



Drumbeat: July 20, 2013

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 20, 2013 - 10:46am

[Canadian Investigators Says Failed Brakes Led to Crash](#)

The brakes on the train that crashed and burned in Quebec this month weren't applied with enough force, Canadian investigators have found.

The braking on the Montreal Maine & Atlantic Railway Ltd. train was "insufficient" to hold the 73 cars that were parked on a 1.2 percent downhill slope near Lac-Megantic, Quebec, the Transportation Safety Board said today in a statement.

"The train was not completely immobilized," said Ed McCallum, a spokesman for the Ottawa-based agency. He said he was unable to give the number of brakes that were set on the train. "The number of brakes is important, but the quality is also important," said McCallum.

[Railway Weighing Viability After Quebec Crash, Chairman Says](#)

Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway Ltd. is evaluating whether the company remains viable after the July 6 crash of one of its trains in Quebec that killed as many as 50 people, Chairman Ed Burkhardt said.

"Whether we can survive is a complex question," he said today in a telephone interview from the Rosemont, Illinois, offices of Rail World Inc., the closely held company's parent. "We're trying to analyze that right now."

[WTI Crude Exceeds Brent for First Time in Almost Three Years](#)

West Texas Intermediate crude became more expensive than Brent for the first time in almost three years as pipeline and rail shipments helped clear a bottleneck that reduced the price of the U.S. benchmark.

WTI hadn't been higher than Brent since Aug. 17, 2010. The move was in intraday trading. WTI averaged \$17.47 less than Brent in 2012 and traded as much as \$23.44 lower than its European counterpart Feb. 8.

Improved pipeline networks and the use of rail links are helping to ease the North American oil glut created by rising production of crude from shale formations. WTI has jumped 18 percent this year, while Brent has decreased 2.5 percent as North Sea

supplies stabilized after maintenance.

[Alaska North Slope Oil Weakens as Price of Foreign Imports Falls](#)

Alaska North Slope crude on the spot market weakened as the price of foreign imports it competes against for space in West Coast refineries fell.

[Gasoline Advances as Shutdowns May Crimp New York Harbor Supply](#)

Gasoline jumped to the highest in four months on speculation that refinery shutdowns in Canada and Philadelphia may crimp New York Harbor supply.

Futures rose as much as 1.7 percent as Philadelphia Energy Solutions' refinery idled an alkylation unit, which might affect the fluid catalytic cracker. Korea National Oil Corp.'s Come by Chance refinery in Newfoundland shut units for repair. Irving Oil Corp., an exporter to the U.S. Northeast, has idled multiple units, including two catalytic crackers, at its St. John, New Brunswick, plant, according to Genscape Inc., a Louisville, Kentucky-based energy information provider.

[Los Angeles Gasoline Drops to Four-Month Low on High Production](#)

Spot gasoline in Los Angeles tumbled to the lowest level in four months as production in the state jumped to a eight-year seasonal high.

[U.S. Energy Rigs Rise for Third Week, Baker Hughes Says](#)

Oil and gas rigs in the U.S. rose by 11 to 1,770 this week, according to Baker Hughes Inc.

Oil rigs rose four to 1,395, the Houston-based field services company said on its website. Gas rigs increased by seven to 369.

[South Sudan to shut down oil production by end of July](#)

(Reuters) - South Sudan plans to sell 6.4 million barrels of oil worth \$300 million before shutting down its entire production by the end of July due to a row over its alleged support for rebels in neighbouring Sudan, its oil minister said on Saturday.

Sudan, the sole conduit for South Sudan's oil exports, said a month ago it would close two cross-border oil pipelines within 60 days and insisted output be shut by Aug. 7 unless South Sudan gave up support for the rebels. Juba denies backing insurgents.

[Premiers hope to put energy rhetoric behind them](#)

At last year's Council of the Federation meeting, an Alberta-led drive for a national energy strategy erupted into a clash over westbound oil pipelines between Alberta's Alison Redford and British Columbia's Christy Clark, who famously refused to support any national effort until her demands were met.

As provincial and territorial premiers gather once again for their annual get-together on July 24 to 26 at Niagara-on-the-Lake, which will be hosted by Ontario's Kathleen Wynne, energy issues are expected to remain front-and-centre.

