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## Survey shows support for renewable energy

### Oil, gas association questions accuracy

By Steve Raabe

Denver Post Business Writer

**Tuesday, February 18, 2003** - Coloradans prefer conservation and renewable energy over fossil-fuel generation by a wide margin, a new survey shows. By a 3-to-1 ratio, respondents said Colorado should meet its growing demand for electricity through energy efficiency measures rather than generation of more power.

The survey, by the Wells Fargo Public Opinion Research Program at the University of Colorado at Denver, showed that residents would prefer new electrical generation from renewable sources such as wind, solar and hydropower instead of coal and natural gas.

"These are striking results," said Peggy Cuciti, director of the polling program, noting that 82 percent of respondents said utilities should focus on renewables. "We don't usually see 82 percent (responses)," Cuciti said. "Opinion is usually somewhat more divided, and usually we will see various groups expressing opposition." But in the new survey, she said, all age groups, political parties and regions of the state showed a strong preference for renewables over fossil fuels.

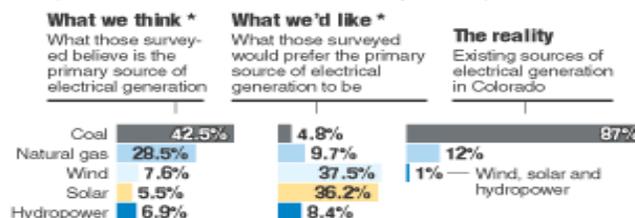
Greg Schnacke, executive vice president of the Colorado Oil and Gas Association, said he had concerns about the survey's methodology and accuracy. "It's designed to push a rosy scenario without any semblance of market reality," he said. "This is a veritable 'free lunch' poll."

Cuciti said the survey used scientific sampling to interview 602 registered voters in Colorado. She said the poll has a margin of error of 4.1 percentage points. A bill in the Colorado legislature would require investor-owned utilities such as Xcel Energy to produce a portion of their electricity from renewable sources.

Survey respondents were aware that most of Colorado's electricity is produced from coal, although they said coal is the fuel source they would least prefer to have used in power generation. Wind was cited by 37.5 percent of the participants as the preferred method of generating power. Solar was second at 36.2 percent, followed by natural gas, 9.7 percent; hydropower, 8.4 percent; and coal, 4.8 percent. Participants rated coal as the best fuel for reliability and affordability but gave it the worst rating for environmental protection.

#### Power generation preference

Colorado consumers know that most of their electricity is generated from coal. Their preference would be more wind- and solar-generated power.



\*Numbers don't add up to 100 because some survey respondents said they didn't know. Source: Wells Fargo Public Opinion Research Program, University of Colorado at Denver

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