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SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT ENERGY NEWS EVENTS
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IN MICHIGAN:
A SYSTEMATIC STUDY

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT ENERGY NEWS EVENTS AMONG MASS AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION MEDIA PROFESSIONALS IN MICHIGAN: A SYSTEMATIC STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT
ENERGY NEWS EVENTS AMONG
MASS AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
MEDIA PROFESSIONALS IN MICHIGAN:
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This thesis investigated uses and sources of energy news among Michigan news and interpersonal communication media. More than 500 Michigan newspapers, radio stations, television stations, magazines, and newsletters were studied to gather data about their sources for and uses of energy related information. Telephone survey technique was used, supplemented by documentary research.

In general, findings in the study showed that news and communication media energy specialists were receivers and redistributors of energy information, rather than creators of energy news. They received most of their energy related information by mail, unsolicited, and showed very little interest in energy as a local issue for political debate. Media energy specialists did seek out sources for energy news in some cases, most often relying on utility company spokespersons. They reported almost no original research or self-instigated coverage of energy issues.

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Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism, College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree.

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Director of Thesis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, REVIEW OF LITERATURE, BACKGROUND ASSUMPTIONS, AND RATIONALE FOR STUDY

Introduction

Energy was not a news beat until recent years. Since 1973, when OPEC[1] doubled crude oil prices twice in one year, energy issues have received increased attention by most news media.

Many popular magazines including Consumers Reports, Consumers Research, Mechanix Illustrated, The Mother Earth News, Popular Mechanics, and Popular Science have been devoting regular coverage to energy news. Special energy publications abound, with many geared toward homeowners, consumers, and do-it-yourselfers. Several Michigan news media also devoted special coverage to energy issues in 1979 through 1981.

Certainly, energy information is becoming increasingly important for Michigan residents. Economic urgency is boosting energy as a topic of concern for the news media. In the early 1970s, Michigan citizens invested about two cents of each gross state product dollar to import fuel from other states and countries. By 1980, this drain had increased to a little more than eight cents per dollar.[2]

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[1] OPEC--The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. An organization of countries from the Middle East, North Africa, and South America which aims at developing common oil-marketing policies.

[2] Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, "Energy and Michigan's Economy: State Energy Agency Proposal," May 1981.

Energy prices are continuing as a leading cause of inflation, increasing approximately 17 percent per year since 1970, with some short term gains for specific fuels as high as 100 percent per year. With energy prices doubling, on the average every four years, energy news has become important information for Michigan residents. Direct outlays for energy cost Michigan residents about $1750 per person in 1980, for a state total of about $16 billion.[3]

In order to meet the public's need for reliable energy information, the Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce operates a Clearinghouse; an information center providing easy access to energy conservation and renewable energy resource information. A toll-free Energy Hotline was established in 1978. Michigan residents call the Hotline with any questions about energy use, conservation, solar energy, and so forth. A staff of twelve, with technical assistance from Energy Administration staff, provides answers to callers' questions, usually mailing information in response to each request. This information center now averages about 500 requests per week, or about 25,000 in a year, from Michigan consumers.

From its inception, Clearinghouse staff recorded information about each request on log sheets (see Appendix A for a sample log sheet), including a record of how each caller heard about this energy information service. This was especially important because the agency had no budget for paid advertising and relied on press releases, published or broadcast by Michigan news media, to inform people of available services.

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[3] Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, Research, Development, and Evaluation Division, 1981.

The Energy Clearinghouse was already receiving some success with press releases to Michigan news media by late 1978. Since there was no budget for paid advertising or to produce public service announcements advertising the energy information service, research concentrated on means to achieve better results with press releases.

The bureaucratic system for processing press releases was quite complex, unpredictable, and erratic. Press releases were limited in content to announcements of new Clearinghouse publications. Also, the Clearinghouse did not want to compete directly with other sources of energy information, such as the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), that regularly provided information for news media in addition to publishing several newsletters and volumes of technical information every month.

Typically, the Clearinghouse added new publications when a need was determined from hotline callers' questions. When a new publication was finalized, a draft press release was prepared by the Clearinghouse Director. This draft would be reviewed and edited by the Clearinghouse Division Director and then by the Energy Administration Director. (Sample press releases are presented in Appendices B, C, and D.)

Once press releases were approved within the Energy Administration, they were forwarded to the Office of Public Affairs/Michigan Department of Commerce. There public affairs officials finalized the release, and decided how to disseminate the information. There were different press release mechanisms available through the Department of Commerce, including: (1) Department of Commerce press release (see Appendix B); (2) Governor's press release (see Appendix C); and, (3) press release with personal appearance (see Appendix D).

A Department of Commerce press release was considered important enough for release by the Department of Commerce, but it was not afforded any special recognition. It would be typed and delivered to the Capitol Press Room, where some Michigan news media would pick up the story, along with as many as twenty or thirty press releases every week from the Michigan Department of Commerce, and many more from the state's other 18 major departments, too.

News media with access to the Capitol Press Room include wire services, major daily newspapers, bureau staff for newspaper chains, and a few television and radio station reporters.

Some releases were considered important enough to receive attention by the Governor or Lieutenant Governor. These were sent from the Department of Commerce to the Governor's staff, where they were edited again, inserting quotes attributed to the appropriate dignitary. These printed press releases were distributed to the Capitol Press Room, in a package of twenty or thirty per week from the Governor's Office. They often received more news media attention because they were higher on the state's news agenda, being connected with the Governor's Office.

Sometimes press releases coincided with a personal appearance by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Department of Commerce Director, or the Energy Administration Director. These personal appearances often received even more news media attention because they offered opportunities for personal interviews and photographs, too.

Each method of press release produced vastly different results for the Clearinghouse. One press release might account for 400 information requests from Michigan consumers over two or three weeks, while another might produce as many as 4000 requests in a similar time period.

It was nearly impossible for the Clearinghouse staff to anticipate the level of response to expect from a press release, and to plan scheduled press releasess.

In order to rectify this situation, it was realized that a systematic study of sources of energy news information among Michigan mass and interpersonal communication media professionals was needed. This need was further accentuated by the erratic success from various press releases, and because news media consistently ranked highest as a source of referral for Clearinghouse clients.[4] The author hoped the study would provide useful information about mass and interpersonal communication media professionals in Michigan, and that the study itself would familiarize them with the Clearinghouse and its services.

Michigan mass and interpersonal communication media professionals were designated as an important target audience for Clearinghouse information. If they could be encouraged to rely on the Energy Clearinghouse for information, and personal contact could be established by a survey, it was hoped that press releases would receive more media attention and that each release would receive predictable results in terms of Clearinghouse contacts. However, these hunches needed to be tested.

This perceived need prompted a systematic search of literature in the proposed field of study.

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[4] Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, "Clearinghouse Data Base System." 1978 through present. See Appendix A; Tables A-1, A-2.

Review of Literature

The review of literature in the field was conducted under the following rubrics: (1) literature on sources of energy news information for Michigan mass and interpersonal communication media professionals; (2) scholarly literature in the field of proposed study; and, (3) specific data bases in the field developed by the Energy Administration/ Michigan Department of Commerce.

Literature on Sources of Information About Energy News Among Communication Media Professionals in Michigan

The author completed an informal study of access to energy information by reviewing energy news clippings from about thirty Michigan newspapers, and by watching television news on different Detroit, Flint, and Lansing area TV stations. Additional sources of information included press releases, announcements of conferences, meetings, workshops, book reviews, and the like received by the Clearinghouse unsolicited. The author assumed that similar information was received at least by major Michigan news media.

This steady flow of unsolicited information--often from mailing lists supplied by publishers from subscription records--included utility company information, propaganda, and announcements. The federal Department of Energy (DOE) forwarded press information monthly, including their latest series of tips for energy conservation, and camera-ready cartoons with energy conservation themes. Automobile companies, oil companies,

and energy companies like solar, wind, insulation, window products, home appliance manufacturers, and distributors all sent literature to the Clearinghouse.

In addition to this information, there were news releases from the state Cooperative Extension Service, which also began publishing an energy newsletter of research and experiments. Several Michigan colleges, universities, community colleges, or other agencies sponsored various energy education programs, including hands-on workshops where Michigan residents could learn solar system construction and common insulation and weatherization techniques. Several Michigan schools offered emphasis programs on solar and other renewable energy sources, and in 1979 and 1980, the Mother Earth News offered a series of traveling educational programs on alcohol fuel production and other energy-related topics.

The review of newspaper clippings and broadcasts showed that local reports concentrated on examples of conservation techniques and interviews with photographs of the first families to use solar energy and wind systems in Michigan. Other innovative building techniques were covered by local media, especially newspapers, including super-insulation techniques, underground or earth-sheltered housing, geodesic dome homes, solar homes, and so forth.

A newspaper education series called "Energy and the Way We Live" was developed under grants from the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities. The multi-part series was available to Michigan newspapers, and presented college level course material through newspapers in 1979 and 1980.

Some news media participated in community energy conservation programs. For example, many Michigan papers ran information about car-pooling and van-pooling, including maps that readers could use to request computer matching. Some papers used a special section of free classified ads for readers trying to find convenient car-pool partners.

One important finding of this review was that news reporters would often localize national and international energy stories by interviewing utility company spokespeople. For example, when one Michigan newspaper ran a front-page story about news from Three Mile Island, a side-bar story devoted nearly equal space to a statement from the local utility company vice president for nuclear power development. The Energy Administration was seldom contacted for background information in similar situations. A considerable amount of media attention was devoted to legislative issues, both in Washington and in Lansing. Once again utility company spokespeople were often consulted for background information in Michigan communication media reports of energy policy debates and government decision-making.

In short, communication media personnel probably received unsolicited information similar to that received by the Clearinghouse. They seemed to rely extensively on utility companies for energy information, and local news coverage usually concentrated on new home construction or solar building techniques. Local reporters investigated energy conservation techniques but did little to promote local energy policy debates and provided little in the way of education about energy issues. National and international coverage was provided by wire services, and state coverage concentrated on legislative issues and

Public Service Commission activities, often involving possible rate increases for utility customers. Michigan oil and gas drilling, development, and government regulation of drilling activities also received considerable attention by Michigan news media during this time.

Scholarly Literature in the Field of Proposed Study

Although studies about energy information are becoming more common, few studies have been completed to date.

Abbott's study reviewed findings in a year-long study of energy information in Iowa and Wisconsin daily and weekly newspapers.[5] Significant learning and retention occurred among readers exposed to a series of articles about energy conservation presented in five Iowa and Wisconsin newspapers. All news media sources out-scored other sources for energy information. The study of newspaper readers showed that 62 to 76 percent had read at least some of the series presented about energy. There was also a significant increase in source credibility for the participating newspapers following the series, with many more readers listing the newspaper as their best source for energy information after the series of articles appeared.

A 1977 study in Michigan showed that paid newspaper advertising offered only moderate success in reaching a target audience of small businesses for a government technology transfer program.[6] The report

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5 Eric A. Abbott, Effects of a Year-Long Newspaper Energy Series on Reader Knowledge and Action. Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, Seattle, Washington, August, 1978.

