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Screening of 'Switch' documentary to promote education on future energy



By **Sheldon McBay**

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One University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) student organization president believes decisions surrounding renewable and non-renewable energy sources are extremely political issues. However, in order to approach the issue of finding new energy sources, this club president thinks it should be done in a non-partisan way.

In order to bring attention to the future of energy, Cheyenne Sumire Jade Valdez, president of the UHCL Physics and Astronomy Club, partnered with the UHCL Green Hawks club president, Sara McAda, and organize a screening of director Harry Lynch's 2012 documentary "Switch."

Valdez believes that the documentary adheres to a non-partisan stance put forth by director Harry Lynch.

"This is extremely important when it comes to reaching your audience," Valdez said. "It a for maximum amount of audience reception, which places its impact above many other documentaries."

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The documentary focuses on different aspects of renewable energy and how America could transition from using fossil fuels like coal and oil to cleaner sources of energy in the future. The approach was to show the pros and cons of each future energy source that could replace old energy sources based on the analysis given by experts in the United States Department of Energy and within the specific fields of energy.

The film itself was in production for three years before it premiered at the 2012 Environmental Film Festival in Washington DC. Scott Tinker, professor of geological sciences at the University of Texas-Austin and director of the Bureau of Economic Geology, is featured in the film. Tinker travels the world to discover the various ways in which energy will transition and when these changes can realistically happen.

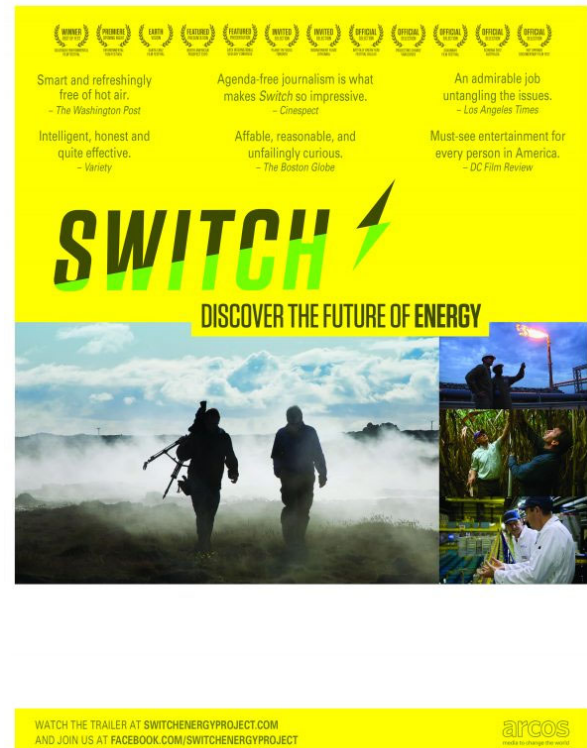
"Switch" is part of a larger energy and efficiency project, which included the Switch Energy Project that has now become part of the Switch Energy Alliance (SEA). The SEA website allows users to sign up for free to watch educational videos on energy and watch a segmented version of the "Switch" documentary.



An aerial view of an offshore oil platform. Photo courtesy of Switch Energy Alliance.

is the most important issue of our time."

As listed on the SEA website, users who have signed up will be able to view the "Switch" film. In



The film's screening will be in the Student Services Building Lecture Hall on Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. "Switch." Film poster courtesy of Switch Energy Alliance.

SEA is a nonprofit organization that aspires to educate the modern world about the many challenges surrounding the use of energy. Its website includes a multi-platform education program focused on teaching people of all ages within classrooms, professional environments, museums and online. Users can sign up for free to watch the SEA's large collection of videos hosted on their website. To SEA, "Energy

the future, users will also be able to view "Switch On," a new film focusing on more than 2.5 billion people around the world living with little or no energy. "Switch On" is slated for a 2019 release. The trailer for the new film is "coming soon."

For SEA, the responsibility of having a cleaner environment and cleaner sources of energy is in the hands of individuals. Valdez agrees with this statement, pointing out that UHCL is a campus that supports recycling and uses LED lights in the parking lot.

"The film puts emphasis on individual responsibility for the health of our planet and the future of mankind," Valdez said. "It makes every person feel like they can change the world with the simple flip of a switch, a turn of a faucet, or a toss of your old paper into the recycling bin."

However, despite the film's statement about cleaner energy being an individual's responsibility, Valdez states that "UHCL professionals" are responsible for allowing changes to take place on campus. It is then an individual's responsibility to let people in higher positions know that these changes need to be made and how soon the changes need to be realized.

Lisa Gossett, associate professor and program chair for environmental management, has been invited to speak at the film's screening. She believes that choices in how we address our energy needs, both individually and as a society, will have direct and indirect impacts on everyone in both the short term and the long term.

"This documentary takes neither the 'scare tactics' nor 'denial' approaches, but rather provides some basic background information while working toward defining some practical and cost-effective alternatives," Gossett said.

The screening of "Switch" at UHCL will be held on Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. in the Student Services Building Lecture Hall. The screening is free to attend and is open to the public.

Students interested in the future of energy or in STEM fields are encouraged by the screening organizers to view the film. After the screening, there will be a Q&A session where attendees will be able to ask experts in the field any questions they have. Among these experts will be Gossett and Bill Hays, director of operations for SEA.



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Sheldon McBay is an alleged spaghetti connoisseur, videographer, late 90s anime lover and Yakuza series fan. Even when not on the clock he can somehow never catch a break.

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