



Office of Technology Assessment

NEWSLETTER

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OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT  
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
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April 25, 1978

Volume I, Number 1

INTRODUCTION

In response to an expressed need to be better informed about goings-on within the Office, we present to you Volume I, Number 1 of the "OTA NEWSLETTER."

At this early stage, we intend to publish the Newsletter in two parts. Part one will feature business-related matters and may later be distributed to select audiences outside OTA. The second part will include items of an in-house nature.

In talking with people from the various program areas, we found that despite the fact that we're all located in one building (finally), much is happening that most people are not aware of, and would like to be. This newsletter is an attempt to keep everyone better informed. It includes many specific items suggested by many of you.

We invite further comments and suggestions: We welcome proposed items as well as ideas. In our next issue, we may initiate a "letters to the editor" column, by which means the Newsletter could express the viewpoints, concerns, or aspirations of all who work at OTA.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope this form of communication will be useful to all.

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-- Public Affairs Office

OTA in the NEWS: Railroad Safety

OTA reports continue to make news. Most recently, Governor Peterson's testimony on railroad safety, before the House Commerce & Transportation Subcommittee, was picked up by Thompson Newspapers and the Associated Press. AP quoted Gov. Peterson as saying, "It is unlikely that a change in track-caused train accidents will occur until there are positive economic changes in the industry." The Thompson stories focused mainly on OTA's statistics, but quoted the Director's warning that "the danger from accidents involving hazardous materials being hauled by trains will continue to pose 'serious threats to our communities.'" The Washington Post (March 21), and the New York Times (March 16) also cited the new railroad safety report, as did the Congressional Quarterly (April 15). [Bob Maxwell, Lee Dickinson and Lucia Turnbull produced the railroad safety report.]

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SIX NEW PROJECTS APPROVED BY TAB

Six projects were approved by the Technology Assessment Board (TAB) at its April 3 meeting. The projects vary in completion time from seven to twelve months and are budgeted at \$1,525,000. The projects are:

Impacts of Global Trends in Energy Supply, Demand, and Technology --  
Project Director: Henry Kelly

Energy from Biological Process -- Project Director: Audrey Buyrn

Impact of Technology on U.S. Industry Competitiveness -- Project  
Director: Paul Brown

Societal Impacts of National Information Systems -- Project Director:  
Skip Johns

Alternative Pest Management Strategies in Food Production -- Project  
Director: Walter Wilcox

Environmental Contaminants in Food -- Project Director: Catherine  
Woteki

(A list of all current OTA projects is also included with this newsletter.)

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HONORS AND ADDRESSES

Governor Peterson testified at the House Science and Technology Oversight hearings on OTA on April 4. On April 12, the Director addressed the Invitational Futures Forum at Swarthmore College on "The Need for Future-Oriented Thinking and Acting in the Framework of Global Problems." Gov. Peterson is invited to be the Distinguished Lecturer of the Academy of Sciences at Philadelphia on April 20. And on April 26 he will speak before the Society of Plastics Engineers Annual Technical Conference here in Washington.

Deputy Director De Simone testified before the Subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee on April 18 to report on OTA's plans for a study of the Societal Impacts of National Information Systems. Mr. De Simone addressed the National Association of Independent Insurers Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, April 19.

Joe Coates discussed, "OTA - What It Is and What It Does," at the Joint Center for Political Studies, Washington, D.C., April 5 ... at the Conference on the Profits from Breakthrough Technologies, The Futures Group, New York City, April 11-12; and is to address the Conference on the Future of Education Center for the Study of Alternative Futures, Memphis, Tenn., April 27.

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UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

The Technology Assessment Board (TAB) will meet Monday, May 8, at 3:00 p.m. in Room H-139 of the United States Capitol.

The Technology Assessment Advisory Council is tentatively scheduled to meet Thursday, May 25.

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ENERGY POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Joint resolutions have been introduced in both the House and Senate calling for an OTA assessment of alternative energy strategies. The resolutions, introduced by Senator Wendell Anderson (D-Minn.) and Rep. Richard Ottinger (D-N.Y.), would mandate a 9-month, \$2 million study to evaluate and compare a full range of energy policy alternatives for both the short- and long-term. The resolutions have been referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Science and Technology.

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ADMIN ITEMS

OTA is seeking a \$10 million appropriation for Fiscal Year 1979. With both Senate and House Appropriations subcommittee hearings concluded, the next scheduled step is House Appropriations Subcommittee mark-up on May 25, with the full House committee mark-up following in early June. The Senate Subcommittee mark-up is scheduled in June and full committee mark-up thereafter. Appropriations bills go to the Floor of the House in mid June and of the Senate in July.