6 William M. Brown and others, SEMTAP: A New Technology Transfer Network to Link Business and Industry with Federal Research and Development; Interim Report for October 1976 through November 1977, Ann Arbor, Environmental Research Institute of Michigan, April, 1978.

concluded that there was "no evidence that a very intensive [paid advertising] campaign would result in an increased audience, especially as a means to reach [small businesses] with the information."[7]

Brownell interviewed more than 350 individuals in the Grand Rapids area to gather information about their perceptions of different communication media as energy information sources. Although his findings showed some variations based on income and education levels of respondents, in general, respondents agreed that newspapers were their most important source for energy information, followed by television, and then magazines. Friends scored a distant fourth, and radio fifth.

An important finding in Brownell's study was that perceptions of source credibility for energy information differed significantly from reports of sources most utilized for energy information. In measuring credibility, consumer groups scored highest, followed by television, with newspapers third, government pamphlets fourth, and utility companies and oil companies fifth and sixth, respectively.[8]

Two studies report on the performance of news media in explaining energy information to the public and other special interest groups. Dangerfield studied information about gasoline shortages reported in national magazines from 1971 through 1973. Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report were reviewed to check for inclusion of

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7 Ibid., p.22.

8 William Brownell, Energy Awareness and Media Credibility: An Analysis, Master's Thesis, Michigan State University, 1977.

information about impending gasoline shortages. Dangerfield concluded that the news media failed to report energy information in a useful way.[9] In another study, Lambeth researched news media influence on national energy policy development. Respondents included government leaders, both appointed and elected, as well as media professionals. The survey was limited to the so called "elite" media, including the New York Times, Washington Star, Wall Street Journal, Time, Newsweek, Business Week, and the Congressional Quarterly. Lambeth found that news media influence on energy policy-making was the lowest, compared with other recent national issues including civil rights, the Vietnam War, environmental issues, economic issues, and consumer rights. Press influence on energy policy-making was also ranked lowest compared to other policy-making sources including legislators, government officials, economic interest groups, and public interest groups.[10]

Both Fowler and Barrett studied energy issues in the press and found that, in general, news media professionals lacked training and understanding of important energy issues. They both suggested that journalism education be combined with technological training to prepare reporters for what Fowler termed the "mega-beat" of energy news.[11]

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9 Linda A. Dangerfield, et al, "How Did Mass Communication, as Sentry, Perform in the Gasoline 'Crunch'?" Journalism Quarterly, v52, n2, 1975, pp. 316-320.

10 Edmund B. Lambeth, "Perceived Influence of the Press on Energy Policy Making," Journalism Quarterly, v55, n1, 1978, pp. 11-18.

11 John M. Fowler, "The 'Energy Elephant'," Journal of College Science Teaching, v7, n2, November 1977, pp. 95-97.

Barrett's study included several interviews with energy reporters, who mentioned their lack of background training as an important impediment to their adequate understanding and reporting of energy issues.[12]

The Washington, D.C. based Media Institute completed a detailed analysis of the three major television network's news coverage of "the oil crises" of 1973-74 and 1978-79. Price quadrupling and then supply interruptions amid great public skepticism prodded ABC, CBS, and NBC to devote nearly one and one half months of evening news time to oil crisis news over a period totaling 18 months.[13] Researchers learned that 56 percent of all stories' sources were government officials, with only two percent considered outside experts. Television news was blamed for incomplete coverage. It was chastised for offering simplistic explanations of causes and possible solutions for the U.S. energy situation. Television created, said the Media Institute, " a distorted picture in which certain solutions became the focus of discussion, and in effect, became the limits of the debate."[14] The Institute did, however, exclude stories about alternate fuels, solar, natural gas, oil shales, synfuels,

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12 Marvin Barrett & Zachary Sklar, The Eye of the Storm: The Seventh Alfred I. Dupont/Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, (New York: Lippincott & Crowell, 1980).

13 Leonard J. Theberge, ed., TV Coverage of the Oil Crises: How Well Was the Public Served?, (Washington, D.C., The Media Institute, 1982).

14 Ibid., p. xii.

coal, geothermal, and nuclear energy from their study. They also excluded stories about accidents, safety, and pollution from their analysis, as well as editorials from the three major networks.

While the goal of the Energy Clearinghouse is promotion of conservation and renewable resources, the Media Institute report shows a pro-oil company bias. Nevertheless, both groups concluded that television coverage of energy problems was inadequate. The Institute concluded that "with near single-mindedness, television covered a narrow set of solutions that featured the government..."[15] Television was charged "clearly oriented toward stories that were entertaining and visually appealing."[16]

In summary, Abbott's study concluded that readers exposed to energy conservation information in newspapers learned from the stories, and retained some of what they had learned. Brownell concluded that news media, especially newspapers, were the most used source for energy information, in spite of the fact that source credibility was higher among other sources. Although paid advertising might reach some people with energy information, the SEMTAP study advised against intensive paid advertising campaigns. In several studies, scholars criticized energy coverage by various news media, and charged that journalists were inadequately educated to cover energy issues. Instead of leading and encouraging public education and debate of energy issues, news media reports were often blamed for restricting their audiences' knowledge of energy issues.

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15 Ibid., p. 24.

16 Ibid., p. 46.

Specific Data Bases in the Field Developed by the Energy Administration/Michigan Department Commerce

Early Clearinghouse experience showed that request quantity was highly influenced by Michigan news media reports of publications available free at the center. Contacts from Michigan consumers peaked following press releases in 1978 and 1979 about specific Clearinghouse publications. The Clearinghouse Data Base System aggregated responses to the Clearinghouse Log Sheet question, "How did you hear about our telephone service?" Michigan news media were the most important source of referral for Clearinghouse clients, accounting for 46.9 percent of all contacts in 1978. In 1979, Michigan news media were directly responsible for 38.5 percent of all contacts. Newspapers and magazines, especially, continued to be leading sources of referral for Clearinghouse clients.[17]

Special surveys undertaken by the Energy Administration also highlighted the importance of news media as a source for energy information among different target audiences. A study of small businesses in the greater Detroit area asked, "Where do you get most of your current energy information?" Newspapers accounted for 28.4 percent, magazines 22.1 percent, and television or radio 11.3 percent, for a total of 61.8 percent listing news media as their most important source of energy information.[18]

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17 Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, Research, Development, and Evaluation Division, 1978 through present. (See Table A-2.)

18 William Stevens, Energy Conservation Needs Assessment for a Business With Under 250 Employees; Michigan Energy Extension Service Technical Report Number 6, Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, 1979.

Another study surveyed early adopters of solar energy technologies in Michigan. Respondents were selected from applicants for Michigan income tax credits for eligible solar energy systems. Almost 600 of the first 2000 solar users in Michigan were interviewed. News media sources were listed once again as the most important sources for energy information. Respondents also reported that news media information was even influential in their final selection of a particular brand or type of solar system.[19]

A similar study was completed for members of the general public. One hundred interviews were completed based on a random sample of telephone numbers in each of Michigan's 83 counties. Once again, interviewers asked about sources for energy information. Newspapers, radio, television, and magazines accounted for nearly 70 percent of all answers to the question, "Where did you first hear about solar energy systems?" News media out-scored private businesses, friends, government groups, and utility companies as a prime source for solar energy information.[20]

Another special Energy Administration study asked how consumers learned about a state-wide utility company conservation services program. These results were especially significant because each respondent had received a written program notice from their utility company, in addition

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[19] Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, Research, Development, and Evaluation Division, "Solar User's Survey Data Base." 1980.

[20] Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, Research, Development, and Evaluation Division, "General Public Survey Data Base." 1980.

to possible exposure to program announcements via news media advertisements or articles. Almost 70 percent of the respondents said that the notice from their utility company had been their first notification of the program, but another 18 percent indicated a news media source for their initial contact. Only 12 percent said that the utility company notice had been their second source of information about the program, while 30 percent indicated a news media source. Newspapers again scored very high as a source of information about the program.[21]

A final Energy Administration study tracked responses to paid newspaper and magazine advertisements and television public service annoucements. Ads promoting solar energy use in Michigan were placed in several Michigan newspapers and in Michigan editions of Time, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, and U.S. News and World Report. The ads, and similar television public service announcements, were produced under a special solar energy grant to the Energy Administration. They invited consumers to contact the Clearinghouse for solar energy information.

Responses to these ads and announcements were tabulated and compared to production and placement costs for each marketing strategy. Public service announcements shown on Michigan television stations received the most responses. Even though the public service announcements cost much more to produce than newspaper or magazine ads, their cost per response was only about $4.75. Newspaper ads received the next highest rate of response, costing from $10 to $17 per contact. The magazine ads received the least response, in spite of their high placement costs.

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[21] Martin Kushler, Energy Administration Technical Report on Residential Conservation Services Program Evaluation, Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, 1981.

They averaged about $250 per response, even though readership studies for the magazines selected had shown great demographic similarity between their readers and early adopters of solar energy systems.

This advertising study supported the contention that paid advertising is not too successful in promoting energy conservation information availability. In fact, during the study a press release about solar energy information ultimately produced more responses than the paid advertising. The study concluded that free uses of news media, including press releases and public service announcements, should be employed instead of paid advertising.[22]

In summary, these special studies showed that news media sources provided an important link to deliver energy information to Michigan residents, early adopters of solar energy systems, and small businesses. Paid advertising did not produce cost effective results when compared to free uses of access to news media.

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22 Martin Kushler, Report on the Solar Energy Information Media Effort: An Examination of Alternative Media Options, Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce, 1981.

Background Assumptions

The preceding review of literature generated five basic assumptions for the study:

First, mass and interpersonal communication media personnel were considered an important target group to reach with energy information. Personnel were not expected to be designated as "energy reporters" by most Michigan news media, and personnel identified as energy specialists were expected to be largely ignorant of important energy issues and background information.

Second, mass and interpersonal communication media personnel were assumed to rely on unsolicited information for a significant portion of energy news published. Little local investigative reporting was anticipated.

Third, a multi-step flow of information to the public was expected, where mass and interpersonal communication media personnel were mediating the information available to the public, especially in their selection of information sources.

Fourth, it was assumed that the public relied on mass and interpersonal communication media news for much of its information about energy.

Fifth, mass and interpersonal communication media professionals were expected to have a small network of energy contacts on whom they relied for expert information on energy issues.

The study was designed to test these assumptions.

Rationale for the Study

It was hoped that findings of the study would provide a middle-range theory relating to the sources of information about energy news events being used by mass and interpersonal communication media professionals in Michigan.

Additionally, the findings of the study would hopefully bridge the knowledge gap that presently exists in the field of journalism and mass communication.

Furthermore, the findings of a systematic study of Michigan mass and interpersonal communication media professionals' usage of energy information might provide information for the Clearinghouse about the most practical means to reach the Michigan public with energy conservation and renewable energy resource news.

