

American Electric Power CEO speaks at North Dakota meeting

BISMARCK – The chief executive officer of Ohio-based American Electric Power, one of the nation’s largest power generators, said Monday in North Dakota that Americans should expect a mixture of energy sources, including coal, nuclear, solar and wind, in the coming decades.

“It has to be multidimensional,” Michael Morris said. “It cannot be singularly focused on any one technology.” Morris spoke Monday at a climate change conference in Bismarck.

The International Climate Stewardship Solutions Conference included discussions about carbon sequestration, sustainable buildings and agriculture’s role in the climate change debate.

“These conversations are happening all over the world,” said Roger Johnson, president of the National Farmers Union and former North Dakota agriculture commissioner. “Many of us have come to the view that the science is settled and we ought to get past this business about arguing whether global climate change is happening or not.”

Morris said homes should be retrofitted to become more energy efficient, though he said it is not always easy to do.

He recalled a Michigan program that required power companies to offer \$50 coupons to customers to buy energy efficient refrigerators to replace older, less efficient models.

Instead of disposing of the old refrigerators, Morris said, people kept the older models in the garage and used them to store even more food and beverages, increasing energy consumption.

“So I worry if we will be energy efficient as a people,” Morris said. “What we are seeing with the American psyche is at \$4 a gallon for gasoline, we are energy efficient. At \$2.50 a gallon, we’re not energy efficient anymore.”

Morris said a national energy standard, which includes a cap-and-trade policy, is needed to give power companies and consumers more certainty.

The Bismarck conference comes on the heels of U.S. House passage of a cap-and-trade bill that Rep. Earl Pomeroy, D-N.D., opposed.

The Senate is expected to address the bill later this year.

Johnson said the National Farmers Union has pushed for a cap-and-trade policy in light of a growing market for sequestered carbon.