



## DrumBeat: September 5, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 5, 2007 - 8:59am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Technical issues stall hydrogen vehicles](#)

A few years ago, it looked like we would all be driving pollution-free hydrogen-powered vehicles someday very soon. The signs, after all, were everywhere.

Automakers debuted concept vehicles with fuel cells under the hood. Investors poured money into hydrogen startups. News stories abounded about the new "hydrogen economy." Even President Bush, in his 2003 State of the Union message, said babies born in 2003 should be in hydrogen cars by the time they hit driving age.

But today, four years after that prediction, big technical challenges remain in using hydrogen to power passenger vehicles on a wide scale. These range from storing it safely aboard a car to producing it from something other than the fossil fuels it is supposed to replace.

### [Price Gouging? Speculation? Analysts Explain Why Oil Prices are up Over 100% In Last Four Years](#)

Every year since 2003, crude oil prices have hit new highs. Topping out in the mid-\$30 range back in 2003, this year spot crude reached almost \$80 a barrel during the peak U.S. summer driving season. That's an increase of over 100% in just four years.

### [John Deere's renewable energy harvest](#)

For Steve Tiedeman, a farmer in Woodstock, Minn., it hasn't been all that great of a year. The weather's been dry, and he's lost about a third of the corn on his 1,000 acre farm.

But Tiedeman, along with a growing number of farmers across the Midwest, can now rely on another, more stable crop: wind power.

### [Mount Stripmine?](#)

WHILE THE nation's attention was focused on the nine lives lost in the deep coal mine of Crandall Canyon in Utah, the Bush administration has been busy pushing a form of strip mining in Appalachia that is lethal to land itself. It has proposed a rule that would explicitly allow mining companies to blast and bulldoze the tops of mountains and dump rock and dirt debris into streams and hollows. While this has been going on under existing rules and laws, critics of the dumping had fought it in courts. With the new rule, mine owners expect the legal fights to end.

### [Coal Rush Reverses, Power Firms Follow](#)

The mayor of Missoula, Mont., is the latest person to discover just how unpopular coal plants have become.

In early August, Mayor John Engen (D) won city council support to buy electricity from a new coal-fired plant scheduled to begin operation in 2011. He said the city government would save money on its electric bills.

But three weeks later, Engen pulled out of the deal after receiving hundreds of e-mails and phone calls from constituents upset that Missoula would contribute to the creation of a coal plant and concerned about what the town would do if the plant never got built.

### [WWF says Asia-Pacific coal rush worsens global warming](#)

Growing dependence on cheap coal to power rapid economic growth in the Asia-Pacific could undermine efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that is blamed for harmful changes in the world's climate, experts said on Tuesday.

### [Canada must lead by example in claiming Arctic](#)

It's generally assumed that one-quarter of the world's undiscovered oil and gas lies waiting beneath Arctic ice and rock.

In fact, while this estimate is usually attributed to the US Geological Survey, the United States has done no systematic study of the region. The actual extent of the potential reserves will be clarified by surveys now under way.

### [Dams 'contributing to global warming'](#)

The world's dams are contributing millions of tonnes of harmful greenhouse gases and spurring on global warming, according to a US environmental agency.

International Rivers Network executive director Patrick McCully told Brisbane's Riversymposium rotting vegetation and fish found in dams produced surprising

amounts of methane - 25 times stronger than carbon dioxide.

### [Energy Market Consolidation Versus Foreign State Takeovers in Central Europe](#)

In common with the Baltic states and Poland, which face the risk of being caught between Russian and German energy policies, Hungary is facing a similar two-front problem, albeit with country-specific differences. In Hungary's case, Russia and Austria (with Germany in a lesser role) seem to be reaching out toward each other over Hungary, targeting parts of Hungary's energy systems.

### [Richardson calls for transportation alternatives](#)

The United States' transportation system is "fixated on highways" and should include more emphasis on energy-efficient modes of travel with planning to ensure preservation of open spaces, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson said here today.

### [Nuclear Bid to Rival Coal Chilled by Flaws, Delay in Finland](#)

lawed welds for the reactor's steel liner, unusable water- coolant pipes and suspect concrete in the foundation already have pushed back the delivery date of the Olkiluoto-3 unit by at least two years.

"Substantial delays, I think you can use that word, yes," the 54-year-old Landtman says.

### [Japan, Australia working on bilateral nuclear energy deal](#)

Japan and Australia plan to strengthen bilateral cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear power, with Tokyo poised to secure a stable supply of uranium from the world's biggest uranium reserves holder, Japanese sources said Tuesday.

### [Canada to reprocess other nations' nuclear waste](#)

Canada will eventually get into the business of reprocessing spent nuclear fuel, Natural Resources Minister Gary Lunn said yesterday as the government considers an invitation to join a major international effort to promote nuclear technology worldwide.