The telecopier has been installed and is ready for use in the Service Center. Simply take your material to the Service Center and an operator will send it for you.

Watts lines are coming! The special lines will be installed on or around May 12. The Administration Office will be issuing instructions on how to use the telephone lines in the next couple of weeks.

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TRANSITIONS

Welcome aboard to Greg Joyce, who joined the troops on April 3. Most of you have probably met him; he is working with Jim Tolson .... Congratulations to J.B. Cordaro and his wife on the birth of their son, Michael Patrick. M.P. was born on March 19 .... There will be one less single girl at OTA next week: Rose Sutton of the Energy Program is getting married April 29.

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CPR for OTA

The Office of the Attending Physician is sponsoring a course in CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) in OTA's first floor conference rooms. Two 4-hour sessions will be held, on April 27 and 28. This class is filled, but another will be scheduled in the near future. If you are interested, contact Rose Grozak (4-0750).

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OTA SOFTBALL SEASON TO BEGIN ON "SUN DAY"

With temperatures rising, soft breezes blowing, green grass growing, and birds chirping in the early hours of the morn once again, can softball season be far away? Of course not!

Team captain Carol Drohan has announced a tough 14-game schedule in the U.S. Senate Softball league beginning Wednesday, May 3. Russell W. Peterson, OTA's distinguished director and a veteran himself of numerous softball seasons, is expected to throw out the first pitch.

There will be a practice on Saturday, April 29, to get ready for the league opener. The practice will be at OTA's home field at Augustinian College. Since many veterans are returning from last year's successful team, keen competition is expected for several positions. All interested persons (especially those with gloves and desire) are invited. A preseason party will follow the practice.

Following a dismal 1-win record suffered during OTA's rookie season in 1976, last year's team rebounded to an amazing 9-7 season. The season was highlighted by the power hitting of Jim Tolson, the superb fielding of Jim Leach, the swivel hips of Jerry Harden, the astute managing of Carol Drohan and Dick Rowberg, and the beer drinking of Chuck Wixom.

Another successful season is forecast for OTA this year by all observers.

-- Jeff "Haywoud Hale" Cohn

[Editors Note: For the next several weeks, Cohn may be reached in the B-2 level of OTA's quarters, where he has been assigned to dust the pages of reports in storage.]

(4/25/78)

ENERGY

Residential/Commercial Energy Conservation	Nancy Shirk
Coal Utilization	Alan Crane
Impacts of Global Trends in Energy Supply, Demand, & Technology	Henry Kelly
Energy from Biological Processes	Audrey Buyrn

FOOD

Implications of Increased Support of Research on Major Food Crops in Developing Countries	Walter Wilcox
Use of Drugs and Chemicals as Feed Additives in Livestock Prod.	Walter Wilcox
Alternatives in U.S. Food Policy	J.B. Cordaro
Transfer of Food Processing Technology to Developing Countries	Ray Hoehle
New Food Marketing Technology	Mike Phillips
Nutrition Research Strategies	Cathie Woteki
Alternative Pest Management Strategies in Food Production	Walter Wilcox
Environmental Contaminants in Food	Cathie Woteki

HEALTH

Computerized Tomography Scanners	Carl Taylor
Efficacy of Medical Technologies	Clyde Behney
Health Data Systems	Polly Ehrenhaft

MATERIALS

Resource Recovery, Recycling & Reuse	Chris Hill
Management of Fuel & Nonfuel Minerals on Federal Land	Al Paladino
Effects of Federal Land Management on Non-Federal Mineral Resources	Frank Wobber
Conservation through Reduced Wastage	Marshall Peterson
Existing Federal Coal Development Rights	Stanley Schweinfurtl
Future Availability of Materials Imported by the United States	David Kay, Al Palad:
Oil Shale Technology	Donald Kesterke

R&D

Health of Scientific & Technical Enterprise	Darryl Banks
Applications of Science & Technology	Clee McBee
Decision Making Process whereby R&D Policies & Priorities are Established	John Young
Task Force for Appropriate Technologies	Jim Sullivan

OCEANS

Siting of Energy Facilities	Tom Cotton
Renewable Ocean Energy	Ben Silverstein

TECHNOLOGY AND WORLD TRADE

Impact of Technology on U.S. Industry Competitiveness	Paul Brown
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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Societal Impacts of National Information Systems	Skip Johns
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TRANSPORTATION

Changes in the Use and Characteristics of the Automobile	Bob Maxwell
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