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Industry seeks energy independence

Nearly four decades after President Richard Nixon called for the United States to wean itself off foreign oil, many energy and political leaders are preparing to declare independence.

Increased domestic oil and natural gas drilling, reduced energy consumption and the promise of alternative fuels have reversed decades-old trends and caused domestic energy production to increase and oil imports from outside of North America to drop.

The idea of energy independence is nothing new.

President Nixon began calling for United States to rely only on its own energy sources in 1973, when the country and much of the world were still reeling from the Arab Oil Embargo.

In the following decades, the focus shifted to energy conservation and then to increased production of alternative energy, such as wind, solar and biofuels.

Today, however, traditional oil and natural gas industry leaders are using new technologies in both new and old oil fields to dramatically increase the amount of oil produced within North America.

Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association President Mike Terry said he doesn't know how long it would take for North America to become energy independent, but he is pleased with the trend so far.

"I've been in this business since the '70s, and I've never thought it was possible until now," Terry said.

Oklahoma City-based Sand Ridge Energy has contributed to the recent domestic energy increase with 60 percent growth in its oil production over the past year alone. <

The last time the United States was truly independent, according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, was 1952. The country imported nearly 35 percent of its daily use, or 6.25 million barrels per day, when Nixon first called for energy independence in 1973.

Instead, the dependency grew for decades, peaking in 2005 about 60 percent of usage, or 13.7 million barrels per day.

In recent years, however, the trend has reversed. In 2011, crude oil imports dipped to 49 percent of total consumption, according to government statistics.

Complete American independence is not the goal for most domestic energy advocates. Instead, they are looking to reduce or eliminate the dependence on oil-rich countries that are often adversarial to the United States, including Iran, Syria, Libya, Venezuela and most of the rest of the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Electricity Pricing Areas – Mar 13, 2012

April

On-Peak	Per kWh
Cinergy	\$.02815
PJM West	\$.03324

ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Mar 1- Mar 31,2011	\$.03668
April 1 – April 30	\$.03448
May1- May 31	\$.03954
June 1 - June 30	\$.03851
July 1 thru July 31	\$.05170
Aug 1 – Aug 31	\$.04064
Sep 1 - Sep 30	\$.03058
Oct 1- Oct31	\$.02968
Nov 1- Nov 30	\$.02816
Dec 1 – Dec 31	\$.02971
Jan 1 –Jan 31	\$.03043
Feb 1–Feb 29	\$.02963
Mar 1 thru Mar 12	\$.02982

Weather Today: Sunny. High 69F. Winds NW at 5 to 10 mph. **Tonight:** Mainly clear. Low 51F. Winds SE at 5 to 10 mph. **Wed:** Mostly sunny skies. Warm. High 76F. Winds S at 15 to 25 mph. **Wed night:** Partly cloudy skies. A stray shower or thunderstorm is possible. Low 62F. Winds SSW at 10 to 20 mph. **Thursday:** Partly cloudy with a stray thunderstorm. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the low 60s. **Friday:** Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the mid 50s. **Saturday:** Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the upper 50s.