The study was designed to answer the questions "Who are Michigan's energy reporters?" and "What kind of energy information will they use?" It was hoped that information from the study would help the Clearinghouse develop means to increase responses from press releases, achieve predictable results from each press release, and increase mass and interpersonal communication media use of the Clearinghouse for background information about energy issues.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY, CONCERNS OF THE STUDY, AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The Problem of the Study

Statement of the Problem

What are the sources of information about energy news events among mass and interpersonal communication media professionals in Michigan?

Purpose for the Study

Specifically, the purpose of the study was (1) to identify the nature and characteristics of information sources about energy news events among mass and interpersonal communciation media professionals in Michigan, (2) to delineate the patterns of usage of Energy Administration press releases by those media professionals, (3) to analyze data on media professionals' use of the Energy Administration as a source for Michigan energy news, (4) to generate some conclusions about Michigan media professionals' sources of information about energy news events, and (5) to provide a set of recommendations that the Energy Clearinghouse could use in designing and planning its public relations strategies.

Concerns of the Study

First, the study was concerned with energy information sources, energy news itself, the channels used to disseminate energy news to Michigan mass and interpersonal communication media, and the media professionals who received this information. The study was concerned with both active information dissemination (e.g., press releases) and passive information dissemination (e.g., responding to research and background information requests from media professionals).

Specifically, the study was concerned about identification of attributes of energy news sources that might predict media usage. What factors within the media outlets themselves would predict receptivity for energy news sources? Was an energy reporter necessary to gain energy news coverage? How would frequency of publication, circulation, and media type affect energy news utilization? The study was concerned with qualities of contacts between energy news sources and mass or interpersonal communiation media professionals that might predict usage of energy news. What type of information or story would receive the most attention? What topics would be utilized most? Would frequency of contact affect receptivity?

A second concern was to understand patterns of energy news usage among Michigan mass and interpersonal communication media.

Specifically, could the study identify patterns of use for active information dissemination, such as press releases, and for passive information dissemination, for situations where reporters contact sources for background information?

Third, as shown by the review of literature and special Energy Administration data bases, news media are a prime source of energy information for Michigan consumers. Since the Energy Administration has a very small budget for public relations and program marketing, the study should identify the best means to use those limited resources in future news media relations efforts.

Definitions of Terms Used

Communication Media.--In this study, communication media are defined as those interpersonal channels of news communication which include newsletters but do not include news media, as defined here.

Energy Information.--Energy information is technically defined here as any knowledge or communication dealing with production, supply, consumption, conservation, or management of energy resources.

Energy News Events.--In this study, energy news events denote events which deal with energy information, and a restructuring of those events in news story form.

Energy News Professionals.--The term is operationally defined as those gatekeepers in Michigan's news media who manipulate the flow of energy news to Michigan residents.

News Media.--In this study, news media mean those formal channels of mass communication primarily utilized in news dissemination, including radio stations, television stations, daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, and magazines.

CHAPTER III

THE METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STUDY

Primarily, the techniques of telephone survey research method were utilized in the execution of the study.

Procedurally, the universe for the study was constructed by pursuing a two-phase approach to the identification of energy news professionals among the news and communication media outlets in Michigan.

At the initial phase, all the news and communication media outlets in Michigan, including daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio stations, and television stations, were contacted by telephone. The purpose was to generate a list of energy news professionals in Michigan, by asking each outlet to identify the presence or absence of at least one energy news professional in their individual media outlet. In this process, directories of various news media and organizations were used. These included Ayer's Directory of Publications, Broadcasting Yearbook, and the Michigan Press Association Michigan Newspaper Directory. In addition, the Office of Public Affairs/ Michigan Department of Commerce supplied its most recent mailing lists for Michigan news and communication media outlets.

This initial survey identified a universe of 502 energy news professionals among 502 separate media outlets in Michigan. They were considered to be representative of various media outlets, accounting for nearly all of the 553 media outlets in Michigan which could be identified by combining the aforementioned lists.

Only a handful of media outlets did not identify energy professionals. Some media outlets reported that they had no news facilities of their own, or no interest in energy news. These included some ethnic and religious publications, some shopping guides or advertisers, and a few newsletters from professional organizations and labor unions. A few newspapers refused participation in the survey asking that their central office be contacted directly. These included several of the Panax chain of Michigan newspapers.

At the second phase, these 502 media professionals were surveyed over the telephone with a telephone survey instrument. The study did not resort to a sample survey since the universe of 502 was considered small and manageable enough for the telephone survey.

The survey yielded valuable data germane to the study. Survey data was supplemented by the additional data gathered through documentary and analytical techniques of historical research.

Research Instrument, Interviews, Interviewing, Data Processing and Analysis

Research Instrument

A telephone interview instrument was constructed (See Appendix E) to translate the objectives of the study into operational and measurable terms of specific items in the telephone interview instrument. This instrument was pretested and refined by the author.

Interviewers

Three Michigan State University students, trained by the author in telephone interview techniques, conducted the interviews.

Interviewing

They were instructed to contact each media outlet and ask to speak to the person who was earlier identified as the individual who handled energy information at the outlet.

Initially, interviewers would explain the purpose of the survey and identify themselves as working for the Energy Administration/Michigan Department of Commerce. When convenient, interviews were conducted at that time. Otherwise, interviewers scheduled a convenient time when they could call back to complete the survey. This flexibility was required in order to complete telephone interviews with news media personnel, who have daily deadlines to meet and highly variable working conditions and schedules. Interviewers were instructed to prod respondents for answers to specific questions, but not to suggest answers for them.

The telephone survey was designed to require five minutes or less for completion. Interviews were scheduled to follow two or more weeks after an Energy Administration press release, so that survey questions would gather meaningful data about present methods of distributing press releases.

News media packets were prepared for each outlet requesting special information and for those requesting a sample package of publications to keep on hand. These packages included several of the most popular Clearinghouse publications, and a letter from the Clearinghouse Director thanking the participant for the interview and inviting future energy information requests.

Data Processing and Analysis

First, a code book was prepared to translate information from the telephone survey instrument into specific quantifiable data for computer analysis. Two coders were trained to code the data, and keypunchers subsequently entered the data into the computer system provided by the Office of Systems and Computer Services/Michigan Department of Commerce.

Cross coder reliability was found to be very high. There was almost 100 percent agreement between coders. Data was checked for errors and corrections were made after rechecking the appropriate survey instrument.

Descriptive statistical analyses were completed using the computer system provided by the Office of Systems Computer Services/Michigan Department of Commerce.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study have been reported and interpreted here under the following rubrics: (1) The nature and characteristics of sources of energy news among energy news professionals in Michigan; (2) the nature and pattern of utilization of press releases from the Energy Administration by those media professionals; (3) the nature and pattern of utilization of the Energy Administration as a source for energy news by those media professionals; (4) conclusions about Michigan news and communication media professionals' sources of information about energy news events; and, (5) recommendations the Energy Clearinghouse could use in designing and planning its public relations strategies.

The Nature and Characteristics of Sources of Energy News Among Energy News Professionals in Michigan

Each energy news professional was asked what percentage of energy related press releases their outlet received by mail, by wire services, and by other means.

Receipt by Mail

Overall, 52.6 percent (n=264) of all respondents said that they received all of their energy press releases by mail. Another 12.5 percent (n=63) said they received 90 to 99 percent of all energy press releases by mail. This was specially true of weekly newspapers (n=198;

87.6%), who reported very high or total reliance on mail for all incoming information.

Many respondents said that their media outlet was so small, they had no wire services or other means to receive anything, except for mail. Weeklies, some other media, and several radio stations had only one- or two-person news departments. At weeklies, they often doubled as typesetters. They essentially fill all available news space with information they receive in the mail, energy information included, and have very limited, previously established reporting duties. Radio stations said they were organized for their announcers to read wire service news for regular daily broadcasts. The news professionals who were interviewed might be responsible for only an hour or two of radio news per week.

Reliance on mail was also reported for other media (n=26; 60.5%). They also represented very small operations with no wire services, and relied on mail or their own reporters' initiative for all incoming information, energy information included.

Many radio stations (n=72; 49.3%) said they received nearly all of their energy news by mail. They often had some wire services, but not necessarily a complete news wire service. Announcers read news directly from wire services, and all local news was produced by one or two individuals. Many radio stations, in an attempt to curtail spending, have cut wire services to a bare minimum and may only receive weather, sports, and a minimum of hard news by wire. Their local reporting often consists of only one person.

Television stations were the only group to report less reliance

on mail than other means for receiving energy information. Only 40 percent (n=10) relied heavily on mail, and 56 percent (n=14) reported medium reliance on mail. In light of this reponse, and from responses to other questions, television stations seemed to think about local news as individual, unrelated stories they produced locally to fill an otherwise wire-service-read news hour. TV stations mentioned their wire services (n=14; 56%) and other means (n=11; 44.0%) more often than any other media type.

Only 9.8 percent (n=49) of those surveyed said that they received no energy press releases by mail. They represented two groups, those who had never received any energy information prior to the survey (n=19; 3.8%) and those who had other means of receiving energy information (n=30; 6.0%). Several, but not all religious publications, said they had not received any energy information prior to the survey. Some shopping guides and advertisers had not previously considered energy news for publication.

Of those who had other means to receive energy information, some said they received everything from wire services, some received everything from a single source, and some said they had developed their own local sources for energy information.

A few radio stations (n=9; 6.2%) reported no use of mail to receive energy news. They were radio stations where almost all news came from their wire services, read by their announcers.

Apparently, some radio stations are controlling costs by reducing wire services while others keep costs down by relying more completely on wire services while curtailing local reporting.

In summary, mail was reported as the medium most used to receive energy information. For many media outlets, mail is their only means of receiving any incoming information. In addition, 80.7 percent (n=405) of all respondents said they received no energy information by wire services, and 71.9 percent (n=361) said they had no other means of receiving energy press releases. Most media rely on mail, but the larger ones augment mail with wire service news or other means. Only a few outlets did not rely heavily on mail, but these included several publications where energy news had not previously been used, and others where nearly all news used came from wire services.

Receipt by Wire Services

Most respondents said they had no wire service for receiving energy information, including 223 weekly newspapers (98.7%), 41 other media (97.6%), 88 radio stations (60.3%), and 23 daily newspapers (52.3%). Only television stations (n=11; 44.0%) had less than half of all respondents reporting no wire receipt for energy information.

As stated before, most weekly newspapers and other media, and several radio stations, had no wire services they would use to receive energy information. Television may rely more on wire services for their news compared to the other media types. It was noteworthy, however, that more than half of all daily newspapers reported receiving no energy information by wire service. This may be because energy related wire service news is routed to a wire editor, and was not perceived as energy news by the local reporter or editor interviewed.

Only a few media outlets reported more use of wire services than mail. These included 35 radio stations (24.0%), 12 daily newspapers

(27.3%), and 6 television stations (24.0%). They represented stations or papers with larger audiences, and the radio stations already mentioned that relied almost entirely on wire services for all news. Also, there may have been a bias to this response, from editors who handled wire service news perceiving more use of the wires for energy news.

