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**(Neb.)-Utilities Expect To Rely On Coal, Nuclear, Gas Energy**



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 10/01/2012 09:37 AM

KEARNEY, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska utilities will likely continue to rely heavily on coal, natural gas and nuclear power to produce electricity until someone develops a cost-effective way to store power.

Industry experts discussed the state's energy outlook at a conference in Kearney last week. Nebraska Public Power District President and CEO Pat Pope says coal, natural gas and nuclear remain popular sources of electricity because they are reliable and economical.

Nebraska's biggest and most-efficient power plant is Gerald Gentleman near Sutherland. That plant burns low-sulfur coal from Wyoming, and Pope says even when natural gas was cheap, electricity from Gerald Gentleman was cheaper.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor Jerry Hudgins says the key to increasing the use of wind and solar power is to develop a good way to store electricity.