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ELECTRIC UTILITY OPERATIONS

China's Electricity Demand Dropped Almost 8% After COVID-19 Measures

Electricity use dropped 7.8% year on year for January and February, according to IHS Markit

Jeff Postelwait

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China, the country where people first reported symptoms of the disease that became known as COVID-19, saw a drop in electricity demand of nearly 8% as a result of social distancing policies and lockdowns intended to halt the spread of the disease.

Electricity use dropped 7.8% year on year for January and February, according to IHS Markit. Also, China's industrial sector used 12% less electricity, contributing to the drop in demand as many workers stayed home. The textile industry alone used 30% less electricity.

However, in what could be a predictor for what will happen in areas of the world struck with the disease later, other areas of the economy used up more energy.

Residential electricity demand rose by 2.4% as more people stayed home. The commercial and service industries say a 3.1% demand increase for January and February as people stocked up on needed goods before hunkering down. Even as restaurants, bars and hotels limited their business, electricity demand from the telecom and internet sector jumped 27% as China's lockdown policies went into effect.

According to IHS Market, China will see a return to economic normalcy as people return to work. IHS expects a 3.9% growth for the Chinese economy and a 2.8% increase in electricity use, however this is less than half of the expected 7% increase in electricity use China sees in a normal year.

Chinese researchers discovered the novel coronavirus January 8, 2020, just one day before the first patient died of the disease called COVID-19. Scientists did not find the disease was human-to-human transmissible until Jan. 20, a day before the United States reported its first case. The Chinese government issued a lockdown order for Wuhan Jan. 22 and started working on vaccines Jan. 26.