

# Saving energy saves state business

By Penny Wright  
special writer

Michigan's economic future is linked to the amount of energy commercial and industrial enterprises consume, says Doug Ross, director of the Michigan Department of Commerce.

"Michigan is in a life and death struggle for economic survival in world markets," Ross told a gathering of energy professionals in Ann Arbor last week.

"Energy use in businesses of all sizes will determine whether the state can stay competitive."

ROSS, a Southfield resident and former state senator from Oakland County, cited the machine tool industry as a situation in which energy costs influence the state's competitive position.

"We have combined manufacturing and information processing sys-

tems to the point where we can produce customized products and meet quality standards. We could be wealthier than before."

"The trouble is the Japanese and western Europeans have also found this new technology."

ROSS NOTED that by using less energy for industrial and commercial operations, Michigan products can stay competitively priced with other countries.

"When we compare the energy costs of our Italian, German, and Japanese competitors, we find their cost per unit of energy is higher, but they use less units."

Ross said businesses must develop a new sense of urgency about energy costs.

"Too many people in the state think we are in good shape energetically. We are going to stay competitive worldwide by consuming less energy. In three to five years we

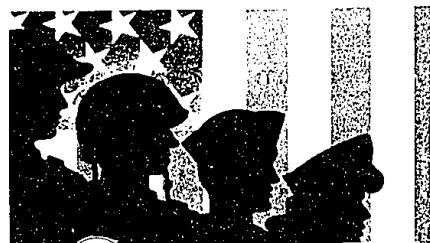
could be out of the competition if we fail to find ways of using energy more efficiently," he said.

THE COMMERCE Department's focus in the coming months will be to alert businesses and manufacturers about the urgency of reducing energy usage, said Ross.

Plans for the coming year may include extending programs to help small manufacturers reduce operating costs.



Doug Ross  
keep state competitive



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