In summary, relatively few respondents relied on wire services for energy information, but those who did were from larger stations or papers, with more staff people and larger audiences. Heavy reliance on wire services for energy news might also indicate a station or paper with almost no local reporting, especially among the smaller radio stations. Most outlets reporting use of wire services also said they received energy information by mail.

Receipt by Other Means

Other means mentioned for receiving energy press releases included from other news media, from subscription or syndicated services, and from local individuals who walk-in or call-in, especially to television stations, with ideas for energy news coverage. As already reported, nearly 72 percent of all respondents did not list other means, besides mail and wire service, for receiving energy information. Of 141 (28.0%) listing other means, 50 were radio stations (34.2%), 58 weekly newspapers (25.7%), 11 television stations (44.0%), 10 daily newspapers (22.7%), and 12 from the other media group (28.6%).

Radio stations often mentioned other news media as sources, or advertising councils for their public service announcements about energy. Television stations mentioned other news media quite often, including their networks, magazines, and newspapers. Another common response from

television stations was that people come into the stations with their own ideas for energy news. Weeklies and dailies most often mentioned local contacts for individual stories, syndicated services, and a few mentioned local government offices or publications.

When other means were reported for receiving energy press releases, they were most often special cases where the media outlet's energy professional had developed their own means of finding energy information. For example, some said they had their own local contacts for energy information, depending on the story, which meant receiving information by word of mouth or by telephone. Others had learned to call the U.S. DOE by toll-free telephone to hear a recorded message about energy conservation. These messages could be written into news story form, or they could be re-recorded by local announcers for radio or television public service announcements. Only a handful of media outlets said they used this service, however.

Many other outlets said that their other means were from other news media, such as major Michigan newspapers, or the Wall Street Journal or New York Times, or from major television networks. Television stations, in particular, said they used other news media as a source for energy press releases. A few mentioned other means when their media outlet received most information from a central bureau or office, including two other media and several newspapers.

In summary, most media outlets had no other means of receiving energy information. Where they did, it often meant receiving packaged information from other news media or from syndicated services, but in a few cases it meant that the energy news professionals had developed

their own contacts. These last represented some of the largest circulation newspapers and biggest television and radio stations, but the vast majority of Michigan media relied almost entirely on mail to receive everything.

A few media outlets seemed completely out of touch with energy information from any source, but these were mostly small weekly newspapers, other media that had not previously considered using energy news, and advertisers or shopping guides that had not previously used energy news. A majority of all outlets relied heavily on unsolicited information by mail for their energy news. Some media outlets augmented mail with wire services for energy news, and a few others relied almost entirely on wire services for all news. Only about a quarter of all outlets surveyed reported using any other means to receive energy information, but these were often the largest outlets in the state. Those who did report other means appeared to place more emphasis on energy issues, developed some of their own contacts for energy information, discovered other sources for prepackaged energy information from syndicated services or other media, or researched energy issues themselves.

Sources for Energy Information

Respondents were asked to identify their best two or three current sources for energy information. Many reported no sources at all for energy news. They were most often the same outlets who said they receive everything by mail. In fact, 21.9 percent (n=110) of all respondents said they had no source for energy information, 38.6 percent (n=194) could only offer one source, 31.3 percent (n=157) two sources, and only 8.2 percent (n=41) provided three responses.

Utility companies were mentioned more often than any other specific source (n=133; 26.5%). Most often, the utility company was mentioned by name, usually one of the three major utility companies in Michigan. Forty-three outlets (8.6%) mentioned only utility companies as sources for energy information, and 90 more (17.9%) mentioned one or more utility companies, plus other sources. Utility companies were mentioned especially by daily and weekly newspapers. This was anticipated since utility companies, especially the state's three largest, have public relations departments and well developed contacts with many Michigan media. Also, they are both active disseminators of information as well as likely spokespeople to localize wire service energy news. Several respondents (n=26; 5.2%) even mentioned more than one utility company by name. This made a lot of sense for many outlets since utility prices have doubled two or three times in the past decade for most Michigan residents. Another reason that utility companies would be mentioned most often is that they are also advertisers who purchase space or time from Michigan news media on a regular basis.

The second most common response was a local source. These included legislators or local government officials, and individuals who were interviewed for specific stories. Some respondents said they just contact someone local for each story. Altogether, 125 outlets (24.9%) said they used local sources, including 29 (5.8%) who said that they only used local sources and 10 (5.0%) who said that they used more than one local source. Local sources were a catch-all for respondents: They told interviewers that they used local sources, but that did not necessarily mean that they had developed the sources themselves in order to

have a local source for energy information. In fact, a more likely explanation is that the local sources contacted the media outlet with an energy related idea and the outlet did follow up on some of these local projects, products, or ideas.

Legislators have newsletters they often forward to news media, especially weekly newspapers. Often, they provide energy press releases in their newsletters. In this way, legislators may insert Energy Administration press releases in their newsletters but the media professionals, and the public, assume the legislator is the source for the information. In a few cases, local government officials provided energy information on a regular basis.

Local sources were mentioned more by television stations (n=11; 37.9%) and by other media (n=10; 23.3%) than any other sources. They ranked second among sources named by daily and weekly newspapers, and were fourth among sources named by radio stations. Again, the television stations may have listed local sources most often because they produce a limited amount of local news and think of their stories as individual, quite unrelated ideas. The other media set listed local sources quite often, but they very often had no wire services to draw from and many had very limited energy reporting. Radio stations reported less reliance on local sources, but that may be because of the nature of radio news, essentially reading wire service news for a majority of all news coverage.

The next most common response was other news media, accounting for 91 responses (18.1%). Only 36 outlets (7.2%) listed other media as a source for energy information, and 26 outlets (5.2%) listed more than

one other media as a source. Other media ranked first among sources named by radio stations (n=9, 19.6%). Other news media ranked fifth among weekly newspapers (n=23, 10.0%) and among the other media group (n=5, 11.6%).

Radio stations most often reported other media when they made extensive use of wire services, or to a lesser extent when they borrowed story ideas from newspapers, magazines, or television. Many television stations said that they borrowed from other media including radio, newspapers, magazines, and their own or other television networks. Fewer television stations mentioned their own networks or wire services as a source compared to radio stations. Apparently, other news media are used very often to identify current topics of interest and story ideas. Media professionals often get their news agenda from one another, instead of generating their own news agenda without regard to the agenda being set by their competitors or other media.

The U.S. Department of Energy was listed as a source by 86 respondents (17.1%). Twenty-two outlets (4.4%) said that the DOE was their only source for energy information, and seven outlets listed more than one source within DOE.

Radio stations reported the DOE as a source more than other media (n=50, 32.5%). That could be expected because of the toll-free telephone service which DOE established especially for radio stations. The DOE was the third most common response among daily newspapers (n=9; 19.6%) and other media (n=6; 14.0%), and was fourth among television stations (n=7; 24.1%) and sixth among weekly newspapers (n=21; 9.1%). These lower rankings were somewhat surprising, since the DOE had well

established press relations, published volumes of technical information every month, provided camera-ready news features and public service announcements, and published several energy related newsletters which could have served as important information sources for the news media. Only a couple of media outlets mentioned DOE because of these services. Most who mentioned DOE said they "had a contact" there, or at some of DOE's subdivisions, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Energy Information Administration, and so on. The DOE was mentioned more often as a passive source, responding to specific requests from media energy professionals, than as an active source, sending prepackaged information to the news media. Again, this could result from differences in the internal operations at various news media. The person interviewed might not be aware of prepackaged information supplied by DOE because it was routed internally to another staff person. Another reason could be that DOE news was routed to national editors and was therefore never received or perceived as energy news by the local energy specialist.

Ranking fifth was other sources, most often meaning mail receipt in a passive mode for the media. Other was reported most by weekly newspapers (n=37; 16.1%), and ranked fifth or sixth among all the media types. Many weeklies said that their source was whatever came in the mail, once again underscoring their nearly total reliance on mail for all information used. Altogether, 61 outlets said they used other sources for energy news (12.2%). These included 18 (3.6%) who said that other sources were their only sources for energy news, and five outlets (1.0%) who said they had more than one other source for energy news.

Ranking sixth was the Cooperative Extension Service, which was mentioned by 53 outlets (10.6%). The Cooperative Extension Service was listed as the only energy information source by 11 respondents (2.2%). The Cooperative Extension Service was mentioned most often by other media (n=7; 16.3%), who mentioned CES second only to local sources for energy news. Many of the other media surveyed were college publications, though, and could be expected to have closer ties with their college Cooperative Extension Service staff. CES has developed many energy related materials over the past several years, and provided a newsletter from their state headquarters which reported about energy experiments and research in Michigan. CES was mentioned both in reference to local or county offices, and for the state research and publications office. Twelve of Michigan's 83 counties had federally funded energy agents specializing in energy assistance and education. Several of these agents worked under their county Cooperative Extension Service, but they were only mentioned as a source by a handful of respondents (n=9; 1.8%).

The Energy Administration was mentioned by 46 respondents (9.2%), and ranked seventh among all sources listed. Only one respondent mentioned the Energy Administration as a source more than once. They said they had contact with both the Energy Administration Director's office and via the Energy Clearinghouse. Twelve outlets (2.4%) said the Energy Administration was their only source of energy news. Weekly newspapers were most likely to say that the Energy Administration was one of their most important sources (n=34; 14.8%), but there was some indication that respondents were confusing state and federal energy offices. In fact, many respondents may have said that the Energy

Administration was one of their best sources simply because they had been contacted directly and asked to participate in the survey. Several respondents confused the state's Energy Administration with the federal DOE, or even with the defunct federal Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) or the Federal Energy Administration (FEA). These last two offices had not existed since President Ford's administration.

The Energy Administration ranked eighth among television stations (n=2; 8.9%), ninth among radio stations (n=5; 3.2%) and daily newspapers (n=5; 10.9%), and ranked tenth among other media, being reported by only one outlet in that group (2.3%). Apparently, press releases from the Energy Administration were not making much impression on media professionals. Low scores for the Energy Administration could indicate that the agency was too new to be widely known by media outlets. Other survey questions, discussed in the following sections, helped explain how the Energy Administration was known to the news media.

College or university sources were reported by a few outlets (n=34; 6.8%), including 13 percent of daily newspapers (n=6); 9.3 percent of other media (n=4), and 7.8 percent of radio stations (n=12). Only one TV station (3.4%) and 11 weeklies (4.8%) said they used college or university sources. Only five outlets (1.0%) said college or university sources were their only sources for energy information.

These responses were remarkably low, considering more than two dozen Michigan schools, colleges, community colleges, and universities were offering substantive energy curricula and programs, and were researching a dozen different energy related topics. This was also lower than could be expected since 25 college and university media outlets participated in the survey (5.0%).

One possible explanation is that the school or college reporters handle energy related school stories, and energy specialists perceived them as school news rather than energy news. Also, media specialists who were not well informed of energy issues might hesitate to contact university sources. They might not know which department or professor to call for pertinent information, the way they can count on a utility company spokesperson or the DOE for a quick, attributable quote.

Other state agencies also ranked low. Ranking ninth (n=30; 6.0%), only two outlets said their only sources were state agencies, and only three outlets named more than one state agency, besides the Energy Administration.

