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## New National Consumer Survey Reveals Disparity In Energy Conservation Values, Behaviors

*Consumers Voice High Conservation Values  
But Want More Energy-Efficient Options Instead of Reducing Consumption  
No Change In Consumer Message Preferences Pre- and Post-Katrina/Rita*

Knoxville, Tenn. – While the vast majority of Americans – 86 percent – say the issue of energy conservation is important to extremely important now, only 32 percent say energy conservation is extremely important in how it currently impacts their purchases and daily activities, according to a national consumer study released today.

Shelton Group, a Knoxville, Tenn., marketing communications agency specializing in the utilities and energy industries, conducted the survey, “Energy Pulse 2005,” measuring attitudes, opinions and behaviors related to energy use and a range of energy-based product categories.

According to the Energy Pulse study, U.S. consumers prefer increasing energy efficiency and improving technology over exercising energy conservation. Forty-three percent think that increasing energy efficiency is a better solution than reducing energy consumption, cited by 29 percent.

On why they don’t do more to conserve energy, Americans agreed most strongly with the following three reasons: 1) “It’s hard to change habits” (55 percent agree/strongly agree; 2) “I think that new technologies will soon be invented to solve energy supply issues” (54 percent agree/strongly agree); 3) “Energy efficient products cost more” (49 percent agree/strongly agree).

Overall, agreement patterns seem to generally express faith in emerging energy-efficient technology and disagreement with statements that indicate that energy-efficient technology is unproven or that efficient products don’t work as well.

*While 70 percent of consumers said they have heard of renewable, “green,” or sustainable energy, 80 percent were unable to name one source of renewable energy.*

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## 2-2-2 *Shelton “Energy Pulse” Survey*

Consumer knowledge levels appeared relatively weak in comparison with conservation values. While 70 percent of consumers said they have heard of renewable, “green,” or sustainable energy, 80 percent were unable to name one source of renewable energy.

In addition, 75 percent of Americans said it’s important to extremely important for their electric utility to offer power produced from renewable resources; however, 50 percent didn’t know whether or not their electric utility does so.

“Americans feel no overwhelming urge to conserve, just for conservation’s sake,” said Shelton Group CEO Suzanne Shelton. “However, we’re seeing a strong openness by consumers to consider energy-efficient options that are easy to choose, from practical and financial standpoints. Our data also suggest that consumers have a long way to go toward being well-educated about energy-efficient options, how to access those options and that those options are not necessarily more expensive than non-efficient ones.”

“On the corporate side, the multitude of companies with energy-related products would be well-advised to consider more educational outreach to their customer bases about energy-efficient choices available,” Shelton said. “If an energy-efficient product is actually cheaper long-term than non-efficient competitors, companies should use that benefit as a major point of differentiation to overcome consumer assumptions that efficient choices cost more. Product development teams might also focus on product features or delivery systems that meet consumers’ preferences for ease of adoptability.”

Because the survey was conducted immediately prior to Hurricane Katrina, one question was re-polled in recent weeks to determine potential consumer changes in opinion – only for Shelton Group to discover opinions stayed the same: When given a choice of several potential persuasive messages, respondents thought the message that would be most effective in convincing Americans to purchase energy-efficient products or participate in more conservation activities was one centered on U.S. national interests, not cost savings or environmental benefits.

“There appears to be a higher priority placed by Americans on the health of the nation’s economy than on immediate personal cost savings,” Shelton said. “Americans also appear to disassociate consumption with higher energy costs, thereby negating the perception that behavior modification to conserve energy is important.”

More information about Shelton Group’s Energy Pulse 2005 study is available on the agency’s web site, [www.sheltoncom.com](http://www.sheltoncom.com). # # #