

## NEWS

### OF ENERGY

#### The Nuclear Promise

As the events of 1979 settle into history, the promise of nuclear energy has never been in sharper focus.

"Even with the dramatic problems we faced and overcame this year," says Carl Walske, president of the Atomic Industrial Forum, "an international trade association interested in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy." "I believe—from what I see in the polls—that a clear majority of the public still appreciates nuclear's considerable benefits in a world of limited energy options."



Walske has reason to be optimistic: Nuclear electricity, which accounted for 13 percent of our electricity in 1978, has been cheaper than that produced by oil or coal: the average total cost to produce a kilowatt-hour in 1978 was 1.5 cents for nuclear, 2.3 cents for coal, and 4.0 cents for oil.

But there is another way to read nuclear's performance, Walske points out. "Without nuclear power, the U.S. last year might have had to burn an additional 470-million barrels of oil to make electricity. This amount of oil could be converted into at least 12-billion gallons of gasoline—a year's supply for 17 million automobiles—or enough heating oil for 15-million American homes. With nuclear energy helping our country to save oil, we come that much closer to energy independence.

"It's obvious, then, that nuclear energy is alive and well," Walske adds, noting that, of all the electric-power plants now under construction or on order, nuclear accounts for more kilowatts than does coal. "I think 1979 will be remembered as the end of the beginning for nuclear power—the year when we matured and set the stage for vigorous new growth in this essential energy sector," Walske concludes.

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