This was unexpected since energy related responsibilities are spread so widely among Michigan's nineteen major departments. Twelve of the 19 major departments have specific responsibilities for major programs directly related to energy issues. For example, energy financial assistance programs are available through five separate state departments, and different kinds of energy resource development potentially involve six. It is just this transcending infringement which prompted Fowler to call energy "the megabeat of the 80's."[23]

Once again, a possible explanation is that state reporters handle news from each department, and it is not routed to the energy specialist, but at many outlets respondents were editors, publishers, or news directors who should have known major sources.

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[23]Fowler, "The "Energy Elephant'," p.95.

Ranking last among all sources named (n=13; 2.6%) were large energy corporations, including automobile companies and oil companies. General Motors (n=3) and Ford (n=1) were mentioned by respondents who said they "knew someone" there. Oil companies (n=9) were mentioned when they provided local fuel oil deliveries for oil heating customers, and probably did not represent sources for many kinds of energy information, in spite of the fact that several oil companies publish energy journals or magazines, and have their own public relations staff.

To recapitulate, the most frequent response for sources of energy information was none, but these respresented mostly small media outlets with almost no news gathering function. Still, only a few respondents reported more than one or two energy related information sources. Respondents named groups who contacted them with energy information in most cases, but mentioned sources they contacted for background or research information in others.

From the information source's standpoint, these findings help explain that mail is the most practical means of reaching most media, and that the media have only a few sources for energy information. Many outlets have restricted news gathering facilities, so sources must perform many of the news gathering, editing, and packaging functions for the media outlets if they want to make certain their press releases will be used.

When the media professionals are looking for outside sources, they do not seem willing to search very far. They appeared to want simple access to a spokesperson who would have something quotable to say, and often contacted utility companies for energy information, but made very few contacts to colleges, universities, or the many state

agencies responsible for energy programs. Less than a dozen of the respondents mentioned doing their own energy research: Only two said their sources were energy books or periodicals. Several mentioned other news media as important energy information sources, but they were all general news media or syndicated services, and not energy publications per se.

The Nature and Pattern of Utilization of Press Releases From the Energy Administration By Those Media Professionals

In order to understand how Energy Administration press releases were being received and utilized by Michigan media outlets, several questions were included in the telepone survey instrument. Respondents were asked whether they had ever heard of the Energy Administration, whether they recalled receiving press releases from the Energy Administration in the past, and if they could remember the last press release they had received from the Energy Administration.

Some effort was made to identify the presence of more than one energy specialist at each media outlet. Respondents were asked whether energy press releases went to others at their media outlet. If another energy specialist was identified, interviewers made a note of their name or section at the outlet.

One very important finding from these questions was that responses were similar for all media types. Nearly a third (30.5%; n=153) of all respondents said that they had never heard of the state's Energy Administration, which was created by Governor's Executive Orders in 1975 and 1976. Only 38.2 percent (n=192) remembered receiving any press releases from the Energy Administration, and only 4.6 percent

(n=23) could recall the topic of the most recent Energy Administration press release they had received. Department of Commerce press releases evidently reached some of each media type while missing or bypassing others of each type.

Another person or section was mentioned by about a third of all respondents (n=159; 31.7%). Many said that their editor received all incoming information and asked that press releases be mailed to their editor. A few responded that energy press releases were routed according to subject area, some going to business reporters, some to consumer reporters, some to city reporters, and so forth. At television and radio stations, another person or section was often mentioned when respondents made a distinction between energy news and public service announcements: Public service directors or news directors were mentioned.

Even small weekly newspapers had chains of command through which press releases were passed. Some reporters interviewed differentiated by subject area, and they were almost all from larger daily newspapers.

Two specific questions were designed to determine whether present Department of Commerce press release distribution was adequate to reach most Michigan media outlets. Respondents were asked whether they would prefer press releases mailed directly to them, or to their outlet. Another question asked whether they would like to receive background information or copies of new Energy Administration publications along with press releases, or if they would prefer receiving only the press release.

A total of 62.2 percent (n=312) of all respondents asked to have press releases mailed directly to them, and 497 of the 502 interviewed asked to be placed on an Energy Administration media mailing list. Television (n=24; 88.9%) and radio (n=114, 74.0%) respondents were most interested in having press releases mailed directly to them. That may be because they place a higher premium on developing their own story ideas, and want to hoard incoming information.

Most respondents asked that background information or publications be included when mailing press releases (n=399; 79.5%). Television stations (n=26; 96.3%), other media types (n=30; 90.9%), and daily newspapers (n=41; 89.1%) all expressed great interest in receiving extra information in addition to standard press releases. Weeklies and radio stations were less interested in background information, presumably because of their more limited news gathering abilities.

In summary, a majority of media outlets were not receiving information from the Energy Administration, and many respondents had not even heard of the agency. Most were, however, willing to receive information on a regular basis and felt that information should be mailed directly to their outlet. An important finding was that respondents preferred receiving background information with press releases.

From the Energy Administration's standpoint, press releases were being used, as described in Chapter I. Press releases generated most of the requests to the Energy Clearinghouse. The methods being used by the Department of Commerce did not seem well suited to the kind of news presented in Energy Administration press releases, which were limited in content to announcements of new Clearinghouse publications.

In general, there are four main ways press releases can be used at media outlets. First, they can be used as is, with only minor editorial revision. Second, they can be used as a news source, reporters adding local information pertinent to the subject area. Third, press releases can suggest feature story ideas. Reporters use the press release as a starting point for a story, but essentially remake the entire release into their own story, perhaps never even using any of the original material. The fourth likely use for press releases is identical to the third, but for hard news rather than feature content.

Energy Administration press releases did not lend themselves to the latter three potential uses, primarily because of their restricted content. Also, the Department of Commerce was releasing them at the Capitol Press Room, where they were one among hundreds of press releases. That also meant relying on wire services for distribution to most Michigan news media, and the survey results showed that many outlets had no wire service provisions. Another shortcoming of relying on wire services for press release transmittal is that wire stories might be discarded without being used more often than mailed press releases, which might be saved for a longer time. This hunch needs to be tested, though.

A second problem for the Energy Administration was that many news media outlets removed the toll-free hotline number from press releases before publication. That subverted the Clearinghouse goal of providing simple, direct access for the public, who had to write a letter to request information. Occasionally, press releases would be published with no phone number or mailing address included, which must

have made it very difficult for interested readers to contact the Energy Administration.

These findings showed that the present method of Department of Commerce press releases was not satisfactory for energy press releases. If press releases could be mailed directly to media outlets, and to media energy specialists whenever possible, and publications or background information could be included in these mailings, it was hoped media outlets would expand their uses of Energy Administration press releases to include feature or news story presentation, as well as verbatim use.

The Nature and Pattern of Utilization of the Energy Administration as a Source for Energy News by Those Media Professionals

Each respondent was asked whether there was any specific information they or their audience might need right away. A last question asked whether they would like to receive a sample package of Energy Administration information, containing publications presently available through the Energy Clearinghouse.

Almost every media outlet (n=473; 94.2%) asked to receive a sample package of Clearinghouse materials, and a large fraction (n=211; 42.0%) asked for information about specific subjects. These subjects included solar energy, alcohol fuels, energy financial assistance programs, and information about wood as an energy source. This part of the survey was designed to simulate, for the respondent, the services regularly available from the Clearinghouse. Each request was promptly filled, using regularly available publications whenever possible.

Sample packages were described in Chapter III.

Since the author was media contact for the Energy Administration, he knew when media personnel contacted the Energy Administration for information. Contacts prior to the survey were infrequent. A few media outlets did contact the Energy Administration Director for information from time to time, though.

The media professionals interviewed seemed very receptive to the Energy Administration as a new source for energy information. One important finding was that media energy specialists were asking for the same kinds of information as Michigan consumers calling the Clearinghouse. Since media professionals' questions and information needs might be the same as Michigan consumers', it was hoped that sample packages of publications and the information forwarded in response to specific requests would familiarize respondents with the services available, and that they would contact the Clearinghouse on their own in the future.

Although no direct measure of media professionals' use of the Energy Administration was possible at the time of the study, some indirect measure was possible (see Tables A-1 and A-2). News media continued as a leading source of referral for Michigan consumers, and Clearinghouse contacts peaked in weeks following press releases. Direct measuring capabilities were provided in 1981 (see Recommendations).

If the Energy Administration was to become a source for news media and communication media in the same way that utility companies were sources, available for quick responses to reporters' questions, some means for direct, convenient contacts with the media had to be arranged.

Chapter V reports conclusions from the study and recommendations the Energy Administration could use in designing and planning its public relations strategies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings in this study clearly supported the general conclusions about energy news reporting which could be drawn from the review of literature and special studies. On the whole, news and communication media energy professionals were receivers of energy news more than creators of energy news. They tended to receive most of their information by mail, unsolicited.

There appeared to be little or no interest in energy as a local issue for political debate, except in a few rare instances where local groups had formed energy committees or where there was an active county Cooperative Extension Service energy agent who generated energy news.

Media energy professionals did seek out sources for energy news in some cases, and most often used utility company spokespeople for background information or to localize national or international stories. They seemed to have a small network of established contacts they would use for energy information, but they did not seem ready to go out of their way to develop energy information sources of their own.

Press releases appeared to be a much better means of reaching Michigan media outlets and audiences compared to paid advertising. Since many media outlets had not previously heard of the Energy Administration, and since many outlets had not been receiving Energy Administration press

releases in the past, there seemed to be ample room for improvement in methods to disseminate press releases.

Looking once again at the four main ways press releases could be used at media outlets--used verbatim, used as a tip for a news story, or for a feature story, or for a news story with local news added--it was clear that the methods being used by the Department of Commerce did not lend themselves to the latter three uses. Since Energy Administration press releases had dealt only with new publications available through the Energy Clearinghouse, the press releases had either been used verbatim or not used at all. It was clear that more emphasis should be placed on press releases which could be used in several different ways.

Media professionals have active and passive modes of action analogous to different modes for information disseminators. In a passive mode, media professionals receive information about energy news. This information arrives mostly by mail, but unsolicited information also comes from local sources. When unsolicited information is received, media energy professionals or their editors read through the information and make a decision about whether to use it for a news story, and decide what type of treatment the information will receive.

The active mode for media professionals appears very limited with respect to energy information. They solicit some information for energy news stories, but apparently only for input or localization of stories or press releases already in their information flow. Energy issues, at the time of the study, did not receive attention as an investigative news beat. These findings agreed with the hunch that energy was not an issue receiving local investigative news coverage.

Respondents reported an extremely limited network of energy information sources. When extra information was required to complete an energy news story, media professionals might make one or two telephone contacts to obtain background information or local input for the story, but they reported almost no original research or self-instigated coverage of energy issues. When asked for their most important sources of energy information, only two mentioned journals or magazines specifically devoted to energy issues, one reported access to U.S. government information through the DOE Technical Information Center, and two cited their own research.

In Michigan news and communication media, there was not yet a mode for energy reporters to develop their own energy related news concept, complete their own research, and publish or broadcast the resulting energy news.

