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ENERGY RESOURCES CENTER

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ENERGY RESOURCES CENTER

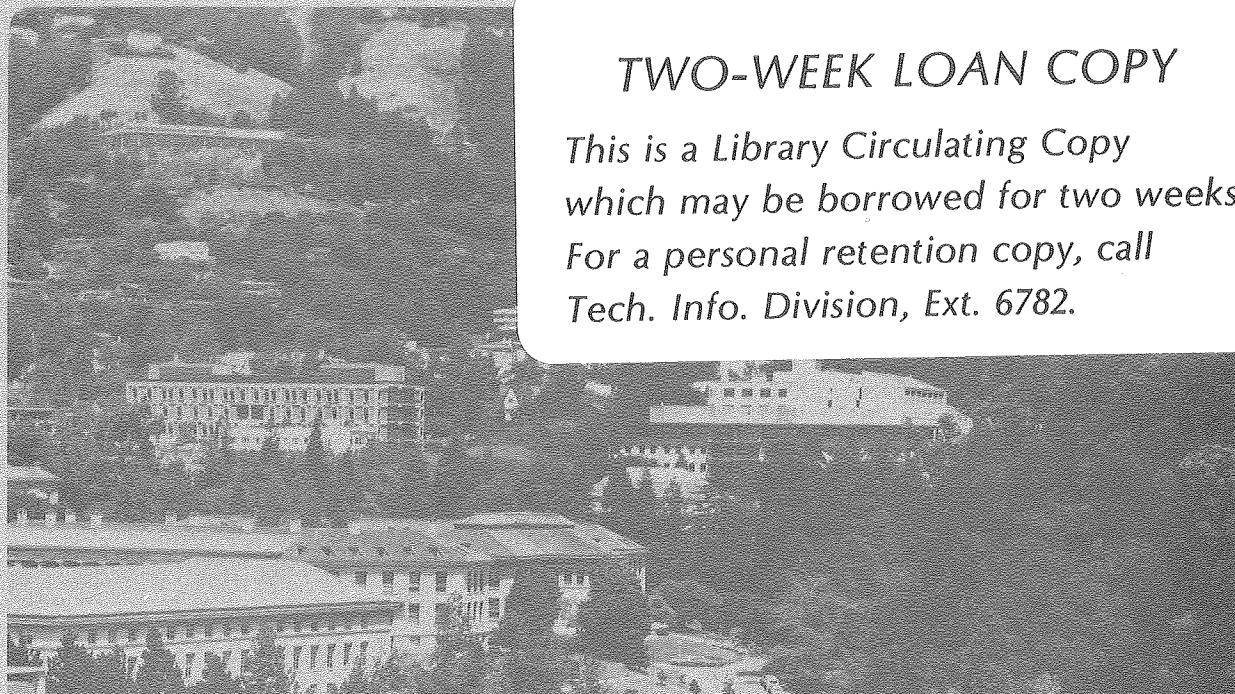
Virginia Sternberg

November 1979

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LBL-10426

ENERGY RESOURCES CENTER

Virginia Sternberg

November 1979

ENERGY RESOURCES CENTER

I would like to add my welcome to San Francisco to all of you. And before I tell you about the Center I want to invite you to visit it on the fourth floor of this building before you leave today. You can then see for yourself some of the resources I will mention in my presentation.

First I will give a short history of this Center which has had three names and three moves (and one more in the offing) in three years. Then I will tell you about the accomplishments made in the past year. And last, I will discuss what has been learned and what is planned for the future.

HISTORY

The Energy and Environment Information Center (EEIC), as it was first known, was organized in August 1975 in San Francisco as a cooperative venture by the Federal Energy Administration (FEA), Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

These three agencies planned this effort to assist the public in obtaining information about energy and the environmental aspects of energy. The Public Affairs Offices of FEA, ERDA and EPA initiated the idea of the Center. One member from each agency worked at the Center, with assistance from the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory Information Research Group (LBL IRG) and with on-site help from the EPA Library. The Center was set up in a corner of the EPA Library.

