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# Mizzou is planning power plant addition that employs more natural gas, less coal

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COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri depends heavily on coal to fuel its power plants, but school officials say natural gas could soon play a more prominent role.

Late last month, the school's Board of Curators approved the initial step in a \$34.7 million addition to the power plant, an addition that would boost its capacity to generate electricity by 71 percent and steam by 37 percent.

The plant now has six boilers that heat water to produce steam. One is a "dual-fuel" boiler —

which can be powered by either natural gas or fuel oil — and the other five use coal.

The boilers produce steam, which drives the plant's turbines to generate electricity. The steam is then distributed throughout the campus to help with heating and cooling.

The new system will change that process considerably.

The 25,000-square-foot addition, on the north side of the power plant, will use two or three dual-fuel gas turbines and two or three "heat-recovery" boilers. The turbines will be powered by combustion of the fuel and will produce electricity on their own.

The new boilers will then recover heat from the exhaust of the turbines and produce steam for campus distribution.

Phil Shocklee, assistant director of campus facilities, said the move would make the university less dependent on the availability of coal.

That doesn't mean coal will be eliminated as a fuel for the plants.

"We'll still burn a good bit of coal, but it's a diversification," said Kee Groshong, vice chancellor for administrative services. "We hope there's going to be reasonably priced gas for the next several years, and hope to take advantage of that."