



DrumBeat: July 30, 2006

Posted by [threadbot](#) on July 30, 2006 - 9:30am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Update by Leanan on 07/30/06 at 9:36 AM EDT]

The *Chicago Tribune* [special report on peak oil](#) appeared as a pull-out supplement in today's paper. It's reportedly huge, with tons of graphics. Really an unusual amount of ink to devote to a single subject. And right behind the front page, too.

Is the world running out of oil?

The prospect seems unthinkable--mostly because the consequences, if true, would be unimaginable. Permanent fuel shortages would tip the world into a generations-long economic depression. Millions would lose their jobs as industry implodes. Farm tractors would be idled for lack of fuel, triggering massive famines. Energy wars would flare. And car-less suburbanites would trudge to their nearest big-box stores--not to buy Chinese-made clothing transported cheaply across the globe, but to scavenge glass and copper wire from abandoned buildings.

Wow.

[editor's note, by Prof. Goose] [Heatwave shuts down nuclear power plants.](#)

[editor's note, by Prof. Goose] [NIMBYism alive and well regarding wind farms, and not just with Robert Kennedy!](#)

[Oil boom puts stress on water supply](#)

Water is a major concern throughout Alberta. Three years of drought, along with a population boom that is stretching water supplies to the limit, prompted the provincial government to unveil a water strategy in 2003. It considers the growing demand for water by industry and people, and factors such as water pollution and drought.

Scientists David Schindler and Bill Donahue's recent research shows the amount of water flowing through the Athabasca River has declined 33 per cent since 1970, due to a combination of human and industrial activity and climate change. Other Prairie rivers have suffered similar, and sometimes much more dramatic, declines.

...This increased scrutiny of the oilpatch's water use has made the industry nervous. Boutilier says the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers recently asked him, "Why are you picking on us? What about agriculture?"

[High energy prices compelling Americans to care about climate](#)

[Matthew Simmons is still predicting \\$200 oil:](#)

"And we shouldn't give the companies any credit for their performance," he said. "It doesn't have anything to do with them."

Moreover, he said the industry's profits could reach a whole other order of magnitude within the next few years. "I wouldn't be surprised if oil reached \$200 a barrel by 2010," Simmons said.

[Where will big oil's big profits go?](#)

[Democrats propose major energy independence bill](#)

[High gas prices not entirely due to oil prices](#)

The portion of gas prices tied to refining has ballooned on its own, apart from oil.

The suspicion of frustrated drivers is correct: After upward spikes, the price of gasoline drops back more slowly than the price of oil — and someone pockets the difference.



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