FEA and ERDA each contributed one staff member on a rotating basis to cover the daily operation of the Center and money for books and periodicals. EPA contributed space, staff time for ordering, processing and indexing

publications, and additional money for acquisitions. The LBL Information Research Group received funds from ERDA on a 189 FY 1976 research project to assist in the development of the Center as a model for future energy centers.

For the first two years the EPA Library and staff were the backbone of the Center, routinely supplying documents, books and indexes and even reference assistance when the Center's staff was absent.

The LBL Information Research Group prepared, via the RECON computerized Energy Information Data Base (EDB), 20 basic literature searches in the field of energy for distribution by the Center. The LBL staff also trained the EEIC staff members in the techniques of dial-up and searching of the RECON data bases.

Records were kept of the workload in the Center. The peak was the period after November 1976 when an article appeared in Sunset magazine stating that the Center had a Solar Energy Packet available free of charge. Approximately 2000 requests for the packet were filled. Most of the requests came from the general public. The packet had been prepared by the California Energy Resources and Development Committee (now California Energy Commission) and was also available from their Publications Office.

A review of the Center was conducted after a year and plans for its operation in 1977 were developed.

It was at this time that the General Services Administration (GSA) decided to move EPA out of the central business district to less expensive quarters. At about the same time FEA and ERDA were merged into the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE). In view of these two developments it was decided

to discontinue the association with EPA and to continue as the Energy Information Center (the Center's second name), sponsored by DOE. Plans were made to move it to a storefront space in a central location. GSA was requested to locate space and arrange for the move. Because GSA had not found space by the time EPA moved, there was no alternative but to move the Center along with EPA.

Staff turnover also affected the Center. The ERDA staff member transferred to a field office in November 1978. To fill that vacancy, Norma DelGaudio was transferred from the ERDA (now DOE) Los Angeles office in January 1978. The FEA participant resigned in May 1978 but was not replaced, and the shortage of staff is still acute.

In May 1979 the Center moved from the EPA space to the regional office at 111 Pine Street. Another move is scheduled to 333 Market Street when all of the DOE offices in San Francisco are centralized in a new building.

The name has been changed again to reflect the fact that the Center is a resource of information. This third name is Energy Resources Center. It is expected that once the move is made to 333 Market Street and the Center is given some publicity, the resulting usage should justify adding a second DOE staff member.

LBL'S PARTICIPATION

LBL submitted a proposal for a renewed effort in FY 1978 to assist in developing the Center into a model Energy Information Center. This proposal was funded by DOE Technical Information Center, Headquarters, Washington, D. C., under the cognizance of Charles M. Gottschalk, to provide for one LBL staff member, some special equipment, and a core collection of books and

journals for the Center. Virginia Sternberg and Gloria Haire wrote the proposal, evaluated equipment and prepared a list of equipment required by and best suited for such a center, and compiled the lists of publications to be ordered.

After the funding was provided by DOE Technical Information, Virginia Sternberg was assigned as the LBL liaison to work with the Center.

Sternberg visited the Energy Information Center in early January 1978 and compiled a list of things that needed to be done to upgrade the Center's operation. It was evident that on-site assistance was needed at that point due to lack of enough staff and the incumbent's lack of interest. Sternberg, therefore, planned to work at the Center four days each week and in that way also gain more insight into the needs of the Center's patrons.

Sternberg's work at the Center has included ordering equipment, purchasing books and journals, developing the collection's indexing system, and conducting computer searches.

Other LBL staffers have assisted the Center's operation in the following ways:

- Gloria Haire provided expertise in computer indexing, new equipment, and expediting of orders.
- Jo Robinson provided advice and training in the use of RECON.
- Allan Konrad worked on the computer indexing program to debug it and accomodate the special documents in the Center. Konrad also trained the Center's Stay-in-School employee to operate an on-line terminal for inputting and editing index information stored in the LBL computer system.

