



## Efficiency with a hearty laugh

### Report addresses needs in western United States

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Don't let the haikus, sexual innuendo, and energy-efficiency tips to be sung to the tune of "My Favorite Things" fool you: Energy efficiency is serious business.

A new report, "The Westerner's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Conservation," was written by the University of Colorado's Center of the American West and Boulder conservation group Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, and is available free on both groups' Web sites. Though the subject matter is serious and wide-ranging, it generally reads like a witty essay.

Energy efficiency is one of the most powerful tools the West has to meet long-term energy needs, and it could save the construction of scores of power plants. But efficiency literature tends to be "something you pull out if you're having trouble falling asleep at night," said Mark Ruzzin, Boulder's mayor and a program associate with the energy-efficiency project.

The report was sparked in 2005 with a letter sent by Ruzzin and Howard Geller, the project's executive director, sent to Patricia Limerick, director of the Center of the American West. The center had recently published "What Every Westerner Should Know About Energy" and included nothing on energy efficiency.

Two years later, energy efficiency has its own report. Limerick said she was surprised at how something that saves money and makes a huge societal difference can get so little attention. So she decided to spice it up, starting with a romance metaphor.

"You have been involved in a tempestuous relationship, pursuing a mad romance with fossil fuel," the report says. Energy efficiency, in contrast, brings "financial gain, emotional satisfaction, physical comfort, and a license for smug self-congratulation."

The report contains such common-sense suggestions as turning off the lights when you leave a room, installing compact-fluorescent lights (which are four times more efficient than incandescents), taking public transit or walking, and low-flow shower heads.

It talks policy and big numbers, too, saying aggressive energy efficiency could "eliminate the need for 100 large new power plants, save consumers and businesses over \$50 billion net, and save approximately 1.8 billion gallons of water between 2006 and 2020."

It includes "The Limerick Pedestrian Plan," in which Limerick relates: "Walking has an astonishing capacity to trim off pounds while also clearing the mind, transporting the self to desired destinations, and conserving fossil-fuel-derived energy."

And the mysterious haiku: "Low flow shower heads/Display strengths in character/More sex will follow."

Ruzzin said the underlying message is serious: "We haven't gotten it into our minds that, if we reduce our energy use, it's the equivalent of some percentage of a power plant or a wind farm."

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