



DrumBeat: July 22, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 22, 2007 - 8:23am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Gas Prices Rise on Refineries' Record Failures](#)

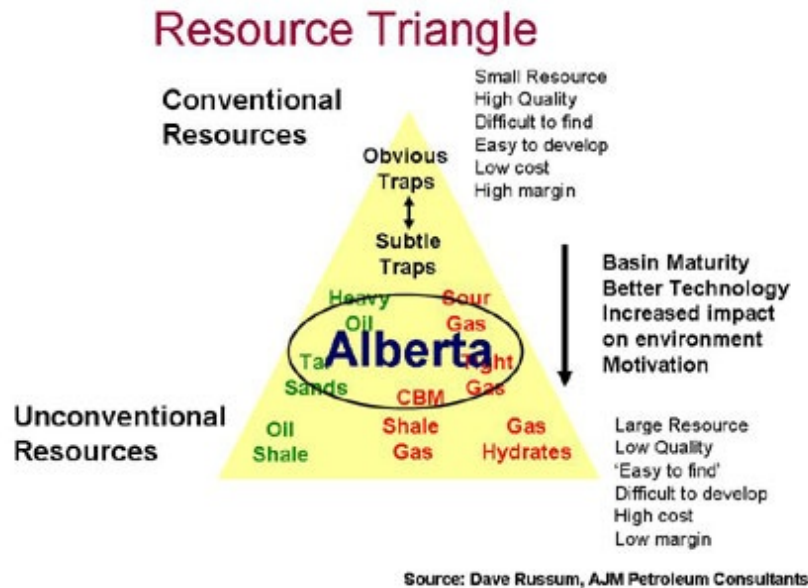
Oil refineries across the country have been plagued by a record number of fires, power failures, leaks, spills and breakdowns this year, causing dozens of them to shut down temporarily or trim production. The disruptions are helping to drive gasoline prices to highs not seen since last summer's records.

These mechanical breakdowns, which one analyst likened to an "invisible hurricane," have created a bottleneck in domestic energy supplies, helping to push up gasoline prices 50 cents this year to well above \$3 a gallon. A third of the country's 150 refineries have reported disruptions to their operations since the beginning of the year, a record according to analysts.

There have been blazes at refineries in Louisiana, Texas, Indiana and California, some of them caused by lightning strikes. Plants have suffered power losses that disrupted operations; a midsize refinery in Kansas was flooded by torrential rains last month.

American refiners are running roughly 5 percent below their normal levels at this time of the year.

[A Natural Gas Crisis Coming?](#)



This resource triangle illustrates that conventional resources (the apex of the triangle) represent a relatively small volume of the total hydrocarbons in an area or basin. Unconventional hydrocarbons depicted by the lower part of the triangle tend to occur in substantially higher volumes. Early exploration and production is focussed on the apex of the triangle. Industry only pursues opportunities lower in the triangle when the opportunities at the top of the triangle are inadequate to meet demand and consumers are prepared to pay to make the opportunities economic. The oval illustrates that the Alberta oil and gas industry has moved significantly down the triangle in pursuing both oil (heavy oil, tar sands) and gas (coalbed methane, tight gas).

[New warning on oil](#)

Brace for another energy crisis. A new authoritative assessment forecasts sharply higher demand that will raise prices and increase reliance on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and unstable regions for oil supplies. While some experts dismiss the analysis as alarmist, we need to prepare for a world characterized by increasing energy scarcity — and think creatively about how to do so.

[After peak oil: Will America survive?](#)

As public awareness about peak oil continues to grow, and even the big oil companies like Exxon Mobil Corp. are now starting to admit that the future supply of oil looks troublesome (see this Boston Globe article), there's an increasing focus on renewable energy solutions. But most members of the public still don't understand energy very well, and they generally have no idea whether alternative energy sources like solar, wind or CSP (see below) can replace oil. Many people are concerned about a potential collapse of modern society due to the end of cheap oil. So to help answer some of these questions, I've put together a set of uncensored, science-based answers about oil, renewable energy and the future of modern civilization.

[Tata's Rs.100,000 car: boon or bane for India?](#)

It looks as though Tata's Rs.100,000 car will be a reality next year. It is now being praised all over the world as India's shining moment ushering in a new automobile era. When seen in the background of India's energy crisis, it shows India's total lack of preparedness and long-term planning failure.

[Saudi's Aramco says four foreign employees killed in fire incident this week](#)

State-run Saudi Arabian Oil Co., or Saudi Aramco, said Saturday that four of its foreign employees died in a fire this week at the Ras Tanura terminal on the country's east coast.

[SK Energy wins right to develop 'promising' Peru offshore oil field](#)

SK Energy, South Korea's largest oil refiner, said Sunday it had won a bid to develop a "very promising" oil field in Peru's offshore Trujillo basin.

[Day Of Reckoning](#)

The time is growing short for the nation to take a serious approach to the dual problems of global warming and a looming energy crisis.

[Standing up to global warming](#)

It's time for people to enlist in the battle against global warming and its accompanying pollution that are messing with the qualities of their life. In fact, it's late already. The large question is whether Americans are up to it even as it would benefit both their health and pocket books.

[Maryland Adopts Plan For Energy Efficiency](#)

In a bid to cut energy use, Maryland yesterday became just the fourth state in the nation to approve a plan that removes the incentive for electric utilities to sell more power in order to make more money.

In a rate case ruling issued yesterday, the Maryland Public Service Commission endorsed an approach known as decoupling, which ensures that utilities do not lose revenue if customers use less electricity.

