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The lead items coming out of almost all mainstream news outlets these days seem to focus on the price of gasoline hovering in the $4.00-per-gallon range. It's not as though the regular drivers among us need to be reminded of that depressing fact of life. The news media, though, is not the only group putting a harsh spotlight on the issue. Skyrocketing energy costs, regardless of the fuel, have become an embarrassing political football in this election year.

Forget the press and the politicians. How to mitigate a global energy crisis is a matter of deep trepidation to everyone. While we see plenty of hope on the horizon, we know it won't come fast.

Upstream production of hydrocarbons and downstream refi nery upgrades are attempting (and doing a pretty good job) to keep up with worldwide demand. Both old and new sources of "black gold," including Canada's tar sands and shale oil deposits in the Western U.S., are undergoing extensive development.

Our old friends coal and natural gas also are being explored and leveraged to the hilt. Nuclear energy, once shunned, is again being considered for major expansion. Biofuels are still in the mix, with wind power and solar initiatives fi lling in the larger picture.

Unfortunately, to fully harness the many fossil and renewable energy sources we have and/or will have is expected to take many years. That's why conservation of our available energy resources is so crucial now. Being successful at this will require a general overhaul of the way industry thinks.

For example, while the initial cost of a pump or motor is just a minor part—*3% to 4%*—of the total lifetime cost of the equipment's ownership, the energy required to run these units is major. Recognizing their customer's needs, manufacturers have made great strides in providing energy-effi cient products. Today, pumps are being designed to operate in their best effi ciency range for reasons of both hydraulic balance and improved power consumption. Motors are now capable of operating at electrical effi ciencies in the high 90% range. Still, it's up to the end-user to specify energy-effi cient products and capture the benefi ts they offer.

Our company also is doing its part to conserve energy and promote the reliability of rotating equipment, within our own operations and those of our customers. The benefi ts of energy conservation are immediate and can be accomplished by systematically eliminating energy-consumptive components and substituting non-energy consumptive devices.

Consider these statistics. Every noncontacting bearing isolator that supplants a contact bearing protection seal, be it a lip seal or face seal, not only will protect the bearing environment, it will conserve an average of 147 watts of power. Furthermore, the effective life of a contact seal is relatively short and it has a 100% failure rate, which is not the case with non-contact bearing isolators. This year, we project that we will move 700,000 non-contact bearing isolators through the marketplace. The power these devices will help to conserve is equal to what 70 wind turbine generators would produce.

We, like many other energy-conscious manufacturers, are ready, able and committed to increasing our production when the need presents itself. To our way of thinking, all of us—*suppl iers and end-users alike*
—have an opportunity to help solve the energy crisis. It begins right now.
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