



DrumBeat: August 12, 2007

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Middle East risks fuel oil crunch period, says IEA](#)

The International Energy Agency yesterday warned that the Middle East runs the risk of becoming a net importer of fuel oil at precisely the time worldwide output of the product could diminish.

Fuel oil demand in the region, which sits on nearly three-quarters of the world's proven reserves of crude oil, has reportedly spiked on the back of hefty power generation requirements as gas supplies become insufficient to meet electricity demand, the IEA said.

The region's rapid economic expansion coupled with the start of Summer has led to power shortages in Kuwait, where a power-rationing programme during peak hours is in place, and in the United Arab Emirates, where industrial users are reportedly turning to coal and rolling blackouts have occurred in the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, the IEA added.

[China exports more oil products](#)

Increasing exports with less imports aggravated short supply in some areas, as oil consumption peaked in summer.

Qiu Xiaofeng, an analyst with China Merchants Securities, said if the export was not curbed, oil prices at home would rise.

Other analysts believed the increasing exports and the ensuing short supply were due largely to the price gap between domestic and international markets.

[Food banks see more need as donations fall](#)

Dianna Kessel, family support specialist at the Safety Harbor center, and Judy Mitchell, president of Church and Community Outreach, say it is a sign of the times in Florida. Even two-income families are stressed, and increasing numbers of clients at area food pantries mention that their homes are in foreclosure.

"Even those who are not losing their homes are hanging on by the skin of their teeth," said Mitchell. "Florida is no longer a reasonable place to live."

The high cost of gasoline is a major factor straining family budgets, Kessel said. Not only do those who can't fuel their cars find it hard to get to work, but gasoline prices also have driven up food prices. Higher taxes and property insurance have impacted those who own homes, and also have led to rising apartment rents and higher prices for retail goods and services.

[Coming soon: Fuel-friendly SUVs?](#)

If you love driving your SUV but hate the cost and eco-stigma that come with it, automakers are trying to help you resolve your issues.

In the past year, sustained gas prices of \$3 a gallon have led to a decline in the market for sport-utility vehicles, trucks and other large vehicles that use a lot of fuel.

To win back customers, automakers are using new technologies to improve SUVs' fuel economy, including cleaner-burning diesel engines, gasoline-electric hybrids, special lightweight parts and even power-steering pumps that think for themselves.

[Australia: Diesel can be deadly](#)

While a tank of diesel will take you further and therefore release less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, the particulates they emit can be deadly.

[Hybrid technology may revitalize more efficient diesel engine](#)

You may have noticed recently that you are hearing more and more about diesel cars.

That makes sense because diesel engines get better fuel economy than gasoline engines. With gas prices rising so much, people are interested in any technology that cuts the amount of fuel cars use.

But have you ever wondered why diesel engines get better mileage?

[TxDOT may soon only maintain roads](#)

Texas Department of Transportation faces its most severe funding crisis ever, and according to officials who met Friday at the second Northeast Texas Mobility Transportation Forum in Commerce, things are not going to get better.

TxDOT leaders, including Michael W. Behrans, TxDOT executive director, and Amadeo

Saenz Jr., assistant executive director of engineering operations, told the group of city and county leaders unless new sources of roadway funding are developed, the state soon will be in a maintenance program rather than a roadbuilding program.

[Putting the brakes on sales](#)

A sales boom has slowed for the tractor-trailer truck industry.

The problem stems from new Environmental Protection Agency standards limiting the amount of emissions from trucks.

"The government has taken 10 [percent] to 15 percent of our business," said John Cerni, owner of Cerni Motors dealership in Austintown.

[What's America's energy IQ?](#)

The survey, conducted for the American Petroleum Institute (API) by well-known public opinion surveyors, Harris Interactive, shows that "most U.S. adults have a fundamental lack of knowledge regarding energy demand and supplies and the role of America's oil and natural gas companies," said Dr. Felmy, API's chief economist.

In fact, when presented with 20 multiple-choice questions, on average more than 25 percent of respondents said they were "not sure," and in many cases people "chose the response that is farthest from the correct answer," said Felmy.

[Congress should reverse oil-first energy policy](#)

BOTH HOUSES of Congress have passed legislation this session that would mark a shift in energy policy toward federal investment in the development of alternative forms of power.

[51 Zimbabwe bus drivers arrested as transport crisis bites](#)

Fifty-one bus drivers were arrested for overcharging this weekend in the Zimbabwean capital Harare as riot police were brought in to control crowds of desperate travellers, official media reported Sunday.

Thousands of would-be travellers were stranded at Harare's main railway station, unable to catch trains for the holiday weekend, according to the Sunday Mail.