In contrast to an ideal image of news media, providing a broad forum of ideas, investigating significant social and political issues, debating suggested solutions to important community problems, and so forth, the news media were followers instead of leaders when it came to energy information.

Barrett,[24] Dangerfield,[25] and Fowler[26] all suggested that the energy issue was too difficult for journalists because they had no

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[24]Barrett, The Eye of the Storm, pp. 44-48.

[25]Dangerfield, "How Did Mass Communication, as Sentry, Perform in the Gasoline "Crunch'?" p. 317.

[26]Fowler, "The "Energy Elephant'," p. 97.

previous training to handle energy issues, and that the energy issue was too complex and technical for them to tackle and handle adequately. Although this may be an important problem which needs attention, in the short run media professionals could find the education they lack if they are motivated to learn. The problem in Michigan seemed caused more by a lack of media staff and access to information: Many outlets had few resources to try to cover energy issues more thoroughly, and the media energy specialists seemed to rely on standardized procedures when researching energy issues, and did not go out of their way to find new sources for information about energy news.

This problem has been further exacerbated by major fluctuations in federal energy policies over the past decade and the lack of state attention to energy policies during the same time period. During President Carter's tenure in the White House, energy was elevated as a national issue of first priority, but the overwhelming message was that it was a national issue to be resolved by federal decision-making and action. Now, in President Reagan's administration, a very different message is being delivered: Energy is a serious problem, but if the government will just get out of the way and let a freer market operate, business and industry will eventually solve our energy problems. Although several politicians and scientists have argued that energy is ultimately a local issue which requires serious local commitment and resourcefulness for solution, their voices have not been widely heard.

Recommendations

The author made several recommendations for changes the Energy Administration could make in their public relations effort with Michigan's

news and communication media.

First, direct mail appeared to be the best means of reaching Michigan media outlets with energy press releases. Following the survey, a mailing list was compiled using the names and addresses provided in the interviews. The mailing list was entered into a word processing machine with codes to represent each outlet's county, type of publication, and survey number. Another code indicated whether the outlet had requested background information with press releases, or only the press releases. In this way, mailing lists can be generated by media type or by geographic location.

Since the survey was completed, several press releases have been mailed directly to Michigan media outlets, and preliminary results indicate that this method has increased use of Energy Administration press releases, especially among smaller newspapers and among radio stations. These outlets were often bypassed by previous methods of press releases through the Department of Commerce. Another benefit from direct mailing is that responses to press releases have been more predictable. Further research is being undertaken to add to the information gleaned from this first survey.

Direct mailing has allowed the Energy Administration to provide background information with each press release, at least to those media outlets requesting it. Clearinghouse publications accompany press releases announcing their availability, and the style of press release has been changed some to try to provide grist for feature or news stories as well as reason to use the press release verbatim. In addition, Energy Administration press releases from divisions or programs other than the Clearinghouse have been coordinated so that the toll-free number is used

for contacts whenever possible. Each press release is using a consistent name, phone number, and address for all contacts to the Energy Administration. Furthermore, press releases are now written more in a feature style, in hopes that more interest will be generated within the media and that press releases might lend themselves to more different uses. When possible, the name, address, and phone number are inserted closer to the top of the press release in hopes that they will not be removed by editors or cut out in newspapers' paste-up processes.

Additional research is being conducted to delineate the media professionals' needs for energy education, and to find the most practical means the Energy Administration can use to provide necessary information for them.

A main lesson learned from the study is that reporters will not try too hard to find background information when they do decide to investigate a story. The Energy Administration should continue to simplify procedures for providing information directly to news media staff, especially via toll-free telephone.

Since this study's completion, many more media professionals have contacted the Energy Administration for background or research information, and several radio stations have taped telephone conversations as a means to convey information from Energy Administration press releases. Two TV stations even taped a few minutes in the Clearinghouse for their evening news.

As long as reporters are confident they can contact the toll-free number to get the information they need, quickly and without a lot of bureaucratic red tape, they seem willing to use the Energy Administration as a source.

Arrangements have been made to expedite handling of media staff requests received by the Clearinghouse. Although this service was always theoretically available to news media personnel as well as to members of the general public, it should be made explicitly clear to media energy professionals. Since they seem willing to make some special contacts to obtain energy information, perhaps they will contact the Energy Administration more often once they understand a free energy answer service is readily available.

Another important finding from the study was that the news media's requests for energy information were really no different from the general public's requests. Media professionals could use more education about energy issues and problems, but they also tend to have the same subject orientation they perceive in their audiences. This means that the media may want and use the same publications the Energy Administration produces for other purposes.

Instead of offering only Clearinghouse publications to the news media, the Energy Administration should make an effort to use program evaluation results, research and development reports, and energy forecasts and planning information as educational information for news media staff. In this way, although many of these publications would not lend themselves to announcements of public availability, they might encourage reporters to delve more deeply into energy as a state or local issue, and might provide topics for investigative coverage by local reporters.

The author also recommended some changes in data collected from the Clearinghouse Log Sheet (see Appendix A), and these changes were initiated in 1981. Special codes are now used to tabulate contacts from news and communication media professionals, using a code for news

media as occupation. In addition, special codes were added to tabulate contacts resulting from each specific press release or media appearance. In this way, responses to different outreach methods can be compared for resulting Clearinghouse requests from Michigan consumers. These changes have made it possible to track each press release to see where, in specific, it was used and to compare each press release with others. In fact, the same coding regime has made it possible to count contacts resulting from specific marketing strategies including appearances at energy fairs, television or radio interviews, specific magazine or newspaper articles, as well as the paid solar energy advertising and public service announcements described in Chapter I. This system will eventually allow various means of outreach to be compared on a dollars-per-contact basis, so that the most effective means can be used to stretch available outreach funding.

Finally, the author recommended additional research to identify media professionals' preferences for energy subjects, means of presentation, and methods for packaging both press releases and media educational information. A thorough needs assessment is being conducted to investigate specific energy information problem areas as perceived by reporters.

The Energy Administration should consider news and communication media professionals as an important target group for energy information, the same way they now consider homeowners or small business operators as important target groups. They should continue their function of promoting energy conservation and renewable energy resources among media professionals in the hope they will become better educated and more motivated to report energy issues, and in the hope they will pass more thorough and accurate energy information on to their audiences.

APPENDICES

NCS Trans-Optic 10-31927:32

STAFF CODE

DATE / /

clearinghouse log sheet

DEMOGRAPHICS

- TELEPHONE
- MAIL
- RECORDER
- WALK IN
- UNDER 18
- 19 35
- 36 60
- 61 plus
- MALE
- FEMALE
- ORGANIZATION
- EA STAFF REFERRAL
- FOLLOW UP FORM # ____

DATE OF REQUEST

MONTH 0 1 / 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

DAY 0 1 2 3 / 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

YEAR 8 / 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

COUNTY

PHONE ( )

ZIP

CO.

BACKGROUND DATA

1. Is this the first time you have called us?
   - YES
   - NO
2. How did you hear about our telephone service?
3. Where are you planning to use the information?
   - HOME
   - WORK
   - SCHOOL
   - ELSEWHERE
4. What is the main heating fuel there? (See #3)
   - NATURAL GAS
   - FUEL OIL
   - WOOD
   - COAL
   - ELECTRIC
   - PROPANE
   - SOLAR
   - N/A
5. What kinds of things have you done to conserve energy?
   - NONE
   - NOT APPLICABLE
   - INSTALLED INSULATION
   - CHANGED DRIVING HABITS
   - INSTALLED STORM WINDOWS DOORS
   - SWITCHED TO ECONOMY CAR
   - WEATHERSTRIPPED, CAULKED
   - USED CARPOOL, MASS TRANSPORTATION
   - SET BACK THERMOSTAT, CLOSED ROOMS
   - REDUCED HOT WATER USAGE
   - HEAT WITH WOOD
   - REDUCED HOME LIGHTING
   - HEAT WITH SOLAR
   - OTHER
6. What is your occupation?
   - HOMEMAKER
   - ENERGY PROGRAM STAFF
   - OTHER PUBLIC EMPLOYEE
   - CONTRACTOR, BUILDER, DEALER
   - OTHER PRIVATE EMPLOYEE
   - ENGINEER, ARCHITECT
   - TEACHER
   - COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
   - LIBRARIAN
   - RETIRED, SENIOR CITIZEN
   - STUDENT
   - UNEMPLOYED
   - LEGISLATOR, CONGRESS PERSON
   - OTHER, REFUSED

Mini-Survey Options

7.

8.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

94132

- DIRECT REPLY
- REQUESTED INFO. FROM
- LETTER
- REFERRED TO
- COMPUTER SEARCH
- OTHER

PUB #1 | PUB #2 | PUB #3 | PUB #4 | PUB #5 | PUB #6

SCRIBBLES

MEMORY CODE

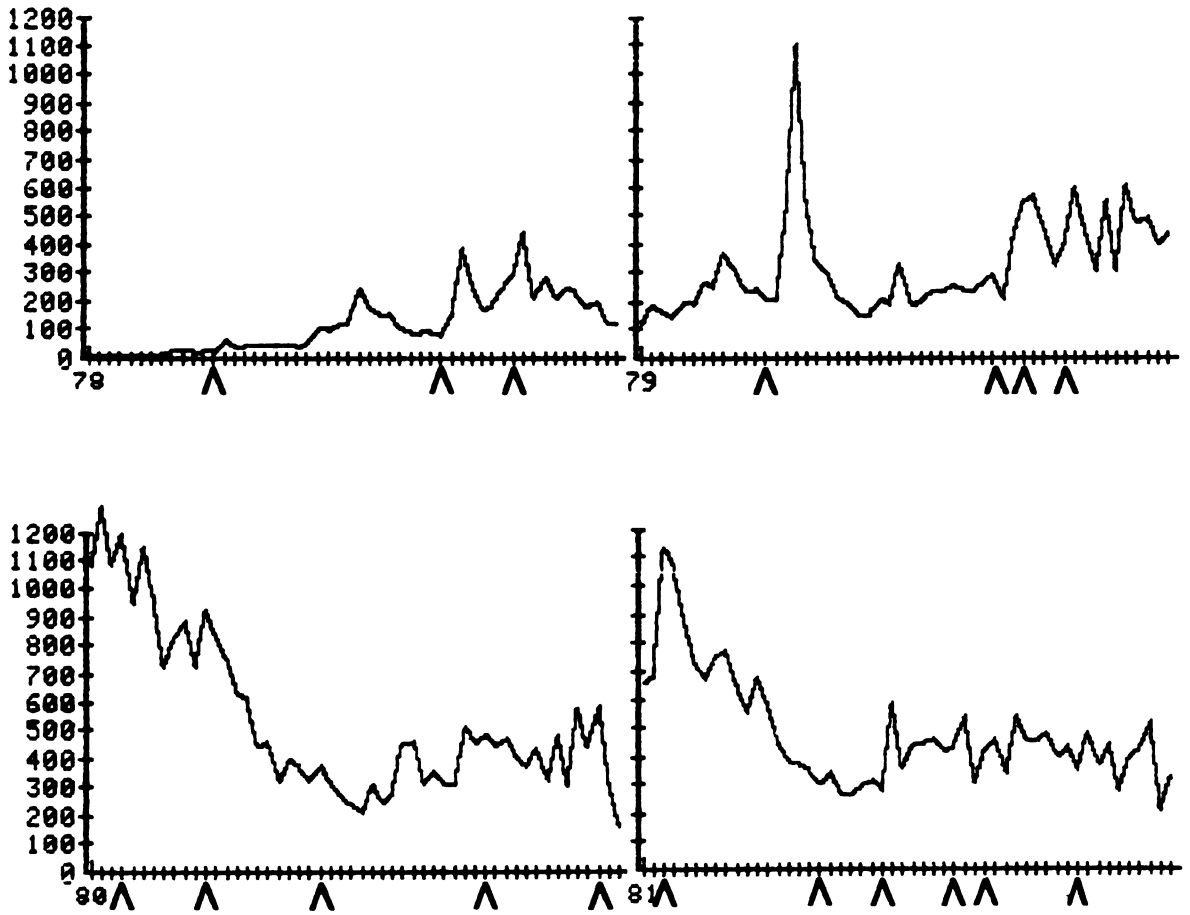
STAFF CODE

DATE COMPLETED / /

BY

TABLE A-1

Clearinghouse Requests Per Week from 1978 Through 1981



Note: Λ s indicate weeks when press releases from the Clearinghouse were distributed.

