



Alternative energy sources provide powerful choices

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Record high prices are fueling discussions of alternative energy sources, and with good reason. If the world keeps consuming this much oil and natural gas, petroleum resources will run out by the end of the century. We need to look to the future and to the world our children and the generations to come will inherit.

Some forms of alternative energy are available now. One of these is solar power which is one of the more popular choices, possibly because this source of power is essentially free after the initial setup costs. The sun emits thermal energy that can be converted into electric energy. All that is required is installing a solar collection system, more commonly referred to as solar panels.

There are three different types of solar conversion systems. The first is known as a stand-alone system which is most commonly found in remote areas.

The second connects to a grid and is the most common one for urban and suburban living. The third is a back-up system for when power failures occur. Although this system can keep the most important systems working, a larger system is required to keep everything running during these failures.

This source of power has many positive aspects to it. Aside from the purchase of the solar panels, the energy is free and can cover up to 15% of electric costs. It does not require any fuel, does not produce any pollution, decreases greenhouse gas emissions and will last for decades.

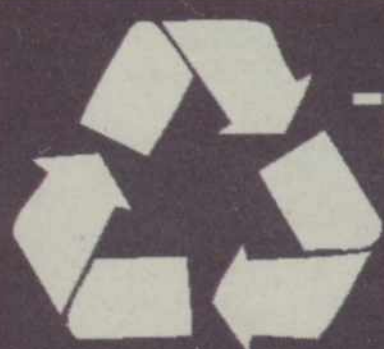
The cost of installing solar panels can be expensive, sometimes up to \$100,000 to convert a house to a total energy independent house off the grid. However, there are programs in Oregon that offer cash incentives of up to \$10,000 for converting to solar power. Oregon tax credits and federal tax incentives can cover up to 50% of the total cost of a

solar electric system.

Wind power is another alternative that does not produce any pollutants. Wind power is collected through windmills and converts the kinetic energy into mechanical power. This form of energy is most commonly used in farms, but can also be installed near households if set up properly.

Some of the positive aspects of this source are that it's safe, costs nothing aside from installation, and is inexhaustible. The main problem with wind generated power is that it can be very noisy and since they take up so much space, they are only efficient in rural locations. In addition, like solar panels, they are expensive to manufacture and produce. Having one installed can cost anywhere between \$6,000 to \$27,000.

"We need to be careful about quick fixes and know about the environmental cost before producing," Gary Eppelsheimer, former Environmental Science teacher, said.



\$20,000 = WLHS electric bill each month!

TOP TEN EASY WAYS TO GO Green

- 1 Unplug electronics when not in use (cell phones & iPod chargers).
- 2 Walk, bike, or take the bus.
- 3 Turn off your computer every night (and those at school, too).
- 4 Save water: take shorter showers, turn it off when you're not using it.
- 5 Eat locally and organically—ask your parents to buy organic.
- 6 Think about what you're buying. Do you need it? How is it packaged?
- 7 Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- 8 Plant a tree.
- 9 Don't buy another bottled water, **REFILL!**
- 10 If you drive, don't let your car idle.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Garbage trucks filled at WLHS each week:

