

# Decentralized Power Could Be Part of State's Future

By PAUL DARST

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CHARLESTON — Heat that escapes from the Indian Point I and II nuclear power plants in upstate New York could generate enough electricity for Manhattan.

During the past 30 years, **Thomas Casten** has worked on ways of making our nation's energy production more efficient and less wasteful. He was one of the featured speakers during the ninth annual **Industries of the Future — West Virginia Symposium** Nov. 9 in Charleston. The event is sponsored each year by **West Virginia University, West Virginia Development Office, WVU National Research Center for Coal and Energy** and the **U.S. Department of Education Industrial Technologies Program**.

During his presentation, Casten stressed the benefits of switching to a

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— **Thomas Casten,**

**Industries of the Future — West Virginia Symposium featured speaker**

decentralized power generation system, which he contends has numerous benefits. One of the biggest benefits would be that the nation no longer would need to invest millions of dollars to build new power lines.

Currently, the U.S. is dependent on large plants that burn coal or use some other fuel to produce electricity. A better route to take, however, would be to install units in existing manufacturing facilities that will capture waste heat to generate electricity for the immediate community, he said.

Large power-generation plants no longer make sense for the U.S., he said.

Even a large plant that uses liquefied coal or other advanced technology is not advisable, he said.

"I submit to you that anybody that builds one of those plants is mad," Casten said. "If you can liquefy coal, why not just put it in a pipe and send it to manufacturers to use?"

The reason, Casten contends, is because **General Electric** and others who would benefit from the construction of large-scale plants are pushing them, he said.

Most power plants in the U.S. today are about 33 percent efficient, Casten said. Although changing the na-

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tion's thinking about power production and efficiency will not be easy, it is possible, he said.

"Demark changed in less than two decades, and now they are less vulnerable," Casten said. "Our collective future depends on how fast we can remove the barriers."

IOF-WV is a partnership program that works with energy-intensive industries to increase efficiency, reduce waste and increase productivity. IOF has several programs in West Virginia, including improved materials for galvanizing line hardware, intelligent potroom operation, beneficial re-use of spent foundry sand, a wood industry assistance program, glass industry assistance program and the projects with industry program.