


# Think Small

## GROWING APPEAL OF SMALL GENERATORS

BY SALVATORE SALAMONE

 **WORLDWIDE INTEREST IN TAKING DISTRIBUTED** generation to a new level and combining it with green technology into what some are calling micro-generation is growing. A handful of projects and companies are developing small energy-efficient power-generation units – micro-generation units – to place in a home or business to provide clean heat and power.

Some micro-generation development work simply formalizes past efforts to use alternative technologies to heat or provide electricity to homes. The work builds on a wide variety of technologies including solar photovoltaic and heating, ground source heat pumps, micro wind and water turbines, and hydrogen fuel cells. Some companies bringing this technology to market include Climate Energy, Honda, Marathon Engine Systems, Microgen Energy, and Whisper Tech.



One factor that makes many of these new efforts different from past work is that they are being driven by utilities, rather

than homeowners. Customer efforts certainly continue, but the new micro-generation projects are aimed at helping utilities meet their growing energy demands. These efforts offer customers an energy-efficient and green way to offload the energy production burden from a utility in peak electricity demand times.

Since the work in this field is being driven by the utilities, the devices that would be installed in homes or businesses need additional features to simplify long-term management because upkeep will be the utility's responsibility. Additionally, many of the efforts provide a way for the home or business owner to sell back electricity to the grid when they are producing more energy than their dwelling needs.

So why is interest in this technology growing now? According to the London-based industry group, The Micropower Council, a number of factors are contributing to the adoption of this technology by utilities and others. One is the increased desire to use green energy sources.

A more important reason is that it can help utilities meet growing power demands. "If just one-quarter of all gas boilers that will be replaced between now and 2020 are replaced with ones that can generate power, the contribution to winter peak electricity demand they would make would be similar to just under half of that provided by today's nuclear power stations," according to the council.

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- Experienced project or department manager
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- Capable and experienced in marketing and client management
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