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Pricey being green?

By Mike Williams, Tribune Staff Writer

Expert says reducing emissions would be costly

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce thinks any effort to fight climate change should be market-based, not government-mandated. That was the gist of a conference on climate change held Wednesday at Walters State Community College.

The event was co-sponsored by the U.S. Chamber, the National Association of Manufacturers and the Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth and state partners, the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives. The Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce also was involved in the effort.

The U.S. Chamber is hosting a series of such conferences across the country. A primary focus of the chamber's work this year has been defeat of the Lieberman-Warner bill in the U.S. Senate, which would have required Americans to cut greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 65 percent by 2050. The chamber's stance is that the bill would cost billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. The bill stalled in Congress.

Dr. Michelle Foss, chief energy economist and head of the University of Texas Center for Energy Economics, on Wednesday presented various cost estimates for reducing carbon dioxide and said some question if this generation of Americans should try to control global warming or leave that decision for future generations.

Foss also showed studies of carbon dioxide levels believed to have existed thousands and millions of years ago and said some periods of high CO2 levels were accompanied by cold weather, not warming.

Foss, who has worked with oil and natural gas concerns for many years, is one of a minority of scientists that dispute how much of an impact humans have had or can have on global climate change.

In June, the scientific academies of the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa called on industrialized countries to lead a "transition to a low-carbon society" and aggressively move to limit the impact of changes in climate that are already under way and impossible to stop.

Dr. Kevin Swift, chief economist of the American Chemistry Council,

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said if the Lieberman-Warner bill became law, it would raise the price of a gallon of gasoline by as much as 145 percent by 2030.

The loss of jobs due to the bill would total 3-4 million, he said.

Other speakers included Wayne K. Scharber, vice president of environmental affairs for the Tennessee Chamber; David L. Denton, business development director of the gasification project for Eastman Kodak; Jonathan G. Overly, executive director, East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition; Chris N. Moore, air program manager, Alcoa, Inc.; and Joe Hoagland, vice president of energy efficiency and demand response, Tennessee Valley Authority.

TVA is conducting many programs aimed at conserving energy and cutting pollution.

SACE says going green equals gold

A public forum was held Wednesday at Walters State College to discuss a multi-billion dollar industry that is growing by leaps and bounds. The global efforts of many communities to "go green" has spawned an enormous industry that is generating income, saving money and energy and creating much needed jobs in the face of corporate down sizing.

Economists, scientists and conservationists were on hand to gain some insight on new sources of energy and a new direction the world economy is taking.

"As the nation continues to explore other sources of energy we are seeing a revitalization in the steel industry" said Keith Romig of the United Steelworkers. "As motor companies continue to manufacture cars that utilize more biofuel they need to retool. The building of a biofuel refinery in Vonore is creating a demand for steel."

The forum was sponsored by Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. The event was intended to educate the public and dispel commonly held misperceptions about environmental efforts.

"We are not a bunch of tree huggers," said Stephen Smith of SACE. "We are simply trying to educate the public and illustrate there's gold in green."

Dr. Burton English of the University of Tennessee was on hand to explain the dynamics of switchgrass, which is expected to create as many as 18,000 jobs across the state.

Russ Nelson of Energy Systems Group explained several energy saving measures in other communities that have saved considerable amounts of energy and money.

"In Johnson City, a program was put into place whereby methane was piped from the county landfill and used at the local hospital to heat and cool the facility," said Nelson. "This saved the hospital over \$1 million per year."

The city of Morristown recently entered into an agreement with ESG to perform energy saving work that is expected to save the city a projected \$200,000 a year at the wastewater plant and \$196,000 at city owned buildings.

Mayor Sami Barile applauded the measure as a common sense way to decrease energy costs and the size of the city government's carbon footprint.

"Energy efficiency can pay for itself," said Smith. "It creates jobs and stimulates the economy. In New Mexico, there are several



companies that build wind turbines. This fledgling industry has created jobs and is helping people save money on their energy bills."

Smith supports tax incentives and government rebates to help fund the development of the emerging green industry.

"We are going green anyway," said Smith. "We need to cut our dependence on foreign oil. This is the first time in American history in which we have funded both sides in a war."