### [Global growing problem of wheat production](#)

With 3 billion new consumers starting to emulate Western lifestyles, it is not surprising that in six of the past seven years consumption of grains has exceeded production.

The second major driver of demand is the ongoing battle for crops between a billion car drivers and the twice as many still struggling for enough to eat.

### [Chicago: Nation's Largest School Bus Company Switches Entire Fleet To Bio-Fuel](#)

The company, Cook Illinois Corporation, last year reduced nearly 1,000 tons of toxic emissions in Chicago by switching to a biodiesel fuel in many of its buses.

### [Marina gas seller on a hunger strike to stop high fuel prices](#)

Shahbazi's predicament began in November 2005, when he put up a sign at his Marina Shell station that read: "Consumers' pain is Big Oil's unearned profit! To oppose it see cashier."

Inside, he handed out fliers accusing oil companies of manipulating gas prices and trying to drive franchise owners like himself out of business by selling gas for less at company-owned stations. He says that the goal of Big Oil is to control the market and raise prices ever higher.

### [Shell boss stumps for off-shore drilling](#)

Shell Oil president John Hofmeister says it is possible for this country to approach energy independence but to do so it must embrace new fuel technologies and rethink existing policies preventing additional oil and gas development.

### [Yacht sellers see smooth sailing](#)

Real estate prices are falling, because of tightening credit. Auto sales are slumping, as consumers feel less wealthy. Sales of small boats have suffered from high fuel prices and pinched pocketbooks.

But the boats sold to the rich are different.

### [Gazpain de France](#)

The creeping advance of state corporatism continues, slipping tentacles into energy in France, stock markets in Sweden, oil reserves in Alberta and auto parts in Canada. On

the great playing field of global business and finance, the rise of government-run corporations remains a small trend. But it is growing, ultimately threatening the market-based economic principles that drive modern capitalism.

### [Argentina: Cold Season for Investors](#)

Fernandez' first crisis may turn out to be the exit of Shell and ExxonMobil (Esso) from Argentina. "Price controls and the government's approach to fuel supply are likely to force Shell and Esso to leave the country," UK-based risk consultancy Exclusive Analysis said last week.

Shell officials are now under threat with imprisonment and the company faces fines for what the government claims are violations of a little-used 1974 law. Shell denies any wrongdoing.

### [Gas Natural, Repsol Shares Hit by Algerian Production Setback](#)

Shares of Gas Natural SDG SA (GAS.MC) and Repsol YPF SA (REP) were hit Tuesday by the Algerian government's decision to take full control of the Gassi Touil gas exploration project it had been running with the two Spanish companies.

### [Nicaragua and Esso: What Will Happen?](#)

Nicaragua's government will likely reach an agreement with Esso over its confiscated terminal, experts predict.

### [Nigeria: 4000 Workers Protest Power Outage in Onitsha](#)

Their protest followed the total disconnection of their light after an alleged attempt by PHCN, Onitsha Business Unit to allegedly trick them into signing an agreement to pay estimated bill of 2003 they claimed they did not incur and N5000 reconnection fee for each of the companies operating in the industrial cluster.

### [Growth of Automobiles and Oil Industry – A Forecast](#)

The industry is confident there are new sources of supply, but some analysts say the world may be close to "peak oil," the moment when supply starts to dwindle. Now, there are around 500 cars for every 1,000 people in the U.S., 8 for every 1,000 in India, 15 for every 1,000 in China, and 137 for every 1,000 in Brazil. By 2050, penetration in the U.S. will have risen to 555 per 1,000; in India it will be 382, in China 363, and in Brazil 645. Probably based on the present trend China and India together have about 2.5 billion people throw in the rest and that adds up to a lot of greenhouse gas. Surprisingly,

all these forecast terrified us, if not the present generation, but for the future generations.

### [Pipe dream of infinite fuel is a costly myth](#)

The logic of peak oil is simple. Oil is a finite resource: the quicker you consume it, the faster it depletes. Production must peak before diminishing towards zero, no matter how high the price or how fancy the technology becomes.

### [Burmese Vessel Suspected of Smuggling Diesel Fuel from Malaysia](#)

Eleven Burmese nationals were arrested by Malaysian authorities on Tuesday in Butterworth after anti-smuggling officers inspected a vessel they said was loading subsidized diesel fuel to be taken to Burma, where fuel prices have skyrocketed in recent weeks.

### [Mexico's Pemex, Statoil renew cooperation agreement](#)

Pemex lacks the experience and technology needed to develop oil and natural gas reserves in deep waters in the Gulf of Mexico, and the country's constitution bars it from forming joint-venture agreements with outside companies to develop these reserves.