- Library reference staff members assisted in answering technical questions and obtaining documents and journal articles.
- Computer Center staff keypunched input data for the Energy Center's index.
- LBL Library staff members Carol Backhus and Allan Konrad substituted when Sternberg and DelGaudio were away at the same time.
- Library staff members obtained technical reports via telefax using the special equipment provided by DOE Technical Information for the Federal Library Network Prototype Project, an experimental interlibrary telefacsimile project.
- LBL Information Research Group staff members conducted some RECON searches when there were dial-up problems at the Center or when the Center's staff was on leave (Nov.-Dec. 1977). LBL IRG also conducted several RECON searches and one DIALOG search for which IRG absorbed the cost for the DOE office in Hawaii.

DOE's PARTICIPATION

Michael Lopez, of DOE's San Francisco office (DOE SAN), was appointed manager of the Center. Lopez reviewed all reports coming into San Francisco and forwarded copies of those that could be used at the Center. He assisted with difficult questions and with any about nuclear energy which came to the Center. At the end of the fiscal year he transferred within SAN to another department.

Dale Cook, DOE SAN, one of the originators of the Center, has been an optimistic and enthusiastic promoter. He has encouraged the concept of a storefront, one-stop center and negotiated with GSA to locate such a place in

San Francisco. His ideas for making the Center a "window on energy" for business, industry, schools, colleges, and the general public have been important guides in developing the Center. Based on his plans the Center should be a model energy information center when it finally moves to its permanent quarters.

Norma DelGaudio, DOE SAN, transferred to the Center at the beginning of 1978. Her experience in expediting work and her finesse in dealing with the public have been assets to the Center. She has become acquainted with the technical people at the DOE SAN and Region IX offices and has developed a list of contacts who can assist in answering questions. She has attended meetings of other energy information center specialists in the Bay Area and has visited information centers in other parts of the country in an effort to learn more about developing this Center in San Francisco. DelGaudio has an aptitude for this type of work and has quickly absorbed the techniques and details of the administration and operation of an information center.

Wolfgang Rosenberg, DOE Region IX, also one of the originators of the Center, has continually supplied the Center with informational materials. His weekly contributions of press releases, meeting notices, pamphlets, brochures, ads, and so forth, have often been the first source of information about something new. Rosenberg placed the Center on DOE's mailing lists and arranged for direct distribution of reports.

Jerald Scheinberg, DOE Region IX, proposed an "Ideal Regional Energy Information Center" in April 1978 which complemented the present Center and was designed to expand its potential as a technical information facility. He is the Energy Information Administration (EIA) representative in Region IX.

Charles Gottschalk, Technical Information, DOE Headquarters, has provided the main financial support of the Center during FY '79. His active interest in the expansion of the Center into a first-class model has been a source of moral support during the frustrations of the space shortage. He has supported the concept of the Center conducting one free RECON search and providing 20 citations to the patrons, a feature of the Center that has attracted much attention.

As can be deduced from the above descriptions of the LBL and DOE participation in the work of the Center, it takes a lot of input from many sources to keep an organization like the Center operational. Cooperation, dedication, and sincere interest on the part of the people mentioned have kept the Center functioning for the past four years.

USE OF RECON

An important feature of the Center has been the ability to provide quick searches, including use of DOE's computerized retrieval service, RECON. Most people are not aware of the immense amount of information now available and the ready access to previous research. Many come hoping to find one or two magazine articles or a pamphlet. When they see a RECON search conducted on-line and are given the results they are surprised and impressed--surprised because they have never seen a computerized library search; impressed because they always find much more than they expect.

RECON searches are only conducted when necessary. A great majority of queries are for facts, statistics, documents and pamphlets. However, when a serious searcher needs assistance in locating information, a RECON search is suggested. As noted, one free RECON search is conducted for a new patron and

20 citations provided. For lengthier searches patrons are referred to the LBL Western Regional Information Service Center (WRISC), a service bureau operation of LBL's Information Research Group. DOE, Technical Information, has authorized WRISC to conduct RECON searches for the public on a cost-recovery basis.

