such superexploitation of the earth's resources ought not similarly *return* disproportionately a part of that gain to the commons, for the benefit of all.

Yes, let us respread the wealth.

Who Are Veterans For Peace?

By Sally-Alice Thompson

Veterans For Peace is a national organization made up of past and present members of America's armed forces. We do not agree on everything, but there are areas related to the protection of the Constitution (that we each took an oath to protect) and the Declaration of Independence, in which we do agree.

Some of the areas of agreement are related to the Declaration of Independence statement of the right to life. In support of this value we call for the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are opposed to illegal invasions of Iran or Pakistan. We call for a peaceful resolution of the Israel-

Palestine conflict. We also call for the end of the death penalty. In support of the Constitution we believe that we should prohibit Congress from giving the president the authority to start wars, that we should end the unchecked executive power.

In support of the Declaration's call for the individual's right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness we encourage public investment to create jobs, fair trade policies, enforcement of labor laws, and regulation of industry. We want an environmental policy stressing alternative energy sources. We want protection of the rights of women, and improved reproductive health services. We want health care for our veterans and for all people.

In support of the Bill of Rights we strongly oppose government spying on our citizens, and torture, and all other abuses of civil liberties. We expect our government to respect the First Amendment and desist from favoring some religions in the form of faith based initiatives.

We are the protectors of the America that we all love. We are the defenders against those who falsely call themselves "patriots" and undermine and seek to destroy the rights to life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all, who were created equal.

For further information about the Albuquerque chapter of Veterans For Peace contact the chapter president, Charles Powell, 505 271-9274.

War Profiteering

Who's really paying for this war?

The troops, and their families. You, your children and your grandchildren.

Returning vets who are not getting the care, benefits and services they deserve and were promised.

Hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis who have died or are now refugees since the first Iraq War.

Our schools. Our cities. Our National Guards. Our infrastructure.

America's reputation; for torture, renditions and killing of innocent citizens.

And who's profiting from this war?

Halliburton/KBR (Cheney's company) hun-

dreds of millions.

Chevron (Condi Rice's company), Exxon-Mobile and other oil companies, hundreds of millions.

Over 100,000 mercenary ("contractors") in Iraq and elsewhere, paid 5 to 10 times our volunteer troops.

Islamic Jihadists who now have a scapegoat, the U.S., to blame, hate and attack.

Al Qaeda who now have a perfect training ground and endless supply of recruits in Iraq.

Osama bin Laden, whose wildest dreams are being fulfilled; our nation is being destroyed.

Google "War Profiteering" for a few figures.
www.vets4vets.org; www.VUFT.org; www.iava.org; www.votevets.org

Emma Goldman's "What is Patriotism?" Speech

San Francisco, CA, 1908

In the early summer of 1908 San Francisco Bay was host to the most powerful naval fleet assembled to date. Sixteen new battleships of the Atlantic Fleet, later known as "The Great White Fleet," accompanied by a "Torpedo Flotilla" of six destroyers and several auxiliary ships were in the harbor. One of the objectives of the Great White Fleet's voyage was to ensure that Americans were aware of the reasons for having a strong and capable Navy and to let them see those capabilities first hand. It was within this context that Emma Goldman, an avid anarchist, gave her speech "What is Patriotism?" at Walton's Pavilion in San Francisco in 1908.

A United States soldier (private first-class), William Buwalda, attended the lecture in uniform and was witnessed shaking her hand. Within two weeks, he was court-martialed in violation of the 62nd Article of War, and found guilty by a military court, dishonorably discharged and sentenced to five years at hard labor on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco, California.

Men and Women:

What is patriotism? Is it love of one's birthplace, the place of childhood's recollections and hopes, dreams and aspirations? Is it the place where, in child-like naiveté, we would watch the passing clouds, and wonder why we, too, could not float so swiftly? The place where we would count the milliard glittering stars, terror-stricken lest each one "an eye should be," piercing the very depths of our little souls? Is it the place where we would listen to the music of the birds and long to have wings to fly, even as they, to distant lands? Or is it the place where we would sit on Mother's

knee, enraptured by tales of great deeds and conquests? In short, is it love for the spot, every inch representing dear and precious recollections of a happy, joyous and playful childhood?

If that were patriotism, few American men of today would be called upon to be patriotic, since the place of play has been turned into factory, mill, and mine, while deepening sounds of machinery have replaced the music of the birds. No longer can we hear the tales of great deeds, for the stories our mothers tell today are but those of sorrow, tears and grief.

What, then, is patriotism? "Patriotism, sir, is the last resort of scoundrels," said Dr. Samuel Johnson. Leo Tolstoy, the greatest anti-patriot of our time, defines patriotism as the principle that will justify the training of wholesale murderers; a trade that requires better equipment in the exercise of man-killing than the making of such necessities as shoes, clothing, and houses; a trade that guarantees better returns and greater glory than that of the honest workingman.

Indeed, conceit, arrogance and egotism are the essentials of patriotism. Let me illustrate. Patriotism assumes that our globe is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. Those who have had the fortune of being born on some particular spot consider themselves nobler, better, grander, more intelligent than those living beings inhabiting any other spot. It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill and die in the attempt to impose his superiority upon all the others.

The inhabitants of the other spots reason in like manner, of course, with the result that from



early infancy the mind of the child is provided with blood-curdling stories about the Germans, the French, the Italians, Russians, etc. When the child has reached manhood he is thoroughly saturated with the belief that he is chosen by the Lord himself to defend his country against the attack or invasion of any foreigner. It is for that purpose that we are clamoring for a greater army and navy, more battleships and ammunition.

