

EIA 2008 Energy Conference: 30 years of Energy Information and Analysis
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President Jimmy Carter: I've just signed an executive order that will activate the new Department of Energy on October 1st. The creation of a Department of Energy is an important step toward dealing with our energy problems. It will give a clear direction and focus to our energy future by providing the framework for carrying out a comprehensive and balanced national energy plan. This will help the public and private sectors as they work together to bring energy supply and demand back into balance both now and in the years ahead. I wish Jim Schlesinger and all those who will be working with him the best of luck in the difficult job they face.

Scott Sitzer (EIA, 1977 - Present): It was a very interesting time for those of us who were there. There were no rules so we had to make our own way and figure out what people needed and try to come up with it.

Mark Gielecki (EIA, 1983 - Present): It was a very exciting place and time because everything was new. We were, on the fly, coming up with new surveys, new processes, new models, and we had a lot of very... it was almost like, you've heard the NASA expression, "can do," well we had those kind of people here at EIA then.

Susan Holte (EIA, 1977 - Present): All of us were personally experiencing the same thing - gas lines and the rapidly escalating prices and the feeling that, you know, somehow, we could try and really do something about it, was really energizing and believe me, there were a lot, many, many long hours put in by people, I mean literally, all nighters, because we felt like we had a job to do.

William Jeffers (EIA, 1984 - Present): Energy information and data have always been crucial for the economy, particularly when the energy markets began to be deregulated during the 1980's.

President Ronald Reagan: De-control unleashed the competitive powers of the marketplace and gave us more supply, more conservation and lower prices.

Diane Duval (Northeast Midwest Institute): Probably the major tenet of our national energy policy is to allow markets to work. We really rely on markets to sort of balance the supply and demand of products and what that means is that the markets, to be really efficient, need EIA's data.

President Ronald Reagan: There is magic in the free marketplace – and it works.

William Jeffers (EIA, 1984 - Present): For 30 years, EIA has been committed to collection and analysis and interpretation of trustworthy energy data.

Dwight French (EIA, 1980 -Present): The first consumption survey that started was the Residential one that was actually an outgrowth of things that happened before EIA and the Department of Energy were formed. The consumption surveys have always been major input into our modeling effort, so they provide the historical background used to drive, in many ways, the NEMS models.

Frank Verrastro (Center for Strategic and International Studies): It's a trite saying that, you know, good policy comes from good analysis, but good analysis has to be grounded in good data...you have to get the first step right.

John Conti (EIA, 1980, 1992 and 2002 - Present): Modeling depends on, sort of, three different aspects: one, it depends on the data that's available, two, it depends on the issues that have to be addressed, and three, it depends on our understanding of the energy market we're trying to represent.

Susan Holte (EIA, 1977 - Present): If all we wanted to do was projections, you could get away with a much simpler model. When you come in with some of the, let's look at the impact of tightening the sulfur content of, you know, diesel fuel, you need a very, very detailed model to try and address that.

John Conti (EIA, 1980, 1992 and 2002 - Present): In the end of the 1980's, EIA played a, key role in the establishment of the Clean Air Act of 1990. EIA worked with the Environmental Protection Agency and members on the Hill to try and understand what the impact of different allowance schemes would have.

Sam Napolitano (Environmental Protection Agency): To take the framework that Congress gave us and implement regulations within in five years from 1990-1995, we relied, fundamentally on a lot of EIA data collected on the generation rates and in particular, heat input.

William Jeffers (EIA, 1984 - Present): NEMS, over the years, has been a critical tool that we've used for a host of complex policy initiatives.

President Bill Clinton: When the nations of the world meet in December in Kyoto, Japan, we must be prepared to commit to realistic and binding goals on our emissions of greenhouse gases.

William Jeffers (EIA, 1984 - Present): In addition, EIA modeling efforts are focused on projections of short-, long-term and international energy markets.

Rich Glick (PPM Energy, Inc.): It's very helpful to actually have an independent voice within the administration that actually can say this is what we think is going to happen. We don't have a dog in this fight and at the same time we believe we have the best information available.

William Jeffers (EIA, 1984 - Present): Since it's inception, EIA has been called upon to provide reliable information to policymakers and market participants during times of international crises.

President George Bush: At my direction, elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, as well as key units of the United States Air Force, are arriving today, to take up defensive positions in Saudi Arabia.

