

Electric car industry has no funds to run on

United Press International
OKLAHOMA CITY — Saying he is tired of the Department of Energy's "no action attitude," the president of an electric car manufacturing company has asked Congress to demand an accounting of the DOE's handling of funding for alternate energy sources.

Pat Jacobs, president of MJ Electronics Corp., sent a telegram to each member of Congress harshly criticizing the DOE.

Jacobs' firm, one of several developing electric-powered vehicles, has applied for \$4 million in federal funds. The DOE is processing paperwork authorizing \$700,000 for MJ, but the funding has been caught up in red tape for six months.

JMJ Vice President Phil Lyon

is convinced there is "someone in the Department of Energy that wants to see it (electric car concept) fail."

Lyon said Tuesday he has talked with representatives of six other electric car manufacturers in the United States and all have had the same difficulty.

He said MJ, which has been working on the electric vehicle for more than a year, has received \$10,000 in federal money.

Research and development on the electric car costs an "enormous amount" of money, Lyon said, and the DOE's failure to expedite funding has slowed the process.

JMJ is turning out an average of one car per week and it should be producing 100 cars a day, he said.

In a telegram sent to the more than 400 members of Congress,

Jacobs said his firm is weary of the "total inadequacy, waste and basic ignorance of the Department of Energy."

"We are tired of spending more than 50 percent of our company's time and money to help solve this nation's energy crisis," Jacobs wrote.

"Had the Department of Energy acted in an expedient manner two years ago to support the electric vehicle industry, we would today be saving thousands of barrels of oil," Jacobs said.

The company purchases small car bodies from Chrysler and equips them with motors powered by several large batteries.

"Two years ago they (DOE) said they wanted to help small industry develop the electric car," Lyon said. "We want them (cars) on the street."

Carter eyes nuclear waste plan

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Carter Tuesday asked Congress for authority to establish the nation's first comprehensive radioactive waste management program, saying it is needed "to protect the health and safety of all Americans."

In a special message to Congress, Carter requested a go-ahead to purchase a permanent disposal site for dangerous radioactive waste in some geological underground area and a storage pool for burned-out nuclear fuel.

"Our citizens have a deep concern that the beneficial uses of nuclear technology — including the generation of electricity — not be allowed to imperil public health or safety now or in the future," Carter said.

Carter said he will select by 1985 at least one permanent repository for high-level radioactive wastes from among 11 potential sites and have it operational by the mid-1990s.

Carter also proposed a repository for spent nuclear fuel by 1983, and for legislation by 1981 allowing the

government to buy at least one site away from reactors for storing spent fuel now accumulating at reactors.

Possible sites for this facility are Barnwell, S.C., Morris, Ill., and West Valley, N.Y., officials disclosed.

Carter said he is establishing a State Planning Council. It will have 19 members.

Nuclear wastes are extremely dangerous because overexposure to

them can cause cancer and other biological damage.

Administration officials said that among the 11 sites under consideration for a waste depository are the Nevada test site where underground nuclear weapons tests are now conducted; the Hanford, Wash., site where military nuclear wastes are currently kept and eight underground salt domes in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

Tumbleweeds could solve energy problem, prof says

United Press International
EL PASO — The answer to the nation's energy woes could be tumbling along with the tumbling tumbleweed, one researcher says.

Dr. Garry Hawkins, an assistant engineering professor at the University of Texas-El Paso, says the lowly tumbleweed, trash dumps and old-fashioned stills may offer a cheaper solution to the gasoline shortage than gasoline made from corn and other expensive farm crops.

Hawkins said tumbleweeds, discarded wood, food wastes, paper and a number of other materials buried at local dumps can be converted into ethanol using technology similar to that used by bootleggers to foil the revenuers.

Ethanol, the same type of alcohol found at a neighborhood tavern, can be mixed with gasoline to make gasohol, and at a lower price than ethanol produced from corn, sugar cane or other such cash crops, Hawkins said.

Hawkins is heading a group of UTEP researchers who want to tap local vegetation and other resources for use in an El Paso ethanol manufacturing plant.

The researchers already have tested the idea on a farm near Marfa, Texas. The farmer wanted to clear brush and tumbleweeds from about 250 acres he planned to cultivate.

Rather than burn the weeds and brush and pollute the air, Hawkins said the farmer purchased equipment for his group to use for grinding up the weeds and brush, for extracting sugar from the plant material and for the still which makes alcohol out of plant sugar.

"Really, what we wanted to do is show people how easy it is to make the alcohol," Hawkins said. "It's an immediate solution to the problem, not something that's 500 research projects down the road."

The researcher said he opposes using corn to make gasohol because it is a food staple and Americans ultimately might be forced to choose between driving less or eating less.

"That is going to do nothing but drive the price (of gasohol) right up," he said.

This arid West Texas area has little corn, but it does have a bountiful supply of tumbleweeds which heretofore have been in zero demand and require little water to grow.

Hawkins suggests wild tumbleweeds and waste materials can be turned into ethanol at roughly half the current \$1.60 a gallon cost for ethanol produced from corn.

823 tons of trash is dumped at El Paso landfills each working day and Hawkins estimates about one third of the trash contains cellulose, the key to making alcohol.

The scientist projected that 10,473 gallons of ethanol could be produced from the daily load of trash and is attempting to locate about \$50,000 in research funds to join with the city in starting an alcohol demonstration plant.

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