An army and navy represent the people's toys. To make them more attractive and acceptable, hundreds and thousands of dollars are being spent for the display of toys. That was the purpose of the American government in equipping a fleet and sending it along the Pacific coast, that every American citizen should be made to feel the pride and glory of the United States.

The city of San Francisco spent one hundred thousand dollars for the entertainment of the fleet; Los Angeles, sixty thousand; Seattle and Tacoma, about one hundred thousand. Yes, two hundred and sixty thousand dollars were spent on fireworks, theater parties, and

revelries, at a time when men, women, and children through the breadth and length of the country were starving in the streets; when thousands of unemployed were ready to sell their labor at any price.

What could not have been accomplished with such an enormous sum? But instead of bread and shelter, the children of those cities were taken to see the fleet, that it may remain, as one newspaper said, "a lasting memory for the child." A wonderful thing to remember, is it not? The implements of civilized slaughter. If the mind of the child is poisoned with such memories, what hope is there for a true realization of human brotherhood?

We Americans claim to be a peace-loving people. We hate bloodshed; we are opposed to violence. Yet we go into spasms of joy over the possibility of projecting dynamite bombs from flying machines upon helpless citizens. We are ready to hang, electrocute, or lynch anyone, who, from economic necessity, will risk his own life in the attempt upon that of some industrial magnate. Yet our hearts swell with pride at the thought that America is becoming the most powerful nation on earth, and that she will eventually plant her iron foot on the necks of all other nations.

Such is the logic of patriotism.

Thinking men and women the world over are beginning to realize that patriotism is too narrow and limited a conception to meet the necessities of our time. The centralization of power has brought into being an international feeling of solidarity among the oppressed nations of the world; a solidarity which represents a greater harmony of inter-

ests between the workingman of America and his brothers abroad than between the American miner and his exploiting compatriot; a solidarity which fears not foreign invasion, because it is bringing all the workers to the point when they will say to their masters, "Go and do your own killing. We have done it long enough for you."

The proletariat of Europe has realized the great force of that solidarity and has, as a result, inaugurated a war against patriotism and its bloody specter, militarism. Thousands of men fill the prisons of France, Germany, Russia and the Scandinavian countries because they dared to defy the ancient superstition.

America will have to follow suit. The spirit of militarism has already permeated all walks of life. Indeed, I am convinced that militarism is a greater danger here than anywhere else, because of the many bribes capitalism holds out to those whom it wishes to destroy.

The beginning has already been made in the schools. Children are trained in military tactics, the glory of military achievements extolled in the curriculum, and the youthful mind perverted to suit the government. Further, the youth of the country is appealed to in glaring posters to join the Army and the Navy. "A fine chance to see the world!" cries the governmental huckster. Thus innocent boys are morally shanghaied into patriotism, and the military Moloch strides conquering through the nation.

When we have undermined the patriotic lie, we shall have cleared the path for the great structure where all shall be united into a universal brotherhood -- a truly free society.

N.M. rated worst in U.S. for worker insurance

By Heather Clark
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE — New Mexico ranked worst in the country for the percentage of residents who are covered by health insurance through their employers, according to a new report from the Economic Policy Institute.

The Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan think tank found that 50.7 percent of New Mexico's population under 65 years old was covered by employer-sponsored health insurance in 2006-2007 and 59.1 percent of all workers were insured by their employers over the same period, the 22-page report released last week found.

Nationwide, nearly 63 percent of the population under 65 years old was covered by employer-sponsored health insurance and almost 71 percent of all workers were insured by their employers for the same period.

Public programs like Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program help children and low-income adults, said Eric Griego, executive director at New Mexico Voices for Children, "but there's little out there for middle-income workers who can't

get or afford coverage through work.

"As the report makes clear, we need a universal program that will make coverage more affordable for all New Mexicans," he said in a statement.

The report showed that health insurance coverage provided by employers in New Mexico declined slightly since 2000-2001, but the fall was not statistically significant.

Texas (53.5 percent) and Mississippi (53.7 percent) ranked second and third worst, respectively, among all the states for their employer-sponsored insurance coverage for people under 65 years of age.

Texas ranked second worst at almost 63 percent and Louisiana third at 63.6 percent in the country for the percentage of all workers insured by their employers.

New Mexico also ranked second worst in the nation behind Mississippi for the percentage of children — 46.3 percent — who were insured by an employer-sponsored health plan in 2006-2007. Nationwide, 59.6 percent of children had coverage through an employer for the same period.

Besides New Mexico and Mississippi, the report said less

than half the children in Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana were covered by employer-provided health insurance.

The report also found disparities in employer-provided health coverage based on race. Employer-sponsored coverage for Hispanics was much lower than for whites.

In 2007, 41.4 percent of Hispanics under age 65 had health

insurance through their employers, compared with nearly 71 percent of whites.

The Economic Policy Institute is focused on improving conditions for workers. The report's author, Elise Gould, wrote that many Americans are falling through the growing gulf between employer-sponsored health insurance coverage and government-run health

programs.

"Between 2006 and 2007, public insurance was the only reason that more Americans did not become uninsured as coverage through work fell," the report said.

With the economic downturn and predictions of unemployment into 2009, further losses in employer-sponsored health coverage are expected, it said.