Mike Grillot (EIA, 1978 - Present): Things happened very quickly here, people got together, did a lot of analysis very quickly, of the situation in the previous oil disruptions and then started putting out an energy situation analysis report which came out every day... you have to remember it was the period before the Internet and those kinds of things, where you had information readily available, so EIA was, it was critical that we were getting that stuff out.

Erik Kreil (EIA, 1978 - Present): The question for us is at what time do we respond and how do we respond, when does the disruption become severe enough that we need to prepare an assessment and we usually get guidance from that from the Secretary or Congress.

William Jeffers (EIA, 1984 - Present): Domestic crises are no different; for example, when hurricanes Rita and Katrina crippled the nation's oil and gas production infrastructure, the EIA responded with timely information about the status of supplies.

James Hart (U.S. Department of Energy): Hurricane Katrina hit on a Sunday; by Monday, we were talking to the International Energy Agency about the possibility that we might have to institute a response measures, you know, add oil to the market. And IEA was looking to EIA, to tell them, what can we expect in the Gulf?

Alan Hegburg (U.S. Department of Energy): EIA data is essential because it's the analytical basis for the current market and the foreign market, both the short, medium and the longer-term, and if you're in the industry or you're in government, that information, and the way it's put together and the way it is presented is absolutely essential.

Frank Verrastro (Center for Strategic and International Studies): The markets have changed, the players have changed, the rules have changed and the data has changed and become more important.

Bill Trappman (EIA, 1978 - Present): The market does seem to react as, sometimes quite robustly, with respect to the information that we put out.

Adam Sieminski (Deutsche Bank): Everybody on Wall Street is very keen to try to figure out what's going to happen next week or next year. Without having a good database of good information to start with, it's hopeless; it's hard enough as it is, but it would be hopeless without the data from the EIA.

Mike Grillot (EIA, 1978 - Present): I think it's important that you have people who are passionate about what they, they, they really get involved in what they are doing. Not everybody has to be that way. Some people have to be sort of dispassionate and they just crank out numbers, but other people have to be able to, kind of, get a, have a real sense that this is part of their life and I think that's helped EIA in the past.

Dwight French (EIA, 1980 - Present): People are going to have more and more concern about energy and how they are going to be able to use it and what they are going to have to pay for it, and EIA is going to have to respond to that.

Bill Underwood (EIA, 2002 – Present): EIA will have to leverage technology to keep pace with our customers.

Susan Holte (EIA, 1977 - Present): Climate issues are very, ah, important right now, I think they're going to be important for the next few years, but we always have to be looking ahead and thinking what might the next major topics be?

Gina Pearson (EIA, 2006 – Present): There's a lot more that we can do to improve our delivery of the data, to make it more flexible, more accessible, more available for customers to use when they want it, how they want it.

Mark Friedrichs (U.S. Department of Energy): I think actually some of the feelings, that we experienced during the 70's I see in parts of the DOE organization now.

Bob Schnapp (EIA, 1977 - Present): It took a number of years for everybody in the government to agree that EIA's data was the energy data, because when we first started, energy data was being produced all over town, and so it took, I would say, four or five years for that agreement to be reached, and then everybody else, over time, stopped collecting data, and everybody really does use EIA data now. Sometimes they refer to us as the Department of Energy, but we like to be called EIA.

James Hart (U.S. Department of Energy): In my view, giants roam the halls of EIA. These are the best people in the world.

Mark Finley (BP, Inc.): As I travel around the world, I find that EIA is the gold standard of energy information and analysis.

Kathleen Deutsch (U.S. Department of Energy): The beauty of EIA is the integrity. I think the organization has absolute integrity...the people and the numbers.

Mark Finley (BP, Inc.): We use almost everything that EIA does, and it informs the entire spectrum of work that we do in covering global energy markets within BP.

Mark Friedrichs (U.S. Department of Energy): It's absolutely vital that we are able to refer to EIA as an authority on energy data, energy forecasts, and maintaining that independence is really quite important.

Karen Billups (U.S. Senate Energy Committee): EIA serves a very important function to us in that it's an entity that can collect the data, be an independent 3rd party, give some reassurance to the participants in the market.

Tara Billingsley (U.S. Senate Energy Committee): When people want an impartial answer, when they want to know they're getting the facts and, they're not, and the facts aren't being spun, they go to EIA.

Adam Sieminski (Deutsche Bank): Happy Birthday EIA
Frank Verrastro: And congratulations