ELBA

The Center's staff has attended the meetings held by the Energy Librarians of the Bay Area (ELBA). This is a group of librarians who have an informal meeting once a month to exchange information about new energy publications, computer services, loose-leaf updating services, and special indexes. The meetings are held at a different library each month so everyone has a chance to see what each energy library has. The group has published a directory of its members and has agreed to assist each other in locating information. The Center has been able to assist these librarians many times.

WINE

The Western Information Network on Energy (WINE) is a group of people working in the energy information field in the Western states. The group publishes a newsletter and a list of members. Gloria Haire, LBL, attends the WINE meetings and represents the coastal states. Her active participation in WINE has provided the Center with the names of people to contact for energy information in the Western states.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DelGaudio (DOE) and Sternberg (LBL) both started at the Center in January 1978. Since that time they have:

1. Designed Request Form and use it to record patrons' questions.
2. Designed Table of Types of Questions Asked and update it monthly.

3. Ordered 650 books and made arrangements for processing and storage by the dealer; received 100 books from EIA; renewed 13 periodical subscriptions.
4. Developed Key Word Out of Context (KWOC) index program, prepared input, and now have an easy-to-use index for the Center.
5. Started a clipping file; add journal articles, newspaper clippings, reprints and pamphlets on a daily basis. Use a subject authority file developed by Mari Wilson of the University of California's Energy and Resources Program.
6. Obtained NTIS microfiche in the category of Energy to supplement the hard copy document distribution received from DOE.
7. Designed 4 floor plans: one for 58 Sutter Street space, and when that was not obtained, one for the 525 Market Street Mezzanine space, one for 111 Pine Street, and one for 333 Market Street.
8. Ordered equipment:
 - a. Microfiche reader printer
 - b. Slide and cassette player
 - c. 8 mm movie projector
 - d. CRT for printing terminal
 - e. 35 mm slide file cases
 - f. Shelving
 - g. Microfiche reader
 - h. Newspaper rack
9. Ordered films on energy subjects.
10. Subscribed to New York Times Key Issues Tracking (KIT).

11. Compiled list of resource people to contact at SAN and Region IX Offices for help in answering questions.
12. Answered an average of 20 telephone questions, 10 mail questions, and 5 walk-in patron questions per day.
13. Conducted two or three literature searches on RECON per week. Referred these research people and many others to the LBL IRG's Western Regional Information Services Center (WRISC) for conducting searches. WRISC under authorization of DOE, Technical Information, conducts RECON searches on a cost-recovery basis.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CENTER

The most significant thing about the Center is the unsolicited demonstration of public need for such an information center. Regardless of all of its problems, it is an oasis for those who need it most--the general public. Despite a lack of promotional effort since November 1976 (except during the SUN DIAL project in May 1978) this Center in San Francisco receives letters daily from all over the country, phone calls throughout the day mostly from the West Coast, and walk-in patrons almost every day. The records of usage prove that even though the Center is located off the beaten track, is not listed in the telephone directory, and has had little publicity, people find it, use it, and need it.

Another significant point to mention is that business and industry in Region IX have begun to look to the Center for information assistance. In our continuous monitoring of the questions coming to the Center it has become apparent that there has been a considerable increase in the number of questions from gas and light companies, consulting firms, investment houses,

construction companies and research institutes. Many of these organizations are small and do not have information facilities in-house. Even large companies which have their own libraries use the Center because the Center's staff concentrates on energy information and often supplies faster answers. The Center does not attempt to replace the established library resources. However, most libraries do not yet have the variety of publications now available in the Center. In addition, the Center's staff has unique qualifications and years of experience in locating information about DOE and its predecessors and in obtaining reports issued by DOE and its contractors.

The Center assists the DOE SAN and Region IX offices (including Los Angeles and San Diego) by answering some of the questions they receive. All of these offices transfer phone inquiries to the Center and forward letters to the Center for reply. This assistance relieves the DOE technical staff of the task of answering questions from school children, teachers, housewives and the general public. This service by the Center could also be a significant contribution to regional offices in other parts of the country. What have we learned about this kind of Center?

