

## Coal research center

**BURBANK**—The public has been led to believe that oil shortages are to blame for the current energy crisis in an effort to take the blame from our political decision makers.

The scientific community has been aware of our dwindling coal, oil, and gas resources for more than 20 years and has been alerting the public to the forthcoming energy crisis for at least five years. The Atomic Energy Commission has been pursuing alternative energy sources for 25 years and has developed the technology and safeguards to harness nuclear energy for the production of electrical energy. The United States has had the capability to avoid the energy crisis, but the construction of pollution-free nuclear power plants in many states was discouraged by activist groups pressuring politicians.

Current political attention to the energy crisis includes visions of a \$1 billion coal research center, with competition over the location of the center involved in the Washington game of clout. Since Illinois has the largest coal reserves of any state (an estimated 200 billion tons), existing facilities with scientific personnel specializing in fuels technology (Argonne National Laboratory, Illinois Institute of Technology Research Institute, and Institute of Gas Technology), and a proposed \$500 million plant to convert coal into natural gas, there shouldn't be any doubt in the minds of the public or conscientious senators as to where coal research should be expanded as a national effort. A decision to expand on these available resources in Illinois would easily save the U. S. two years in building a new research center and staffing it and more than \$500 million in building and operating costs.

It is time for our political representatives to stop riding in circles in the

political arena and to progress on a straight line of success. Many jobs are hanging on their decisions.

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