

Grant given to Energy Center by SDG&E

May 7, 1976

A major research grant to support the study of energy conservation in the San Diego region has been awarded to the University of California, San Diego Energy Center by the San Diego Gas and Electric Company.

The three-year, \$24,900 grant will fund a graduate study fellowship within the Energy Center beginning next March. It is the second such grant the Center has received from the local utility company.

A \$21,000 grant from SDG&E for the study of regional energy problems, including geothermal resource development in the Imperial Valley, was awarded in 1974 and is currently in its third year of operation. The grant has supported Larry Icerman, a graduate student working as a research assistant on regional energy studies. Icerman, who co-authored a three-volume series of books dealing with all aspects of energy use, will receive his Ph.D. this spring and will join the faculty of the Department of Technology and Human Affairs at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, this fall.

The energy program began operation on the San Diego campus during the 1972-73 academic year with university support for two research assistants. The Energy Center was established as an organized research unit in June 1974 to serve the important educational, research and public-service functions which were not being met by existing departments or other organized research units on the campus.

According to Dr. Stanford S. Penner, professor of engineering physics and director of the Center, the Energy Center was developed to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities that exist in the San Diego area to solve fundamental problems resulting from the interrelated physical, biological, economic, political and social consequences of man's need for energy.

"The San Diego Gas and Electric Company grants to the Energy Center are invaluable in broadening the scope of the work at the Center and allowing us now to emphasize research in the area of conservation," Penner said.

"We are trying to develop a program that reflects this urgent national need," he said. "There is general agreement by all who look at U.S. energy problems that conservation is the most important current program and that it must have the highest priority.

"Conservation is required no matter what else we do," he said. "Our work here is aimed at how best to go about developing local and national programs of energy conservation."

Two of six graduate students currently associated with the Energy Center are working on the problems of energy conservation under the directions of Drs. Penner and A.M. Schneider, professor of applied mechanics and engineering sciences. Their research is being funded through National Science Foundation fellowships.

"Conservation is a very sophisticated and complicated problem," Penner said, and not enough research is being done on it. The idea that it can be done easily is not true," he said. "Complex technical, scientific, social, behavioral and political issues are all involved.

"Although we have started in this area, it is only a beginning," he said. "We have been fortunate in getting financial support from the university, federal agencies and private industry but more is needed if we are to contribute significantly to the resolution of our escalating supply shortages."

(May 7, 1976)