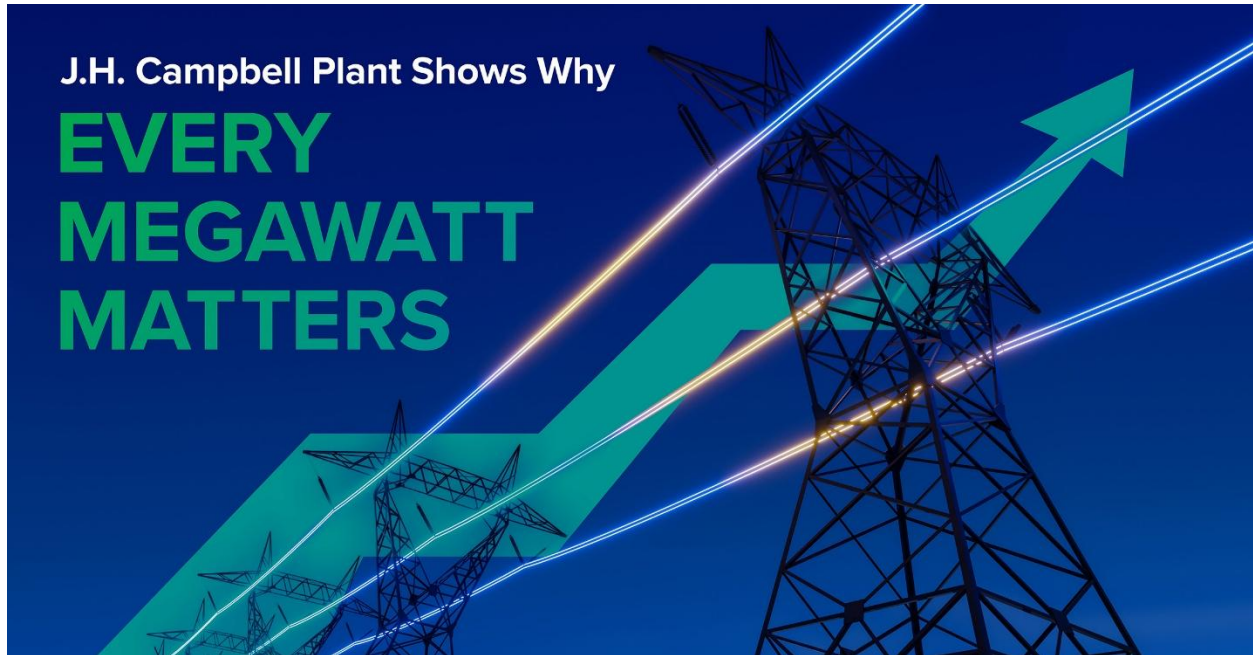


[J.H. Campbell Plant Shows Why Every Megawatt Matters](#)

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This summer tested America's power grid like few others in recent memory. Record-breaking heat pushed electricity demand to unprecedented levels across the nation, with the last week of July setting two all-time power demand records in the lower 48 states, reaching 759,180 MW on July 29 (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2025). On the PJM grid alone, serving 67 million Americans, operators issued nine emergency alerts since June compared to just one the previous summer (Bloomberg, 2025).

In the heart of this crisis, one facility emerged as a critical lifeline. The J.H. Campbell coal plant in Michigan, originally scheduled to close in May because of state regulatory pressure, became a powerful example of why preserving America's dispatchable generation matters today more than ever.

Emergency Authority Saves the Day

Secretary of Energy Chris Wright's decisive action to invoke emergency authority under Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act kept Campbell operational when the grid needed it most (U.S. Department of Energy, 2025). This pragmatic decision reflected the Trump administration's commitment to grid reliability and the role of existing coal capacity in meeting that need.

The results speak volumes. During a brutal late June heatwave, Campbell surged more than 1 gigawatt of power onto the MISO grid when electricity supplies were tightest. The plant achieved a remarkable 66% capacity factor in June, highlighting just how much this dispatchable capacity was needed. For perspective, this single plant at times generated nearly as much electricity as the output of MISO's entire wind fleet during the same period.

Coal Generation Surges Nationwide

Campbell's performance represents just one chapter in coal's broader 2025 success story. On the MISO grid, coal generation has exceeded previous year totals for eight consecutive months, with July posting a 17% year-over-year increase. This surge reflects coal's competitive advantage in meeting rising demand while taking market share from higher-priced natural gas and compensating for weather-dependent renewable shortfalls.

These aren't temporary anomalies but indicators of coal's enduring importance. Coal plants offer fuel security through on-site storage, rapid dispatch capabilities, and proven reliability during extreme weather events that challenge other generation sources.

Meeting America's Energy Future

The numbers paint a clear picture of what's ahead. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects power consumption will hit record highs in 2025 and 2026, rising to 4,186 billion kilowatt-hours in 2025 and 4,284 billion kWh in 2026, up from a record 4,097 billion kWh in 2024 (Reuters, 2025). Leading energy consultancies project longer-term demand growth of 25% by 2030 and nearly 80% by 2050, driven by electrification initiatives and the artificial intelligence revolution reshaping our economy. PJM operators forecast 32 gigawatts of new demand by 2030, with 30 gigawatts coming from data centers alone. That's equivalent to adding more than 20 million new homes to the grid in just five years.

Meeting this challenge requires every available megawatt. While additions of new generation and energy infrastructure remain essential, the timeline for major projects often spans decades. America cannot afford to retire existing, reliable capacity while simultaneously racing to meet explosive demand growth.

The Coal Advantage

America's coal fleet stands uniquely positioned to bridge this supply-demand gap. Unlike nuclear plants already operating at full capacity or natural gas

facilities constrained by pipeline limitations and seasonal heating demands, coal plants maintain significant spare capacity and unmatched fuel security.

The fleet has repeatedly demonstrated its value during grid emergencies, from summer peak demand periods to winter deep freezes. This summer's performance across multiple regional electricity markets confirms that coal generation remains an indispensable component of America's energy security and grid reliability.

As the nation seeks to maintain its competitive edge in artificial intelligence development and advanced manufacturing, reliable electricity supply becomes a national security imperative. The coal fleet offers a proven solution that's already built, already connected, and ready to deliver when called upon.

J.H. Campbell's story illustrates a fundamental truth: America has much of the generating capacity needed to power its economic future, if it's preserved and available when demand peaks. The question isn't whether we can build enough new generation fast enough, but whether we're wise enough to preserve the reliable capacity we already have while that new capacity comes online.

Every megawatt matters in today's tight grid environment. The coal fleet has answered the call this summer, just as it has countless times before. As America faces unprecedented electricity demand growth, our coal plants stand ready to power the innovation and prosperity that will define the next generation of American leadership.