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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR: RENEWABLE ENERGY IS MORE THAN JUST SOLAR POWER,  
WIND (Published July 28, 2004, in the Columbia Daily Tribune) - 7/28/2004**

Dear Editor:

In response to the discussion during the past week of renewable energy options, I wanted to point out that there are other renewable energy technologies besides wind and solar even though these two popular options tend to be the most well-known.

In fact, renewable biomass technologies often provide practical solutions that could bring economic benefits to Missouri farmers. A 1997 Department of Natural Resources inventory found that about 12 million tons of Missouri crop harvest residues could be collected annually and could produce about 156 million Btus of energy a year, if my math is correct.

Similarly, residues from wood harvest and sawmill processing, used tires and municipal solid waste could be collected and used for energy. Another largely untapped resource is the methane gas created in our landfills that can be collected and used to generate electricity.

Renewable crops such as switchgrass can be grown in fallow areas of a farm or on Conservation Reserve Program lands. The grass can be cut and then either incinerated or converted to an alternative fuel such as ethanol. The 1997 DNR inventory estimated that about 7 million tons of switchgrass could be harvested to provide more than 50 million Btus of energy.

When we discuss renewable sources of energy, we need to remember that there may be more options than we think. And one of the most overlooked possibilities is to tap into man's seemingly boundless ability to create waste.

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