

THE FUTURIST

Forecasts, Trends, and Ideas about the Future

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WORLD TRENDS & FORECASTS

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THE FUTURIST

A magazine of forecasts, trends, and ideas about the future

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By Jay Herson

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By Edward Cornish

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John Robinson knows more about time than just about anyone. In an interview with THE FUTURIST, he talks about his discoveries over the years.

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Environment

Growth in Ocean-Current Power Foreseen

Florida team seeks to harness Gulf Stream.

Flowing at 1,000 times the rate of the Mississippi River, and attaining velocities in excess of four knots, the mighty ocean current system known as the Gulf Stream has mystified and inspired both sailors and scientists for centuries. Now, a group of Florida researchers is seeking to tap the Gulf Stream for power.

Energy use in Florida is anticipated to go up by nearly 30% in the next decade, as more people move to the Sunshine State seeking its temperate climate and sandy beaches. Not surprisingly, the state is heavily reliant on imported energy to meet its growing needs, but researchers at Florida Atlantic University are hoping to change that. The university recently received a research grant of \$5 million to examine how the robust ocean currents off of the coasts could be converted into electricity for the state's consumers.

"This new industry will provide a clean, reliable, and renewable source of energy that can be used to generate electricity, unlimited hydrogen, and potable water, as well as provide alternative methods for residual

cooling or A/C [air conditioning]," says Frank Driscoll, one of the project leaders. The university also expects the new industry to bring 26,500 new jobs to the state.

Tidal-current turbines and tidal-stream turbines generate electricity the same way land-based windmills extract power from wind. Tidal current technology has been around—and in use—for years in Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom.

The Florida wave project is one of the first for the United States. The researchers will work with the U.S. Navy, Department of Energy, the Clipper Windpower Company, and a host of other organizations and institutions in launching the project and the new center.

"This funding will lead to the establishment of a world-class center that will revolutionize future energy

production on our planet. We are very excited about developing these innovative, energy-producing technologies," says Larry Lemanski, vice president for research at Florida Atlantic.

—Patrick Tucker

Source: Florida Atlantic University, Office of Media Relations, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, Florida 33431. Web site www.fau.edu.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN OCEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY



Researchers from Florida Atlantic University hope to use underwater turbines to harness the power of the dense Gulf Stream.

About World Trends & Forecasts

The trends and forecasts in this section are divided into the six categories commonly used in business planning:

Demography covers specific population groups, family composition, public-health issues, etc.

Economics includes finance, business, work and careers, and management.

Environment includes resources, ecosystems, species, and habitats.

Government includes world affairs, politics, laws, and public policy.

Society covers lifestyles, values, religion, leisure, culture, and education.

Technology includes innovations, scientific discoveries, and their impacts.

In many cases, a single trend could be discussed in several different sec-

tors. By categorizing a trend in one sector, however, the editors intend to focus attention on a specific aspect of the trend.

This initial organization has proven helpful in understanding global complexities. Over time, readers will acquire a useful framework for thinking about the future.