

## **What Is the #1 Concern of Most U.S. Citizens Today?**

Jobs – Jobs – and more Jobs. What are the choices that cooperatives have for future power? Coal – Gas – Wind. There have been lots of wild estimates of how many green jobs can be created in this country. I don't know if these "estimates" are accurate or not. I do know how many coal, wind, and gas jobs we have attached to our cooperatives here in Missouri. Let's look at the facts.

Fact: There are about 632 permanent jobs attached to Associated Electric Cooperatives coal operations.

Fact: There are about 20 permanent jobs attached to Associated Electric Cooperatives Missouri wind purchases.

Wait a minute – I thought there were 1,000s of wind jobs attached to wind farms in Missouri? Well, there are many construction jobs when the wind turbines are being built, and they are good jobs. But once the wind farm is completed, and the construction jobs move on to some other state, you'll find about 20 permanent jobs for a typical 150 MW wind farm.

Here's a rule of thumb to consider, when comparing coal to wind on a MW basis, large wind projects provide roughly half the jobs, at half the pay, providing electricity half the time, (this is generous) at double the cost to consumers – not counting the additional dollars that consumers pay through their taxes for wind subsidies.

Well, what about gas plants? Fact: There are about 60 permanent jobs attached to Associated Electric Cooperatives 2400 MW gas operations.

Now consider this, Noranda Aluminum, in the boothill, receives power from Ameren UE. Last time I checked, Noranda Aluminum employs about 1,600 people. Their very survival depends on cheap electricity. Take away cheap power and 1,600 jobs go south. That's just one business. Statewide, how many jobs will be lost if Associated Electric (and all Missouri utilities) are forced to substantially raise the cost of power to small and large businesses? Whether it's through Cap & Trade, or through EPA mandates, that is what Missouri utilities face. Other countries are waiting at the border for this self inflicted purging of U.S. jobs. If we are serious about increasing our exports in this country, we need to hang on to our cheap power, so our businesses can be competitive with other country's cheap labor.

Since intermittent wind cannot be counted on for base load, cooperatives have traditionally used coal and have offered businesses some of the cheapest power in the country and the world. But with these EPA and legislative threats, it appears that our base load will shift to gas which has extreme fluctuations in price. And as you can see, the jobs in Missouri attached to our gas plants are minimal (60), even though we have as many MW capacity in gas as we do in coal.

So what do you want? 632 high paying coal jobs producing energy using the latest proven clean coal technology at a cheap price, or 20 moderate paying wind jobs producing energy at a higher price, or 60 moderate to high paying gas jobs producing energy at fluctuating prices? If these high tech clean coal jobs disappear, what ripple effect will that have in our community? (Remember how devastating it was when the Thomas Hill mine closed?) If electricity prices skyrocket, and small and large businesses are forced to cut costs by laying off employees in our communities, what ripple effect will THAT have in our communities?

To me, the good green jobs are high tech clean coal jobs (which have made huge environmental improvements in the last 20 years) and which provide lots of green dollars to local communities. And by keeping electricity prices low for businesses, those businesses also provide lots of those green dollars to our local communities. That's the kind of green that keeps our standard of living high, which in turn helps us live longer. Now that's what I call a "healthy" environment, improved clean coal technology, creating lots of green jobs, putting lots of greenbacks in our community for a cheap price.

There's no doubt that wind and gas play a very important role in our total energy picture and I am grateful to those who invest in and keep these options before us.

But at this place in time, with our economy struggling and jobs disappearing, and costs to small businesses rising – if our politicians are serious about jobs created by utilities, if they are serious about keeping costs low to businesses in America who create jobs, if they are serious about increasing exports, they will reconsider coal's place in our economy and they will fight against the stated comments of some to "bankrupt the coal industry" through the EPA.