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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TOOLS TOWARDS OPTIMIZING ENERGY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INITIATIVES

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ABSTRACT

Energy companies to stay ahead of the developments have to pay constant attention to building and maintaining their networks and are constantly looking for cost-saving possibilities. This paper attempts to highlight the importance of information technology applications towards optimizing energy conservation and environment protection initiatives. This paper also recommends some areas of effective training and development programs.

KEYWORDS

Energy conservation, school curricula, diversified training program, eco-citizens behavior, and renewable energy technologies.

INTRODUCTION

At present, energy-saving technology is a feasible and an effective way to achieve energy and environmental sustainable development, although renewable energy may be final solution to environmental issues. Information and communications technology is helping for responding to these challenges. The right operational information and knowledge are necessary for making better decisions, and they are also indispensable for increasing production and reducing costs. Geographic information systems support electricity and gas companies business processes in following way:

- integral management of assets and networks (grids)
- planning, design, realization and maintenance of networks
- planning and marketing
- tracking and tracing
- finding gas leaks
- implementation of the company-wide use of geographic information
- integration of GIS and ERP, CRM, SCADA and other IT systems
- restructuring processes and process support using geographic information
- implementation of mobile and Internet solutions

OBJECTIVES OF IMPLEMENTING IT APPLICATIONS

Industry application of GIS solutions offers efficiency and effectiveness for Telecom, Transport, Energy, Financial, Manufacturing or Government sector. GIS services and solutions offer rapid and efficient deployment; substantially lower total cost of ownership and higher levels of ROI. It helps in achieving following objectives:

1. Plan better services and infrastructure through analysis of patterns and trend in spatial information
2. Analyze performance spatially and manage property assets data
3. Identify risks for buildings, improve assessor practices, track stolen vehicles and target customers by locating others in the locality in the Insurance Sector
4. Provide Location Based Services (LBS) to consumers based on cell location, monitor network statistics e.g. coverage conditions, aid customer relations by speedy fault repair and relating customers quickly to affected network in the Telecom Sector
5. Provide access to large volumes of current and historic data e.g. through GIS- enabled document management systems, permit field-based data editing and recording of survey information to streamline the process and make the information more accurate and timely

POSSIBLE AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

Possible areas and actions for the development of general knowledge programs should include:

1. Developing market mechanisms to connect accessible and affordable capital with energy consumers to enhance the effectiveness of a provincial strategy.
2. Ensuring inefficient, older appliances are taken out of the market, their materials recycled and any toxic components managed.
3. Engaging community organizations, non-governmental organizations and public interests groups in culture change, communication, education and implementation of conservation.
4. Establishing accessible and understandable means of benchmarking energy use, planning and implementing conservation projects, accessing resources and technologies
5. Ensuring publicly funded institutions establish and maintain management reporting systems which cover energy use, costs and savings potential,
6. Facilitating energy auditing and benchmarking of existing buildings and providing access to resources to implement retrofits.
7. Integrating conservation into school curricula; developing curricula to establish the skills, knowledge and behavior of conservation and renewable energy; developing guidelines for relating curriculum to energy efficient design.
8. Increasing conservation related training in colleges, universities and apprenticeship programs to cover all facets of energy management for industry and buildings.
9. Incorporating Energy Guide for Homes ratings in real estate profiles.
10. Organizing seminars, workshops or summer schools for decision makers and experts related to other energy fields.
11. Pursuing strategies for job creation in the manufacture of products and the delivery of services related to conservation and renewable energy; accelerated development of new technologies. Increasing conservation related training to industry.
12. Producing audio-visual materials that illustrate existing solar installations, as well as future prospects for these technologies.
13. Publishing information, in the form of study articles and comprehensive, well documented reports, on solar energy and its prospects.
14. Produce and broadcast programs and documentary films for television.
15. Using web-based systems to allow comparison of energy use with comparable buildings and estimation of potential savings.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ENERGY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION INITIATIVES

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) highlighting roles of institutions

AASCU devoted its July/August 2006 Public Purpose magazine to cover the issues related to sustainability at public higher education institutions. The issue highlighted role of various institutions implementing sustainability policies on its campuses, in its classrooms and bridging them to the business world.

Bedford College in Southern England providing training

Bedford College in Southern England is a centre for excellence in green energy, providing training for small businesses in installing and maintaining solar panels, wind turbines and bio-mass technology.

Canadian Industry Program For Energy Conservation (CIPEC) developing comprehensive projects

The Canadian Industry Program for Energy Conservation (CIPEC) with representation of 294 companies, and 24 sector task forces is active in developing comprehensive projects to improve conservation in their municipal operations. Non-governmental organizations are implementing community-wide programs for improving the conservation in existing and new buildings, and at developing integrated, fuel efficient transportation schemes.

Florida Gulf Coast University reducing operating expenses

National Center for Academic Transformation implements effective uses for information technology in order to improve student learning and reduce the cost of higher education. By redesign their coursework schools reduced costs by an average of 37 percent, saving of \$3.1 million in operating expenses each year.

Park Lane College in Leeds offering courses on climate change

Park Lane College in Leeds offers a "reduce your carbon footprint" course managed by a team of conservation and environmental tutors through practical energy saving techniques, and the science behind climate change.

Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) encouraging energy-efficiency projects

Energy education programs of SECO promote energy conservation and efficiency through education. Over 2,500 teachers have attended these workshops and utilized the materials in their classrooms reaching over 375,000 students.

University of Nîmes in Southern France organizing programs for eco-citizens

University of Nîmes in Southern France, in March 2007, organized a program to promote the behavior of "eco-citizens". Concentrating on the promotion of waste management and economizing on energy use a university wide campaign for providing practical demonstrations of environmental awareness linked to social psychology theory.

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board and The University Of Wisconsin utilizes community resources

K-12 energy education program (KEEP) encourages school-to-career skills and the use of a rich set of community resources including professionals, businesses, environmental organizations, and institutions of higher education. Wisconsin students are now competent enough to cope with difficult decisions about energy and its relationship to environmental, socio-political, and economic issues.

York University encouraging green buildings:

The Computer Sciences Building of York University is an ideal example of a "green" building built at no cost premium. Raising the standards for new buildings and major renovations is the most economical means of conserving energy in new buildings and avoids the lost opportunity cost associated with retrofitting improvements after the building is constructed.

CONCLUSIONS

The Government of India is planning to deploy a Geographic Information System-based mapping of energy-intensive industries and large buildings. The mapping tool is proposed to be interfaced with Google Earth to offer a spatial distribution of the energy-intensive industrial consumers and ensure geographically-referenced data generation for beefing up the energy conservation efforts. GIS and GPS have a significant role in supporting the development and expansion of the renewable energy sector involving biomass, geothermal, solar, wind and hydro/wave types. In GIS environment, geospatial data are better maintained in a standard format, revision and updating, search, analysis and representation of information becomes easier. The information from satellite data interpretation and other descriptive data can be merged into GIS, thus generating a unique database for hydropower project.

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