



# Atomic Awakening: A New Look at the History and Future of Nuclear Power

By James Mahaffey

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The American public's introduction to nuclear technology was manifested in destruction and death. With Hiroshima and the Cold War still ringing in our ears, our perception of all things nuclear is seen through the lens of weapons development. Nuclear power is full of mind-bending theories, deep secrets, and the misdirection of public consciousness, some deliberate, some accidental. The result of this fixation on bombs and fallout is that the development of a non-polluting, renewable energy source stands frozen in time.

Outlining nuclear energy's discovery and applications throughout history, Mahaffey's brilliant and accessible book is essential to understanding the astounding phenomenon of nuclear power in an age where renewable energy and climate change have become the defining concerns of the twenty-first century.

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**Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #159975 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Pegasus
- Published on: 2010-10-15
- Released on: 2010-10-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.60" h x 1.00" w x 5.70" l, 1.05 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 368 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For many people, the idea of nuclear power died with the 1986 Chernobyl meltdown, but for the curious and open-minded, this book offers a timely look at nuclear technology that, the author argues, could provide plenty of cheap, renewable energy, if only we can get past our oversized dread of it. Mahaffey's history lesson begins along a familiar path, from 17th-century chemist Robert Boyle to the great 20th-century physicists. Nazism and WWII sent hundreds of scientists—and their cutting-edge work—to the U.S. But the war also sent that research underground in the ultra-secret Manhattan Project. Researchers also dreamed of peaceful atoms to generate electricity and run submarines, planes and rockets. The specters of Hiroshima and a few horrifying nuclear accidents displaced that peaceful vision. With a wealth of anecdotes, Mahaffey, a senior research scientist at the Georgia Tech Research Institute, offers hope leavened with pragmatism that, while nuclear technology may be experimental forever, it can still be useful and safe. (Aug.)

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#### Review

Atomic Awakening offers an essential look at nuclear power and how it will overcome its negative connotations to shape our century. (*Scientific American Book Club Selection*)

The world of science education in America would be an altogether different one if its textbooks were as readable as James Mahaffey's latest on nuclear technology. (*Charleston Post-Courier, Michael S. Smith II*)

ATOMIC AWAKENING provides the most complete history of nuclear power, nuclear weapons and nuclear energy development I have ever read in a single book. (*Nuclear Street, review by Randy Brich*)

The book aids in the understanding of how atomic science is far from the spawn of a wicked weapons program and how nuclear power will shape the 21st century, in which renewable energy and climate change have become defining concerns. (*Nuclear News*)

“A senior research scientist at the Georgia Tech Research Institute, Mahaffey offers hope leavened with pragmatism that, while nuclear technology may be experimental forever, it can still be useful and safe.” (Publishers Weekly)

“Starred Review. Mahaffey writes with delightful witty prose. A surprisingly entertaining history of nuclear power.” (Kirkus Reviews)

#### About the Author

James Mahaffey was a senior research scientist at the Georgia Tech Research Institute where he worked under contract for the Defense Nuclear Agency, the National Ground Intelligence Center, the Air Force Air Logistics Center, and Georgia Power Company. He is the author of *Atomic Awakening* and *Atomic Accidents* and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

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