### [Mexico Violence May Get Worse](#)

Despite EPR claiming credit for the gas pipeline and Sears store, there are suspicions the drug cartels were involved. "Such tactics would mirror those of the Colombian drug cartels in the 1980s," Exclusive Analysis says. "Security forces, police stations, the oil and gas industry and foreign banks are now at heightened risk from both the guerrilla groups and cartels."

### [Another Domino Falls as US Electric Power Deregulation Roll Back Continues](#)

When California passed its long awaited electricity deregulation law in 1996, it was supposed to signal the start of a revolution.

Proponents had argued for years that breaking up utility monopolies would trigger an explosion in generating capacity.

That, in turn, would create cheap power, spurring economic growth and prosperity. Utilities and their investors were to be the big losers, and a new generation of feisty upstarts was to take their place.

## [Global Warning: The Last Chance for Change](#), by Paul Brown

Brown reveals the truth behind the political rhetoric, China and peak oil. He addresses how energy security and supply will alter the economic outlook of the world. He clarifies that new technologies to replace fossil fuels is the greatest business opportunity of the 21st century, creating massive local/global opportunities for jobs in sunrise industries.

## [Energy poverty and political vision](#)

Around 2.64 billion people, 40% of the world's population, lack modern fuels for cooking and heating. 1.6 billion have no access to electricity, three-quarters of them living in rural areas. As decision-makers in Europe and north America wonder how to reduce energy consumption, massive regions of the developing world remain literally in the dark. Populations in the energy-poverty trap - covering vast areas of south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa - are nowhere likely to influence the accountability of the energy policies of their governments.

## [What's the Real Story Behind the Power Outages in Southern California?](#)

I pay my bills every month, I'm not an energy glutton, and I don't live in Baghdad. I live in Los Angeles, the second largest city in the country, and while the TV weatherschmucks loves to talk about the "record heat," the truth is that triple-digit temperatures in southern California happen every single year and no matter how many breathless adjectives they come up with, nothing has changed since the invention of air conditioning. So why are 57,000 people without power today? New York City is hotter than us and they have power. How about Miami? Atlanta? Birmingham? I've been in Vegas in 120 degree weather and those casinos were lit up like...er, a slot machine. So what the hell is wrong with California? And why is nobody reporting it?

## [Higher oil company taxes hurt consumers](#)

At a time when almost every presidential candidate is talking about "energy independence," it seems strange that Congress is moving in the opposite direction with the energy bill being considered by the Senate.

## Raymond J. Learsy - [Our Energy Crisis: America's Town Meetings Act While Washington Fiddles](#)

While Washington fiddles, towns across Connecticut are staring to act. Spurred on, first and foremost by the realization that something must be done in their own interest and that of the nation. That if they don't act by deed and example, nothing of significance on this core issue will come to pass. With an encouraging State government, and with the help of national non profit organizations such as SmartPower, a town like Sharon

Connecticut is aiming to source 20% of its municipal power needs from alternative means (wind, sun and water) by 2010.

### [N. Bay Researchers Hope To Turn Algae Into Fuel](#) (video)

Bright green globs of ordinary algae may someday help solve America's energy crisis, even if they are grown atop stinky treated sewage water.

### [India: Efficient firewood stoves to be on show](#)

Even though the shortage of firewood and its spiralling price are some of the problems affecting the conventional energy sector, when compared to fast depleting petroleum-based fuels such as kerosene or LPG, firewood is still one of the dependable sources of cooking fuel.

But ordinary firewood stoves are not energy-efficient and a lot of firewood goes waste.

### [Qatar LPG production to touch 14mtpa](#)

Referring to future projects, Al Attiyah said that several key projects are under advanced stages of development which will further boost Qatar's energy and petroleum product exports.

He said that RasGas and Qatargas both have significant expansion projects under way that will bring LNG exports to 77 million tonnes per year.

### [A Kinder, Gentler Smokestack](#)

Critics say a power plant designed to reduce carbon emissions could be a cancer-causing boondoggle.

### [Bank-Led Satellite Imagery Sheds More Light on Gas Flaring Pollution](#)

From more than 400 miles in space, the World Bank is pinpointing the true extent of one of the planet's major environmental problems - gas flaring.

### [Meeting the Challenge: Matt Simmons Calls for Hard Look at 'Conservation Production' - \(Part 1 of 6\)](#)

There's been a lot of talk recently about whether the slowing U.S. economy will have a



hard or soft landing. Matthew Simmons, the noted investment banker who has gained a global reputation on the basis of his clarion call that global oil production is showing signs that a steep decline is just around the corner, doesn't think a soft energy landing is possible.

But he does hold out hope for a bumpy landing.

### [Pump price highest in month: government](#)

U.S. retail gasoline prices jumped almost a nickel over the last week to the highest level in a month as tight motor fuel supplies threatened to send pump costs higher, the government said on Tuesday.