This time around, however, premiers are expected to move past their differences and focus on common energy interests.

[Former BP chief builds US Gulf oil acreage](#)

LONDON: Former BP chief executive John Browne is to preside over the biggest set of oil and gas assets in the shallower, mature section of the Gulf of Mexico after buying them from US-based Apache Corp.

Private equity firm Riverstone Holdings LLC, where Browne is a partner, is to pay Apache \$3.75bn for its continental shelf assets, Houston-based Apache said.

[New York breaks peak power usage record in heat wave](#)

(Reuters) - New York State's power grid operator said power usage on Friday broke a record set in 2006 as consumers cranked up their air conditioners to escape sweltering six day-long heat wave.

[Nigerian Lawmakers Want Shell, Eni Oil Award Revoked](#)

Nigeria should revoke oil rights for which Royal Dutch Shell Plc and Eni SpA paid \$1.1 billion, a parliamentary committee said, alleging that the acquisition process was "highly flawed."

[U.S. charges mastermind behind Algeria gas plant attack in absentia](#)

NEW YORK – Terrorism charges were unsealed Friday in New York against a purported al-Qaida-linked leader in Africa accused of leading a January attack at a gas plant in Algeria that killed more than 35 hostages, including 10 Japanese and three Americans.

[Judge Rules Against BP Attempt to Suspend Payments](#)

A federal judge denied an attempt by BP to suspend payments to people and businesses claiming damages related to the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill while an investigator looks into possible misconduct in the payout process.

[This Is What Fracking Really Looks Like](#)

“It’s a very hard subject to photograph,” Berman explained. “You see a drill, and you don’t know what that means, and then it disappears. What does that mean? It took me a while to figure out how to approach it.”

[Shale Truth Interview: Arthur Berman](#)

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is presenting a series of interviews on the real impacts of the shale gas industry. In this first segment of our "Shale Truth Interview" series energy expert Arthur Berman discusses some of the industry claims on the supply and availability of shale gas.

[Around 2,000 Fukushima Workers At Risk Of Thyroid Cancer Due To Radiation: TEPCO](#)

Around 2,000 people who have worked at Japan's wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant face a heightened risk of thyroid cancer, its operator said Friday.

Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) said 1,973 people -- around 10 percent of those employed in emergency crews involved in the clean-up since the meltdowns -- were believed to have been exposed to enough radiation to cause potential problems.

[India solar firms wants probe against dumping broadened](#)

Indian clean-energy companies that claim manufacturers in the US and China dumped solar cells below cost on the market are seeking to extend their case to include imports from Europe and Japan.

Indosolar, Jupiter Solar Power and Websol Energy System have filed a new petition to request that duties be imposed on shipments from the European Union and Japan, S Venkataramani, chief executive officer of Indosolar, said in an e-mailed response to questions about the case's first hearing held this week in New Delhi.

[Coal-heavy South Africa eyes wind and solar sectors](#)

South Africa’s main energy company Eskom is adding extensive wind and solar investments to its coal intensive portfolio.

The \$1.3 billion Renewables Support Programme, supported by the World Bank, African Bank and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, will offer Eskom support in building a windfarm and one of the world's largest concentrating solar power (CSP) plants.

[How green is your state?](#)

What's the greenest state? Kansas.

Yes, Kansas. And it's largely due to all that wind power rolling off the plains.

[Analysis: Lawyers gear up to lobby, sue as McCarthy heads to EPA](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - When Gina McCarthy steps into her new role as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency she will face an army of lawyers trying to sway the agency as it writes rules on power-plant emissions that will form the centerpiece of the Obama administration's climate-action plan.

[Why is killer diesel still poisoning our air?](#)

More than half the cars now sold each year run on diesel. They presently make up a third of the total car fleet, compared with just 7.4 per cent only nine years ago. The dramatic rise has been explicitly encouraged because they emit slightly less carbon dioxide than their petrol-driven counterparts. And big environmental groups that used to campaign noisily against them have remained largely silent, possibly because of their overwhelming, if understandable, concern with climate change.