TABLE A-2

How did Patrons learn about the Clearinghouse Service?

Source of Reference	1978 N	1978 %	1979 N	1979 %	1980 N	1980 %	1981 N	1981 %
Brochure Poster	95	3.1%	313	3.2%	761	7.7%	795	11.8%
Press Release	94	3.1%	55	.6%	44	.4%	62	.9%
Newspaper/ Magazine	1182	39.0%	3183	32.8%	1068	10.8%	1586	23.5%
Television Radio	54	1.8%	338	3.5%	407	4.1%	517	7.7%
School College	114	3.8%	413	4.3%	328	3.3%	303	4.5%
Legislator	139	4.6%	527	5.4%	161	1.6%	41	.6%
Mich Energy Admin	396	13.1%	898	9.2%	827	8.4%	445	8.4%
Commerce Register	92	3.0%	153	1.6%	14	.1%	14	.2%
Other Energy Program	98	3.2%	73	.6%	294	3.0%	484	7.2%
Coop Extension Serv	64	2.1%	151	1.6%	121	1.2%	42	.6%
Public Util.	38	1.3%	518	5.3%	3152	31.8%	365	5.4%
Other Organizations	92	3.0%	836	8.6%	856	8.6%	551	8.2%
Friends	124	4.1%	609	6.3%	658	6.6%	735	10.9%
Other Source	450	14.8%	1648	17.0%	1210	12.2%	807	11.9%
Missing Cases	2793	Missing	6655	Missing	12,661	Missing	7990	Missing
Total	5825	100.0%	16,380	100.0%	22,562	100.0%	14,747	100.0%
News Media Totals	1422	46.9%	3729	38.5%	1533	15.4%	2179	32.3%

APPENDIX B

Press Contact: 517-373-8290

Immediate Release

Michigan Department of Commerce

Energy Administration

LANSING, July 24 --- The amount of time a car can idle without wasting gasoline probably is a lot less than most motorists think, according to the Michigan Department of Commerce's Energy Administration.

"An idling car can waste up to a gallon of gas an hour," said Joann Neuroth, acting director of the Administration. "By limiting idling time to 30 seconds, drivers can obtain maximum fuel efficiency."

"Many motorists believe that starting a car uses as much gas as idling for 10 or 15 minutes," she said. "But studies show that starting a warm engine uses only the fuel it would take to idle for 30-seconds."

The Energy Administration has several free publications dealing with fuel efficiency, including gas mileage guides for new cars, car-pooling guides and tips on alternative fuels. Also available are more than 200 publications concerning energy conservation and renewable energy resources.

For further information, call the Administration's toll-free Energy Hotline, 1-800-292-4704, or write the Energy Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 30228, Lansing 48909.

# # #

PR

APPENDIX C

Executive Office
Energy

Gov. William G. Milliken said today that the more than 1,500 solar energy systems installed by Michigan residents last year will save an estimated 71 billion units of energy -- worth about $500,000 at current prices -- in their first year of operation.

According to the Energy Administration, an agency of the Michigan Department of Commerce, the 1980-installed solar systems will save about $17 million worth of energy over the next 20 years, the expected service life of the systems.

"This is a significant saving in energy," Milliken said. "I think it demonstrates that the money the State of Michigan invests in the development of solar energy resources is well spent."

The State of Michigan provided about $1 million in tax credits last year to encourage installation of solar energy systems. As of August 1, 1,301 solar tax credits -- averaging $777 -- were given for the 1,552 installations in 1980. The number of installations exceeds the number of credits because some applicants installed multiple systems under a single tax credit application.

The credits ranged from $25 to $1,700, the maximum allowed in 1980. About 10 percent of the applicants qualified for the maximum credit. In 1981, applicants will be eligible for a maximum of $1,200: a 20 percent credit for the first $2,000 of costs and an additional 10 percent credit for the cost between $2,000 and $10,000.

The credits are available for all renewable energy systems, including active and passive solar, wind, groundwater heat-pump, and low-head hydro when installed to provide heating, cooling or electricity to a Michigan residence.

The 1980 credits went toward installation of 1,028 space heating systems, 467 water heating systems and 57 electric generating systems. These systems will annually save an estimated 25 million cubic feet of natural gas, 129,000 gallons of heating oil, 2,800 tons of coal, and 85,000 gallons of propane. Michigan currently imports from 80 to 100 percent of these fuels.

It is estimated that residents installing the sytems last year spent about $1 million for labor and $5 million for equipment. An Energy Administration survey shows that about 45% of the systems were do-it-yourself projects built from materials purchased from Michigan hardware suppliers and small businesses. About half of the manufacturers who built the remaining commercially-available systems are Michigan-based.

Energy 2

Residents in 80 of the state's 83 counties have installed solar systems and received tax credits since the program began in 1979.

Michigan residents who would like to apply for energy tax credits can request a free Energy Tax Credit information package by writing the Energy Administration Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 30228, Lansing, Michigan 48909, or by calling the Energy Hotline at 1-800-292-4704.

# # #

APPENDIX D

Press Contact: 517-373-8290

Immediate Release

Michigan Department of Commerce

Energy Administration

LANSING, June 9 --- Energy Administration officials today reported that a river of used motor oil that would otherwise flow into the ground in Michigan --- wasting energy and contamining the landscape --- is being rechanneled into productive use through recycling.

At a news conference in a parking lot at the State Capitol, Acting Energy Director Joann Neuroth poured a sample of the used oil into a collection tank and announced the start of a statewide program to collect the oil before it gets into the ground. Fifteen Michigan counties already have set up a used oil collection network at more than 400 collection points, she said.

"Millions of gallons of used motor oil are dumped every every year by backyard mechanics and others, often into the ground or city landfills, where it becomes an environmental problem rather than an energy resource," Neuroth commented.

To stop that waste, the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, under contract to the Energy Administration, is working to develop collection points in interested counties in the state. The collection points generally are service stations, auto repair shops, retail stores and auto dealerships.

The used oil being recovered in the program is picked up at the collection points by commerical firms which recycle it for reuse.

According to Representative Mary Brown, who sponsored the state's Used Oil Recycling Act, "the recovered oil can be reprocessed and used as a fuel supplement, it can be re-refined into high-quality lubricants, or it can be used to manufacture other petroleum-based products. Lubricating oils never really wear out, they just get dirty."

Noting that a local Ingham County project is among the 15 operating programs, Rep. Debbie Stabenow observed, "a 42-gallon barrel of oil yields about 2½ quarts of motor oil. But a gallon of used oil can be re-refined to produce the same amount of lubricating oil."

"This is the largest volunteer recycling effort ever undertaken in Michigan," said Dr. Adger Carroll, assistant director of Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Service, which is sponsoring many of the county programs. More than 30 organizations and volunteer groups have participated in the project so far, he said.

Collection points in 27 additional counties are expected to be operational by September, said David Jasperse, program coordinator for the Western Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC).

Residents of the participating counties --- Barry, Benzie, Calhoun, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Ingham, Kalamazoo, Kent, Macomb, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Ottawa, Tuscola and Wayne --- can obtain a list of the recycling centers in their area by calling the Energy Administration Clearinghouse toll-free (1-800-292-4704) or WMEAC in Grand Rapids (616-451-3051).

# # #

MEDIA SURVEY

_____ Staff Code (Initials)

_____ Phone

_____ Zip Code

_____ Date

_____ Time Begun

_____ Time Ended

_____ Total Minutes

_____ Number of Times Transferred

Contact Person _____

Position/Title _____

Address _____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Type of Contact
1=newspaper
2=radio
3=TV
4=newsletter

Name of newspaper, radio or TV station

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Circulation/Audience Size

If newspaper or newsletter:

_____ Circulation

_____
1=daily
2=weekly
3=bi-weekly
4=monthly

_____ Sector
1=commercial
2=college
3=association (e.g., labor union, League of Women Voters, etc.)

Interviewer's Notes on the Contact:

"Hello, this is _____ of the Energy Administration, within Michigan Department of Commerce. May I speak to the person in charge of energy information?"
(Repeat first sentence above if transferred)

"We are currently in the process of trying to improve our service by notifying most of the (newspapers, radio stations, TV stations) in the State of Michigan. I would like to spend a few minutes talking with you if I may, and ask you some questions, to find out some specific information about your newspaper and its handling of energy-related topics. Do you have time now or would it be more convenient for me to contact you at a different time? Everything should only take about 5 minutes."

Time to contact later: _____

1. Have you ever heard of the Energy Administration?

___

___ 1=yes (If "yes", go to Question #2)

2=no (If "no", read paragraph A and B)

A. The Energy Administration is a state agency. It is designed to bring energy conservation ideas and techniques to the public. As part of our program we are currently operating an information clearinghouse, a service which is made available to the public through a toll-free telephone hotline.

Question #2: "Do you recall having received any press releases from the Energy Administration?"

___

___ 1=yes (If "no" read paragraph B and then move on to Question #4)

2=no

B. "Until now, our main source of advertisement has been through press releases from the Department of Commerce. These have been going out to weekly and daily newspapers and to TV and radio stations throughout the State of Michigan. For example, whenever we publish a new brochure or pamphlet, the Department of Commerce sends out an announcement detailing the contents and information on how to order the publication. In this way, we have logged over 30,000 calls from Michigan residents. Unfortunately, this system does not always function perfectly, so we are looking for a way to ensure that the correct information reaches the right place at the right time."

3. "Can you remember the last press release you received from us?"

___

___ 1=yes Comments: _____

2=no _____

If "yes", about what date was that?

