

Energy in Briefs explain important energy topics in plain language. Each Brief answers a question relevant to the public and recommends resources for further reading. Please use the tools to the right to give us feedback, share with others, or sign up for notices as new Briefs are released.



June 17, 2008

What are natural gas customer choice programs?

Customer choice programs let households and small commercial establishments purchase natural gas from someone other than their traditional utility company. However, utility companies still deliver the natural gas to consumers.



June 11, 2008

Is U.S. natural gas production increasing?

Natural gas production in the Lower 48 States has seen a large upward shift. After 9 years of no net growth through 2006, an upward trend began that generated 3% growth between first-quarter 2006 and first-quarter 2007, followed by an exceptionally large 9% increase between first-quarter 2007 and first-quarter 2008.



May 9, 2008

How is my electricity generated, delivered, and priced?

Many technologies and fuels are used to generate electricity at power plants, which is then delivered to consumers through a complex network of lines and equipment known as the "grid." The price that consumers pay for electricity is determined by weather factors, fuel costs, consumer demand, and regulations.



May 1, 2008

How dependent are we on foreign oil?

The United States imported about 60% of the oil we consumed during 2006. About half of these imports came from the Western Hemisphere. Our dependence on foreign oil is expected to decline in the next two decades.



May 1, 2008

How much renewable energy do we use?

Americans used renewable energy sources--water (hydroelectric), geothermal, wind, sun (solar), and biomass--to meet about 7% of our total energy needs in 2006.



May 1, 2008

What are greenhouse gases and how much are emitted by the United States?

Greenhouse gases trap heat from the sun and warm the planet's surface. Of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, 87% are related to energy consumption. Since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions in the United States have grown by about 1% per year. In 2005, about 21% of the world's total energy-related carbon dioxide was emitted by the United States.



May 1, 2008

What is liquefied natural gas (LNG) and how is it becoming an energy source for the United States?

The United States imports about 16% of the natural gas we consume. Most of these imports are delivered by pipeline (from Canada). But a growing volume of natural gas is coming to the United States in liquid form from overseas. With the demand for natural gas expected to increase, it's likely that U.S. imports of LNG also will need to increase.