[The Philippines: Gov't eyes long-term coal supply deals](#)

To prevent a shortage in fuel supply for the country's baseload power plants, the Department of Energy is seeking more long-term coal supply deals.

[Danes set for North Pole mission](#)

Danish researchers are due to set sail for the North Pole to collect geological data, on a mission similar to Russia's trip earlier this month.

[Trinidad and Tobago: Don't Panic - Audit shows natural gas will run out by 2019](#)

Saith said yesterday the Ryder Scott audit showed there was an estimated 37 trillion cubic feet (tcf), identified as gas yet to be explored even though the existing known reserves had declined.

"So it is not a simple matter as if we are running out of gas. What it is saying is that you've got to do the things necessary to get exploration going where there is gas," Saith said.

[Japan: Preferential tax eyed for biofuel](#)

The Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry said Saturday it plans to introduce a new preferential tax system in fiscal 2008 aimed at promoting a wider use of biofuel, which could help curtail greenhouse gas emissions.

[Iran official raises prospect of free market gasoline](#)

A senior Iranian Oil Ministry official hinted the country may start selling gasoline at a higher price in addition to the subsidized amount allocated to drivers under a rationing scheme launched in June.

[Oil and Pollution at a Critical Stage](#)

There are analysts asking if we already entered the final era of oil.

This leads to seriously think on developing new sources of cleaner energy in a world already feeling the dangers of global heating due to the massive use of fossil fuels as oil and coal.

[Tanzania: Families Dig Deeper Into Pockets to Put Food on Their Tables](#)

Prices of basic foodstuffs including cooking oil have shot up drastically in Arusha many of the traders pointing an accusing finger at the recent increase in petrol, diesel and other petroleum products.

[India should tap bio-fuel sources in Africa](#)

Large tracts of unutilised fertile land in Africa provides opportunity for India to meet its bio-fuel needs and reduce dependency on natural fuel, a senior United Nations official said here.

[Jamaica: Finding alternative sources of energy is a priority, says PM](#)

With Jamaica's oil bill set to pass the US\$-billion mark this year, the need to find and utilise alternative sources of energy must become a priority, said the prime minister of Jamaica, Portia Simpson Miller.

[Canada: Feds hope we'll take a shine to solar-powered water heaters](#)

Thousands of Canadians could soon have new solar-powered water heaters in their homes if their local gas or electrical utilities, homebuilders or municipalities take advantage of a federal pilot project.

[Higher fuel costs a struggle](#)

Higher prices have cost-conscious consumers focusing on how much they spend at the pump, but just think about the impact that expense has on agencies gassing up school buses, garbage trucks, police cars and other vehicles used by government officials.

You're not just paying for gas at the pump - taxpayers end up footing the bill for agencies with gas costs that would awe the average consumer.

[The case for the gas tax: *It could reduce fuel use more*](#)

U.S. Rep. John Dingell's pitch for a massive increase in gasoline taxes makes little sense standing next to a fuel pump shoveling another \$50 into your tank. But from the boardrooms of Detroit's automakers and the halls of Washington's think tanks, it appears better than most alternatives.

[Electrical costs will stay high](#)

The operators of New England's power grid have issued a stern warning: No matter what government policies are adopted to promote conservation and alternative energy, the region's electricity rates over the next 20 years will be linked inexorably to the price of natural gas.

Even if the six states built new nuclear generators at existing nuclear plants and a slew of cleaner-burning coal plants, or were able to make up the expected 8,000-megawatt increase in power demand over the next two decades with conservation alone, ISO New England says the region will continue to suffer among the highest electricity rates in the nation unless the price of natural gas plummets. That could be achieved by permitting development of America's vast natural-gas fields offshore and above the Arctic Circle, but Congress, abetted by the Connecticut delegation, has forbidden that for decades.

[Effort to build coal-to-gas plant praised, attacked](#)

One side calls it clean-coal technology.

The other says the proposed plant to convert coal to natural gas is a recipe for more global warming and more destruction of Kentucky landscapes.

[Growers scratching out a living](#)

More than a hundred Northwest Arkansas poultry farmers are lobbying Tyson Foods Inc. for contractual agreements that give them more money, a response to what they call years of inaction by the meat giant amid skyrocketing business costs.

The group's leaders say the Springdale company is putting off raising the payments per pound of chicken to hedge against its own growing costs. Meanwhile, rapid increases in fuel and living expenses have put these independent farms in jeopardy, they say.

[The wrong extremes on biofuel](#)

Just when you thought George W. Bush and Fidel Castro were dead – one politically, the other literally – they're back at it. Their new fight is about biofuel, the conversion of living things into liquid energy. One president says it's an assault on nature and humanity.

The other says it's an agricultural revolution that will liberate the masses. Mr. Bush is the revolutionary. Mr. Castro is the reactionary.