_____ _____ _____

Month Day Year

4. "What percentage does your (newspaper, radio station, TV station) pick up its energy-related press releases by _____?"

_____

_____ mail

_____

_____ wire

_____

_____ other (Explain) _____

_____

_____

5. "Do energy-related press releases go to some other person or persons at your paper/station?"

___

___ 1=yes

2=no

(If "yes", list below; if any comments, write them on back of page.)

	NAME	SECTION	PHONE
A.	_____	_____	_____
		_____	
		_____	
B.	_____	_____	_____
		_____	
		_____	
C.	_____	_____	_____
		_____	
		_____	
D.	_____	_____	_____
		_____	
		_____	

6. "In the future, we are considering sending our press releases directly to the intended receivers. If we do decide to do this, would you like us to send our press releases directly to you?"

___

___ 1=yes

2=no

How should we address the envelope?

_____

_____

_____

7. "When we send press releases, would you like us to include a copy of each new publication together with the press release, or would you prefer receiving only the press release?"

___

___ 1=send copies

2=just press release

_____

_____ (If they want copies, please note the number desired.)

8. "At this time, what are your two or three best sources of energy information?"
(Enumerate the responses)
1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

9. "Is there any specific kind of information which you or your audience need or would like to see/hear?"

___
___ 1=yes

2=no

___

If "yes": _____ Contact Code from Log Sheet.

(Comments) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Would you like a sample package of our publications to keep on hand?

___
___ 1=yes

2=no

"Thank you very much for your time. It was nice talking with you. I would just like to add that the Clearinghouse would like to be of assistance with any energy-related questions you or your (audience/subscribers) may have. We have a toll-free number that can be called between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is 1-800-292-4704. We not only have information on energy conservation and different types of renewable energy resources but also we have information on heating assistance programs and tax credits. Again, please remember the Clearinghouse and feel free to call our toll-free number with any of your energy-related questions . . ."

TABLE E-1

Numbers and Titles of Respondents Interviewed by Media Type

Respondent's Title or Position at Outlet	N	Percentage
Radio Stations		
news director	98	63.6
news reporter	21	13.6
public service director	3	2.0
public service department, not director	6	4.0
program director	11	7.1
manager, general manager	15	9.7
Total	154	100.0
Television stations		
news director or editor	21	72.4
news reporter	4	13.8
public service director	1	3.5
program director, manager, executive	3	10.5
Total	29	100.0
Daily Newspapers		
editor	27	58.7
news reporter	4	8.7
managing editor	7	15.2
special editor (city, business, consumer, etc.)	8	17.4
Total	46	100.0
Weekly Newspapers		
editor	163	70.0
news editor	22	9.6
news reporter	3	1.3
managing editor, manager	15	6.5
publisher	21	9.1
other (business manager, advisor, etc.)	6	2.6
Total	230	100.0
Other Media		
editor	21	48.8
associated editor, assistant editor	14	32.6
other (director of information, etc.)	8	18.6
Total	43	100.0

TABLE E-2

Duration of Surveys in Minutes

Minutes	N	Percentage
2 or less	18	3.6%
3 or 4	139	27.7%
5 or 6	211	42.0%
7 or 8	83	16.5%
9 or 10	37	7.4%
More than 10	14	2.8%
Total	502	100.0%

TABLE E-3

Knowledge of the Energy Administration by Media Type

	Had respondent heard of the Energy Administration?			
Type of Media	YES N	YES Percentage	NO N	NO Percentage
Radio Stations	110	71.4%	44	28.6%
Television Stations	23	79.3%	6	20.7%
Daily Newspapers	36	78.3%	10	21.7%
Weekly Newspapers	158	69.0%	71	31.0%
Other Media	21	48.8%	22	51.2%
Total	348	69.5%	153	30.5%

TABLE E-4

Receipt of Energy Administration Press Releases by Media Type

Type of Media	Did respondent recall receiving press releases from the Energy Administration? YES N	YES Percentage	NO N	NO Percentage
Radio Stations	64	41.6%	90	58.4%
Television Stations	11	37.9%	18	62.1%
Daily Newspapers	17	37.0%	29	63.0%
Weekly Newspapers	89	38.9%	140	61.1%
Other Media	11	25.6%	32	74.4%
Total	192	38.3%	309	61.7%

TABLE E-5

Recall of Most Recent Energy Administration Press Release by Media Type

Type of Media	Did respondent recall receiving the latest press release from the Energy Administration? YES N	YES Percentage	NO N	NO Percentage
Radio Stations	7	4.5%	147	95.5%
Television Stations	2	6.9%	27	93.1%
Daily Newspapers	2	4.3%	44	95.7%
Weekly Newspapers	11	4.8%	218	95.2%
Other Media	1	2.3%	42	97.8%
Total	23	4.6%	478	95.4%

TABLE E-6

Do Energy-Related Press Releases Go to Some Other Person or Persons at Your Paper/Station?

Yes		No	
N	Percentage	N	Percentage
159	31.7%	343	68.3%

TABLE E-7

Respondents Listing Other Sections

Number of Sections	N	Percentage
1	130	87.8%
2	15	10.1%
3	2	1.4%
4	1	.2%
Total	148	100.0%

TABLE E-8

Comparison of Media Type

To Receiving Energy Press Releases by Mail

Type of Media	Percentage of Information Received by Mail					
	N	Low (0%) Percentage	N	Medium (1-89%) Percentage	N	High (90-100%) Percentage
Radio Stations	9	6.2	65	44.5	72	49.3
Television Stations	1	4.0	14	56.0	10	40.0
Daily Newspapers	2	4.5	18	40.9	24	54.5
Weekly Newspapers	5	2.2	23	10.2	198	87.6
Other Media	13	31.0	6	14.3	23	54.8
Total	30	6.2	126	26.1	327	67.7

TABLE E-9

Comparison of Media Type

To Receiving Energy Press Releases by Wire Service

Type of Media	Percentage of Information Received by Wire Service: Low (0%) N	Low (0%) Percentage	Medium (1-89%) N	Medium (1-89%) Percentage	High (90-100%) N	High (90-100%) Percentage
Radio Stations	88	60.3%	23	15.8%	35	24.0%
Television Stations	11	44.0%	8	32.0%	6	24.0%
Daily Newspapers	23	52.3%	9	20.5%	12	27.3%
Weekly Newspapers	223	98.7%	2	0.9%	1	0.4%
Other Media	41	97.6%	1	2.4%	0	0.0%
Total	386	79.9%	43	8.9%	54	11.2%

TABLE E-10

Comparison of Media Type

To Receiving Energy Press Releases by Other Means

Type of Media	Percentage of Information Received by Other Means: Low (0%) N	Low (0%) Percentage	High (1-100%) N	High (1-100%) Percentage
Radio Stations	96	65.8%	50	34.2%
Television Stations	14	56.0%	11	44.0%
Daily Newspapers	34	77.3%	10	22.7%
Weekly Newspapers	168	74.3%	58	25.7%
Other Media	30	71.4%	12	28.6%
Total	342	70.8%	141	29.2%

TABLE E-11

Respondents asking for Press Releases Mailed Directly to Them by Media Type

Type of Media	Should press releases be mailed direct? Yes N	Yes Percentage	No N	No Percentage
Radio Stations	114	74.0%	40	26.0%
Television Stations	24	88.9%	3	11.1%
Daily Newspapers	28	60.9%	18	39.1%
Weekly Newspapers	126	57.0%	95	43.0%
Other Media	20	58.8%	14	41.2%
Total	312	64.7%	170	35.3%

TABLE E-12

Respondents Requesting Background Information or Publications with Press Releases

Type of Media	Should background information be included? Yes N	Yes Percentage	No N	No Percentage
Radio Stations	117	76.5%	36	23.5%
Television Stations	26	96.3%	1	3.7%
Daily Newspapers	41	89.1%	5	10.9%
Weekly Newspapers	185	83.3%	37	16.7%
Other Media	30	90.9%	3	9.1%
Total	399	83.0%	82	17.0%

TABLE E-13

Did Respondents Request Specific Energy Information?

Yes		No	
N	Percentage	N	Percentage
211	42.0%	291	58.0%

TABLE E-14

Did Respondents Request a Sample Package of Energy Information?

Yes		No	
N	Percentage	N	Percentage
470	93.6%	32	6.4%

TABLE E-15

Energy Information Sources Named

Sources Named	First Source N	First Source Percentage	Second Source N	Second Source Percentage	Third Source N	Third Source Percentage
Mail, Other Source	33	6.6%	26	5.2%	8	1.6%
Utilities	78	15.5%	61	12.2%	19	3.8%
U.S DOE	52	10.4%	34	6.8%	7	1.4%
Energy Admin.	31	6.2%	9	1.8%	7	1.4%
CES	27	5.4%	21	4.2%	5	1.0%
Other State Agency	13	2.6%	12	2.4%	5	1.0%
Univ. or Coll.	18	3.6%	9	1.8%	7	1.4%
Energy Corp.	1	0.2%	6	1.2%	0	0.0%
Other News Media	70	13.9%	40	8.0%	8	1.6%
Local Source	69	13.7%	39	7.8%	17	3.4%
Blank: No Source	110	21.9%	245	48.8%	419	83.5%
Total*	502	100.0%	502	100.2%	502	100.1%

* Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

TABLE E-16

Comparison of Media Type to Sources of Energy Information

Sources Named	Type of Media: Radio (n=154) N (%)	TV (n=29) N (%)	Daily Papers (n=46) N (%)	Weekly Papers (n=230) N (%)	Other Media (n=43) N (%)	Total (n=502) N (%)
Mail, Other Source	14(9.1%)	4(13.8%)	8(17.4%)	37(16.1%)	4(9.3%)	67(13.3%)
Utilities	46(29.9%)	8(27.6%)	18(39.1%)	80(34.8%)	6(14.0%)	158(31.5%)
U.S DOE	50(32.5%)	7(24.1%)	9(19.6%)	21(9.1%)	6(14.0%)	93(18.5%)
Energy Admin.	5(3.2%)	2(6.9%)	5(10.9%)	34(14.8%)	1(2.3%)	47(9.4%)
CES	20(13.0%)	2(6.9%)	6(13.0%)	18(7.8%)	7(16.3%)	53(10.6%)
Other State Agency	9(5.8%)	3(10.3%)	6(13.0%)	10(4.3%)	2(4.7%)	30(6.0%)
Univ. or Coll.	12(7.8%)	1(3.4%)	6(13.0%)	11(4.8%)	4(9.3%)	34(6.8%)
Energy Corp.	2(1.3%)	3(10.3%)	1(2.2%)	4(1.7%)	3(7.0%)	13(2.6%)
Other News Media	73(47.4%)	8(27.6%)	9(19.6%)	23(10.0%)	5(11.6%)	118(23.5%)
Local Source	32(20.8%)	11(37.9%)	16(34.8%)	56(24.3%)	10(23.3%)	125(24.9%)
Blank: No Source	199(129.2)	38(131.0%)	54(117.4%)	396(172.2%)	81(188.4%)	768(153.0%)

Totals equal 300% since each outlet was allotted three possible responses.

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