



Nuclear Energy Answers to Questions

U.S. Department of Energy, Science, and Technology Office of Nuclear Energy, U.S. Government, D. Kvasnicka

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Introduction

When Thomas Edison and his colleagues perfected the light bulb in 1879, they could not foresee the many ways their invention would improve civilization. But now electricity allows us to heat, cool, and light our homes. It enables us to cook meals, watch television, and listen to music. It powers computers for our homes and businesses and makes modern medical diagnosis and treatment possible. Electricity allows us to explore the vastness of space and to study the tiniest molecules.

Since 1982, nuclear energy has been second only to coal as an energy source for production of electricity in the United States. It surpasses oil, natural gas, and hydroelectric power. Today, over 100 nuclear power plants produce about 21 percent of all the electricity generated in the U.S. Although various new energy technologies hold promise for the future, coal and nuclear energy are the two energy sources most capable of meeting the growing electrical needs of the U.S. in the next few years.

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about nuclear energy. The answers may help you to better understand this source of electricity.

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