This is a serious matter. Tiny particulates, one of the two most serious pollutants emitted from car exhausts, are officially calculated to kill 29,000 people a year, over 10 times as many as die in car accidents, in a toll only exceeded by smoking. And the Government's Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution has also suggested that they may play a part in 200,000 more deaths. No one has yet worked out a similar fatality figure for the other big danger from exhausts, nitrogen dioxide, but it is strongly linked with asthma, and a major 25-city study has suggested that living near main urban roads could account for up to 30 per cent of all new cases of the disease in children.

[America's Aging Energy Infrastructure Needs An Overhaul](#)

No one likes being told "I told you so." But since DOE released its report last week, I've been tempted.

The report warns that the existing American energy infrastructure is highly vulnerable

to climate change. That increasing temperatures will stress the U.S. water system and enhance the likelihood of drought. That because conventional power plants require huge volumes of water to operate, lower water availability will mean less reliable power. And that the changing climate will prompt more extreme and frequent storms, increasing energy demand due to extreme temperature changes and threatening our aging and already stressed electric grid with potential blackouts.

[Will U.S. Refiners Pay For New Carbon Regulations?](#)

If the conventional theory doesn't explain the recent move in RIN prices, then what does? According to the Wall Street Journal, on Monday, July 15 the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the EPA's decision to delay biogenic greenhouse gas [GHG] emission regulations for three years. Biogenic GHG emissions are those that are released from recently living biomass. Unlike GHG emissions from fossil fuels, which are released over a short time period after having been sequestered for millions of years, biogenic carbon has only recently been sequestered.

[Why 80-degree temperatures kill in the U.K.](#)

So why does 89 degrees kill in the U.K. when it doesn't in the United States?

One reason is that air-conditioning is relatively rare in England. Only 0.5 percent of homes in the U.K. have air-conditioning, according to the BBC. Compare that to the United States, where an estimated 87 percent of households have an air-conditioning unit.

[Obama's unlikely climate change partner: China](#)

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama has stumbled on an unusual partner in his quest to combat climate change: China.

The world's two biggest emitters of heat-trapping greenhouse gases are finding common cause in efforts to reduce global warming, cooperation the U.S. says could clear the way for other developing nations like India and Brazil to get on board, too.

[Reach for the Sun](#)

A gigantic, steaming-hot mound of compost is not the first place most people would search for a solution to climate change, but the hour is getting very late. “The world experienced unprecedented high-impact climate extremes during the 2001-2010 decade,” declares a new report from the United Nations’ World Meteorological Organization, which added that the decade was “the warmest since the start of modern measurements in 1850.” Among those extreme events: the European heat wave of 2003, which in a mere six weeks caused 71,449 excess deaths, according to a study

sponsored by the European Union. In the United States alone, 2012 brought the hottest summer on record, the worst drought in 50 years and Hurricane Sandy. Besides the loss of life, climate-related disasters cost the United States some \$140 billion in 2012, a study by the Natural Resources Defense Council concluded.

[For Africa to Feed Africa, We Must "Make Peace" With Climate Change](#)

This week in Ghana, leaders from across the continent are gathering for Africa Agriculture Science Week 2013, whose theme is "Africa Feeding Africa." As the World Bank report shows, few things are likely to affect food self-sufficiency in Africa more than the changes in growing conditions caused by climate change. The conference presents a timely opportunity to consider how scientists can help Africans adapt to climate change so they are not "condemned to the future" their colleagues have so vividly outlined in the World Bank analysis.

One way to do this is to strengthen the adaptive capacity of African farmers by bringing climate science down from the upper atmosphere and into farmer's fields in the form of practical seasonal forecasts of probable rainfall patterns and temperature, which can guide farm management (i.e., planting, farm operations and harvesting decisions).

[The Climate Change Real Estate Boom Is Coming](#)

Before he passed away, British futurist James Martin predicted a massive real estate boom in fortified "Climate Change Cities," where the global elite go to escape the ravages of rising sea levels and unstable weather patterns.

[The Haunting Melody of Global Warming](#)

Our own daily experience fails us, and looking at a graph leaves a lot of people cold (so to speak). However, sometimes converting a simple graph into some different form of information can deliver the message far better, and more effectively, than dots on a page.

University of Minnesota undergrad Daniel Crawford did something very clever: He took surface air temperature data and converted them into musical notes, one for each year from 1880 to 2012, and played them on his cello.



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