

Nuclear power advocate undaunted by near disaster — in Pennsylvania

The near disaster at the Three Mile Island nuclear facility will have been all for the best if it makes Americans realize the seriousness of the energy dilemma we face.

That's the opinion of Dr. Herman Koenig, director of the Michigan State University Center for Environmental Quality and a proponent of nuclear power development. Koenig said the Pennsylvania incident provides a great opportunity to focus on the inevitable changes that decreasing energy supplies must bring about, and to consider soberly the choices we must make.

Whether America will continue to develop nuclear energy is one of these choices.

"WHAT HAPPENED in Pennsylvania has put the opponents of nuclear energy in their best position ever to halt the development of nuclear energy," Koenig says.

"But the American people and our energy policy makers have to look past the hysteria of the moment and balance the risks of developing nuclear energy against the consequences of not developing it."

Even with full development of nuclear energy, the U.S. will be able to provide for only a one to 1½ percent increase in energy consumption by the year 2000, he says. In the face of a 1½ to two percent increase in population, this will mean an actual — though small — reduction in per capita energy consumption.

Without nuclear energy, we would have to reduce our energy consumption by nearly one percent per year. Though possible in principle, such a reduction

Women's Econ club to meet

The luncheon meeting at 11:45 a.m. Tuesday, April 24, of the Women's Economic Club in Cobo Hall features Melvin A. Glasser, director, UAW social security department.

His topic will be "Meeting America's Health Needs—A Present Imperative." Reservations for members and guests can be made by calling the WEC office at 963-6088.

in the short time available is likely to create extensive social and economic disruptions, Koenig says.

"Changes in lifestyle and attitude are inevitable," he says, "and the problems of managing the shift to a less energy-intensive lifestyle are formidable. We're going to have to do it, but time is the critical factor. The longer we have to make these adjustments, the less disruptive they will be, socially and economically."

DEVELOPMENT of nuclear energy would give us a little breathing room, he says, which would help make the transition to a more thrifty lifestyle somewhat easier.

"But if we decide we don't want to run the risks of nuclear energy, we had better be prepared to make some very

sweeping social and economic adaptations very rapidly," Koenig advises.

Our whole economy rests on an industrial base that depends on concentrated energy sources and a vast transportation system to move raw materials and finished products, Koenig says. For decades, the country has counted on expanded production as a means of providing employment.

"Part of the adjustment that has to take place is a movement away from the American interest in large cars and travel," he says.

"We need to decide to heat only parts of our homes and to keep our durable goods longer. We also need to diversify our communities so that we can live close to where we work and shop close to where we live."

"We need to reduce the length of the

food chain by producing food closer to where it's consumed. We need to develop public transportation, which is more efficient and should be cheaper than individual transportation."

We can live on less energy without decreasing our standard of living, he insists. In fact, we have lived on less: Per capita energy consumption 25 years ago was only half what it is today.

To reduce energy consumption, Koenig says, people will have to accept the idea of working harder for less as the cost of energy compared to labor goes up and salaries no longer automatically rise to keep pace with it and with the rising cost of material products like automobiles. To insist on that would be to make inflation just that much worse.

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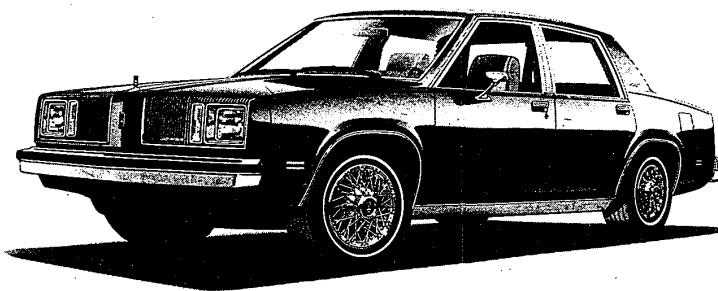
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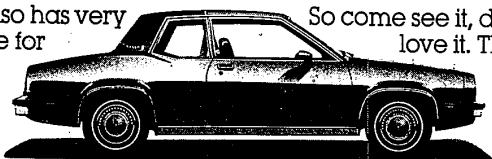
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