

# Gas may fulfill energy needs

By Donna Sisson

Future natural gas use will increase more than ever before, said a speaker Monday at the UNL geology department.

Richard Wyman, director of research at Canadian Hunter Exploration Ltd. in Alberta, Canada, said energy sources have evolved through history: coal replaced wood, oil replaced coal, and now natural gas—which has yet to reach its peak—will replace oil.

Wyman, whose lecture is sponsored by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, is the first AAPG speaker of the semester. AAPG is the largest geological society in the world and usually sponsors two or three speakers per semester at UNL, said Samuel Treves, chairman of the geology department.

Wyman outlines two sides of the natural gas question: supply and demand. The potential supplies of natural gas are enormous, Wyman said.

Currently, there are 10,000 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of proven conventional natural gas reserves, he said. Of this, the world uses 17-20 TCF per year. Nebraska consumes .128 TCF of natural gas annually, Wyman said.

Other gas reserves are tied up in non-conventional forms, Wyman said. Two non-conventional forms with which geologists have worked are tight gas formations and coal seams, he said.

By the end of the century, Wyman said, tight gas formations could supply 10 TCF of gas. That means tight gas forms could provide half of the world's energy, he said.

Removing gas from coal seams involves extracting methane that the coal has absorbed, Wyman said. Typically, water is extracted from these basins which represent a great potential for the field of hydraulics, he said.

Other potential sources of natural gas are coal gassification, geopres-

sured aquifers, hydrates, peat aquifers and biomass. Totaled, these alternatives have the potential of producing 30,000 TCF of gas, Wyman said. When added to the conventional reserves available, a possible 41,000 TCF of natural gas could ultimately be recovered, he said.

Biomass is relatively undeveloped, Wyman said, but it is almost unlimited in supply. An example of biomass: garbage. Twelve thousand Los Angeles homes heat their gas from a garbage dump, he said.

"On the supply side, there is little to worry about," Wyman said. He said economics will determine how fast the gas will be tapped.

How much energy gets tapped depends on demand and the market side, Wyman said.

Future uses probably will include transportation, cogeneration, utilities and fuel cells, he said.

"Transportation is one area where we barely use natural gas but where it

has huge potential," Wyman said. "It is a good motor fuel because it is practical, safe, easy on the engine and lowers maintenance costs and pollution," he said.

Natural gas in transportation began in Italy in the 1920's, Wyman said. Wyman owns two cars that run on natural gas. He said it costs \$1,800 to convert each car, but they run for half the cost of regular gasoline.

"The talk of deregulating the industry is a bunch of politics," Wyman said. "It's already essentially deregulated because it competes with other energies. The producer who used to get \$9 for a million cubic feet is now lucky to get \$3."

"An understanding of how gas can replace other fuels along with an appreciation of the incredible resource base leads to a much brighter outlook for the world energy future than we imagined even a few years ago," Wyman said.

## Library looks for voluntary assistance

The Nebraska Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is recruiting volunteers to work with the blind and handicapped so they may have access to recorded books and magazines.

"We are always looking for new volunteers," said James Terry, volunteer services coordinator for the Nebraska Library Commission.

"We're just like any other library," Terry said. "The only difference is that all our books are either on record or cassette or published in large print or braille."

Of the 4,000 people using the library, about 20 percent are UNL students, Terry said. Interested students can call 471-2045 for more information.

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