[Study Slams Ethanol, Industry Cries Foul](#)

Ethanol is not the "silver bullet" that will solve America's energy crisis, according to a new report released Wednesday by three liberal environmental groups.

In the 77-page report, the groups allege that ethanol production will, in many cases, contribute to significant problems in the United States and the developing world.

But Doug Durante, executive director of Ethanol Across America -- an industry advocacy group -- said the criticisms levied in the report were unfair. He said the industry has never tried to be the answer to every problem associated with fossil fuels and transportation.

[Sweden's Saab leads drive to ethanol](#)

By 2020, the Swedish government wants every new car on the road to run on fuels that can be replenished, and one of its car companies is already speeding toward that ambitious goal.

[Watts of Wind: Turbines above the Gorge will soon help power Cowlitz County](#)

About 370 construction workers can complete one 415-foot windmill per day. As of last week, the crews were near to completing 20 of them since tower construction started last month.

...Sections of the wind towers arrive from all over the world. Steel towers come from South Korea; turbine generators and blades come from Denmark. The parts are unloaded at the Port of Longview, creating work for local longshoremen. Truckers then haul them through the Columbia River Gorge to the 9,500-acre wind farm.

Workers mount each wind tower on a pad made with 300 cubic yards of concrete, using a giant crane that crawls from tower to tower and hoists tower sections, turbines and 148-foot-long blades into position.

"It's like clockwork -- it has to be," Young said. "The logistics here are tough. It's thousands of dollars a day for that crane. You don't want to miss a day because a piece is not here. Logistically, that is a nightmare."

[The nuclear option: Nuclear power no panacea for reducing global warming](#)

Is the expansion of the nuclear power industry, which produces no greenhouse gases, a big part of the solution to the global warming problem, as the Bush administration and some state officials claim? Or does it amount to trading one evil for an even greater evil?

[Ralph Nader: The New Face of Nuclear Power \(Same as the Old\)](#)

The old argument in the Seventies was that nuclear powered electricity would reduce our dependence on foreign oil. With only three percent of our electricity coming from burning petroleum, the pro-nuke lobby is now jumping on the global warming bandwagon. Uranium, they argue, does not release greenhouse gases like coal or oil.

What nuclear lobbies ignore is all the coal and oil that needs to be burned to enrich uranium, to transport radioactive wastes with protective highway and rail convoys and provide security since they would be a priority target for sabotage.

[World energy needs a boon for Wyoming](#)

Due to the increasing global demand for its energy resources, Wyoming's economy performed second best in the nation last year, officials say.

The increase in employment opportunities, vigorous natural-gas production, a consistent low housing foreclosure rate and a mining industry powerhouse led the way. But all industries are expanding due to the booming energy sector.

[Oil and gas may run short by 2015, say industry experts](#)

Humanity is approaching an unprecedented crisis when not enough oil and gas will be produced to keep industrial civilisation running, the world's top oilmen warned last week.

The warning – which is being hailed as a "tipping point" on both sides of the Atlantic – marks the first time that the industry has accepted that it may soon no longer be able to meet demand for its products. In Facing the Hard Truths about Energy, it gives authoritative support to concern about impending shortages, following a similar alert by the International Energy Agency less than two weeks ago.

[Arizona shouldn't waste public money on impractical photovoltaic cells](#)

About 30 years ago, a great wave of interest in solar energy swept through the state Legislature. Being a former engineer, I realized that the numbers didn't quite add up. But I went along with the near unanimous vote to set up several solar-energy programs, hoping that economies of scale would kick in and make the programs feasible.

Grants, rebates and credits flowed profusely, and the only result was that the state and many of its citizens lost many millions of dollars. The cycle has been repeated several times, the most famous being the alternative-fuels disaster that could have bankrupted

the state.

Now it looks as if we're poised for another round.

[Global Warming Theories Fizzle, New Studies Show](#)

Claims of alarming changes in nature because of global warming are being discredited.

Results of two new studies of historical hurricane patterns add to a growing body of research that discredits global warming alarmism, said James M. Taylor, an environmental policy senior fellow at The Heartland Institute.

Reports on the studies were carried in the June 7 issue of Nature but largely have been ignored or overlooked by most news reporting services. In that report scientists documented their reconstruction of Atlantic Ocean hurricane activity back 270 years.

[Governors address climate change](#)

States should develop creative approaches to climate change, just as they have with challenges such as health care, despite their different economic interests, governors said Saturday.

"No individual state is going to solve the climate change problem, but we can do our part," Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty said. "In the absence of national or international consensus or progress, we have the opportunity to show the way."

[Zimbabwe hunts spirit medium over false fuel claim](#)

Zimbabwe police are hunting a traditional spirit medium who led President Robert Mugabe's government on a fruitless search for much-needed fuel she said was mysteriously oozing out of a rock.

[Christo's latest project: an oil barrel pyramid for the Emirates](#)

In a break with their usual temporary installations, the artist Christo and his wife Jeanne-Claude on Saturday unveiled a plan to build a giant pyramid of oil barrels in the desert of the United Arab Emirates.

"The Emirates is very keen to see this project realized," Christo said at a presentation of models and drawings for the 150-metre (500-foot) monument, roughly two thirds of the height of the Eiffel Tower.

The idea for the pyramid, with a flat summit, made up of 390,500 oil barrels piled up

horizontally, dates back to the 1960s, the artists said. Two earlier attempts to erect it in Texas and the Netherlands came to nothing before the couple decided to turn to the UAE.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/).