In General

1. Energy information centers are needed
2. Centers are windows on energy
3. Usual sources are not sufficient
4. Pamphlets are invaluable
5. Educational materials are useful
6. EIA publications and contacts are important
7. National Solar Heating and Cooling Information Center lists are a must

8. TIC services are used
9. Newspaper articles prompt calls
10. Quick answers are wanted
11. Local information centers are needed
12. The San Francisco Center is only a beginning
13. DOE has the information; people don't know how to get it--the Center helps them

Center Users Want:

1. "Instant information"
2. Quick answers to questions
3. What DOE is doing about grants
4. Pamphlets and DOE reports now, not in 6-8 weeks from NTIS
5. Facts and figures about petroleum, solar, etc.
6. Up-to-date information about energy
7. Details about Presidential announcements
8. Help - they do not want to call or write anyone else once they find someone with some knowledge
9. Avoidance of the bureacratic run-around

The Types of Users of Center Are:

Homeowners, business and industry, investors, local community employees, students, teachers, federal government employees, job seekers, state government employees, librarians, conservationists, environmentalists, publishers, volunteers, medical doctors, farmers, consultants, and university researchers.

Examples of their SPECIFIC REQUESTS Are the Following:

1. Homeowners are looking for:

Money for insulation and solar installation

Information about solar installations

Solar home plans

2. Industry is looking for:

Solar installation reports

Electric power statistics

Oil and gas consumption

Utilities

Demonstration grants

PONS, PAFS, Proposals

Grant money

How to get contracts

Solar standards

Laws and requirements

Coal liquefaction

Solar taxes and rebates

3. Inventors are looking for:

Where to show invention

How to have invention evaluated

Where to get money

4. Local communities are looking for:

Pamphlets to give away

Ways to get money for projects

5. Students are looking for:
 - Debating information
 - Research paper assistance
 - "Everything" on solar
6. Teachers are looking for:
 - Information about grants
 - Slides
 - Curriculum aids
7. Federal Government is looking for:
 - Pamphlets for National Parks
 - Statistics
 - Reports on energy
8. State Government is looking for:
 - Coal
 - Conservation
 - Solar
 - Matching funds
9. Job Seekers are looking for:
 - Lists of solar equipment manufacturers in the area
 - Lists of job openings
 - Jobs in solar
 - Jobs in DOE
10. Librarians are looking for:
 - Reports from DOE, FEA, ERDA

11. Conservationists are looking for:

Electric car information

Bicycling

12. Environmentalists are looking for:

Hearings on nuclear

Solar information

Solar satellites

13. Publishers and free-lance writers are looking for:

Free source of information

14. Volunteers are looking for:

Help in learning about solar

15. Medical people are looking for:

Alternative energy supplies for hospitals

16. Farmers are looking for:

Methane from manure for heating

17. Consultants are looking for:

Solar standards

18. University people are looking for:

Demonstration information

Manufacturers' lists

FUTURE PLANS

Sternberg will continue to assist in the operation of the Center according to the plan outlined in the FY '79 189 Research Program.

When the Center moves to its permanent quarters, efforts will be made to limit any break in service and to expedite bringing everything together and becoming operational quickly.

Publicity has been curtailed and deferred until after the move but should be prepared and ready to issue. Sternberg will develop the basic promotional brochure prior to the opening of the new quarters at 333 Market Street. Other promotional efforts such as posters for display in other libraries, radio and TV announcements, and displays for exhibits will be developed in conjunction with the LBL Technical Information Department.

Sternberg will outline models of large-, medium- and small-sized energy information centers for others interested in starting centers.

An impressive aspect of the Center is the gratitude of the people who use it. Many people cannot find energy information elsewhere, keep returning to the Center, and even send letters thanking the staff for their assistance.

From the vantage point of this Center, it is apparent that the general public has accepted the reality of an energy crisis and wants to do something constructive about it. It is also apparent that this type of energy information center is needed by business and industry, schools and colleges, and the general public for assistance in finding information.