### [Libya, Other OPEC States Adding Oil to Market](#)

Libya's top oil official said Tuesday that some OPEC countries, including Libya, have been pumping more oil compared with recent past months as customers ask for additional supplies.

"We in Libya have increased our production because some customers have asked for more oil. And I know some other OPEC countries are doing this as well," Shokri Ghanem, head of Libya's state-run National Oil Co. told Dow Jones Newswires by telephone from Tripoli.

### [Saudi hikes October crude prices](#)

Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia has raised October official selling prices (OSPs) for its crude for Asian buyers and its lightest grades to Europe, but mostly lowered prices to the US.

State-owned Saudi Aramco set its flagship Arab Light crude to Asian buyers at its highest premium in more than four years, with the price hike for lighter grades beating expectations and likely to support demand for rival crudes traded on the spot market.

### [High Costs, Taxes Hitting UK Oil, Gas Developments - Execs](#)

High costs and taxes could prevent development of some of the U.K.'s remaining oil and gas resources, even in areas where significant new discoveries are still being made, senior oil industry executives said Tuesday.

"We are heading in a direction that will see sub-optimal development of gas our country desperately needs," said Frank Chapman, Chief Executive of U.K.-based BG Group PLC

(BRG) at an industry conference in Aberdeen, Scotland.

### [Iran: An oil industry that lost its head](#)

Iran's key oil industry could plunge into crisis, oil experts have warned, if President Mahmud Ahmadinejad does not urgently appoint a replacement for Seyed Kazem Vaziri Hamaneh, who was sacked as oil minister two weeks ago in a major cabinet reshuffle.

### [Shakeup in Nigerian Oil Sector Not a Simple Matter](#)

Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua's plans to break up the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corp. and restructure the state energy sector has prompted largely positive reactions, but it's also left analysts with more questions than answers.

"This is a serious proposal, to allow it (NNPC) to become a serious player along the Saudi Arabia Oil Company model, but my only critique is that there is no policy platform with details and analysis," said Sebastian Spio-Garbrah, Africa and Middle East analyst at Eurasia Group.

### [Iraqi crude oil flowing through Turkey](#)

Iraq's oil minister said Tuesday that crude oil began to flow from his country's northern oil-rich Kirkuk to a Turkish export terminal last week — for the first time since Saddam Hussein was toppled in 2003.

"We're pumping between 300,000 to 400,000 barrels a day of Kirkuk crude to the Turkish export terminal of Ceyhan," Hussain al-Shahristani told Dow Jones Newswires in a telephone interview from Baghdad.

### [DNV Sees Need for Industry Arctic Pipeline Standards](#)

As oil and gas operations move into the Arctic, a number of new challenges are arising due to ice interaction with surface and subsea offshore installations. In relation to pipelines, existing design approaches may be too expensive, technologically limited or uncertain to acceptably manage the increased risk to safety and the environment. DNV is therefore inviting the industry to a Joint Industry Project, which will establish a common practice to address these challenges.

### [Analysis: Iraq oil law \(still\) coming soon](#)

The question is simple on the third and final day of a major Iraqi energy conference where hundreds of hungry oil men and women broke bread with Iraq's industry chiefs, politicians and technocrats: When will Baghdad set the ground rules for the international oil community's long-awaited venture into the largest oil prize on Earth?

### [U.S. oil engineers in short supply](#)

Bustling oilfield activity and retiring baby boomers, among other factors, have petroleum outfits large and small trying to hire thousands of engineers, and experts say the trend is expected to extend into the next decade as worldwide energy demand grows.

### [Car makers focus on fuel efficiency at autoshow](#)

Car makers will show off their latest efforts to fight pollution at Frankfurt's autoshow next week by unveiling models with improvements rather than substitutes to the standard internal combustion engine.

Under pressure to reduce harmful emissions produced by their vehicles amid fears of global warming, they are keen to show the greenest of intentions with the latest line of engines that consume fuel more efficiently.

### [BNP: Britain on course for fusion future](#)

Britain could take the lead, yet again, in a revolutionary technological development which could transform the way the world's economies are powered.

### [Half-price Big Mac to fight global warming proves big hit in Japan](#)

A Japanese government website crashed Wednesday as people raced to take up an offer of a half-price McDonald's hamburger in exchange for pledging to fight global warming.

### [Kyoto rebels pledge to work with UN on climate change](#)

The United States and Australia, the only two countries to have refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, pledged Wednesday to work within the UN system on a post-Kyoto treaty on climate change.

### [Faster Climate Change Means Bigger Problems](#)

The debate about what constitutes “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate” has almost exclusively focused on how much the temperature can be allowed to increase. But we have perhaps just as much reason to be concerned about how quickly these changes take place.



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