[Ethanol has become scapegoat](#)

The anti-ethanol chorus is growing louder, blaming all the world's problems on ethanol. The latest argument of ethanol driving up food prices sounds alarming, until you look at the facts. Sure, corn prices do factor into some foods, but to find the real culprit in the grocery-store aisle, you should look at energy costs.

High crude-oil prices translate into high fuel costs, not only at the pump, but also in the consumer goods that are dependent upon energy for processing, packaging and transportation. Corn is only a tiny fraction of the overall food-price picture.

[Thousands of flex-fuel vehicles, no ethanol](#)

U.S. automakers have stepped up production of vehicles that can run on ethanol, and El Pasoans can easily find such vehicles at some local new car dealerships.

The problem is that ethanol fuel, most of which is produced from corn, is not easily found.

['Hypermiler' is on a roll](#)

On the hottest days of summer, Wayne Gerdes drives with his windows rolled up and the air conditioning off.

He crawls up to stoplights at a few miles an hour, wears an "ice vest" (technical equipment used in nuclear power plants) to stay cool on long rides, parks in the isolated outskirts of mall lots and turns off the engine and coasts on major highways — all in the name of greater fuel efficiency.

[Woes mount for Wal-Mart](#)

Last week, Wal-Mart reported anemic same-store sales growth of 1.9 per cent for July, the kick-off of the important back-to-school season, trailing the industry average of 2.6 per cent. Wal-Mart blames financial pressure on shoppers from high fuel prices and a weak housing market.

[Venezuela's Chavez says oil headed for \\$100 barrel](#)

World oil prices are headed for \$100 per barrel, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez predicted on Saturday, and said he will cut supplies to the United States if the U.S. government "attacks" the South American nation again.

"I've always said that oil prices are headed straight to \$100 per barrel," he said during a televised speech. "We should prepare ourselves for those prices of one hundred dollars."

Chavez said high oil prices were the sign of a "global crisis" in energy caused by voracious consumption that has vastly reduced available oil reserves.

[Chavez deepens Petrocaribe oil pledges](#)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez pledged on Saturday to meet Caribbean nations' oil needs for years to come, and urged the region to unite and seek greater independence from the United States.

Chavez deepened past pledges to share his country's oil wealth as he addressed a summit of nations taking part in Venezuela's Petrocaribe oil initiative, which supplies fuel under preferential terms.

[UAE may carve up, offer oil and gas territory: sources](#)

Prized territory, shared for decades between multinationals and major oil and gas producer the United Arab Emirates (UAE), might be broken up in the medium term, industry sources said on Friday.

The change could follow an open contest that would bring in better technology and a greater variety of players, including Asian firms seeking to meet escalating energy demand.

[Making Money vs Creating Wealth - Migrating to New Energy Paradigms Part 5](#)

Making money is not the same as creating wealth. The objective of this article is to facilitate an understanding of this deceptively simple statement which, in turn, will facilitate an understanding of the dimensions of the problems now being faced by humanity. Hopefully, this will lead to a realization that these problems – most of them – are soluble within a relatively short space of time.

[Deregulation isn't helping consumers](#)

A recent study of changes in electric rates state-by-state from 2002 to 2006 shows that in states where the cost of generating power was no longer regulated, electric rates shot up 35.7 percent.

In the states with regulated electric utilities, rates climbed, too, but at a much slower pace — 20.8 percent.

[Kirchner warns oil companies about investments](#)

Argentina is willing to invest heavily in the exploration and production of natural gas in Bolivia if the multinational companies, such as (Brazil's) Petrobras and (Spain's) Repsol-YPF, are not committed to the undertaking warned Argentine president Nestor Kirchner in Tarija.

[Getting smart about land use, environment and economy](#)

There are too many of us burning things up. It is no accident that we face extinction as we reach peak oil consumption and record population levels.

We need a general moratorium - a time-out to cool off. But that needs to be coordinated with a change in direction. We must conceive and create a world economy that does not require growth in population or increasing consumption to be viable. Anything short of that will avoid a catastrophic collapse of our civilization.

[24 hours to save the planet](#)

Can Jack Bauer save the world? News that television's secret agent, played by Kiefer Sutherland in the addictive thriller 24, is to take the war against global warming into millions of homes has been welcomed by environmental campaigners as a seminal moment in the 'greening' of Hollywood.

[World Water Week to focus on climate change, biofuels](#)

Climate change and a potential water shortage in some regions, also due to the diversion of water to crops for biofuels, will be at the centre of the 2007 World Water Week which opens here Monday, with 2,500 international experts expected to attend.

The theme of the annual event's 17th edition will be "Progress and Prospects on Water: Striving for Sustainability in a Changing World."



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