



DrumBeat: October 2, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on October 2, 2008 - 10:01am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[John Michael Greer: Cassandra's View](#)

In this setting, the presentations and talk at the conference took on a surreal quality, as though the global civilization we were discussing – the one running out of cheap and easily available fossil fuels – was on some other planet. I'm not at all sure how many of the attendees took the time to connect the energy that provided climate-controlled air, fluorescent lighting, PowerPoint slideshows and overabundant snacks for the conference with the sinking lines on graphs that tracked our world's rapidly depleting oil, coal, and natural gas reserves. I'm even less sure how many of them traced out those graphs to their logical conclusions and thought through the likely impacts on their own lives; even in peak oil circles, this is surprisingly uncommon.

Some of the presentations, certainly, showed no trace of such reflections. To my mind, at least, the most pathetic of them – and I use this word with its full meaning of “evoking pathos,” not in its current sense as a general-purpose insult – was offered by Christer Lindstrom, a pleasant Swedish businessman who wants to solve peak oil by building countless millions of little four-seat computer-guided monorail cars to replace today's urban automobiles. No hint of the fantastic capital expenditures needed to build a new transportation grid in cities sprawled across three continents, no reference to the immense burden on the electric grid such a project would impose, darkened his presentation.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Bailouts & Shortages](#)

How does peak oil fit into all this? Somewhere in the next few days (or perhaps weeks) the U.S. Congress either will or will not pass some sort of multi-billion financial bailout that is supposed to restore confidence in the financial system and set the economy growing again. Many find this absurd. The U.S. has problems in the trillions of dollars so bailouts in the 100s billions are unlikely to have more than a short term impact. While an "affordable" bailout may unfreeze loans, it certainly will not solve the myriad of economic problems that are accumulating.

In recent months, world oil consumption has been dropping due to high prices and the worsening economic situation. Whereas worldwide demand for oil had been increasing by about 1.5 million barrels a day (b/d) every year, that is probably down to a few hundred thousand b/d annual increase and if current trends continue, demand for oil

seems likely to go into an actual decline.

If, as seems probable, the financial bailouts do little good and the world goes into a prolonged period of recession, then we have seen the peak of world oil production. Demand will drop, production will be slowed, and new multi-billion dollar oil projects will be deferred or cancelled due to lack of demand for oil or the capital to pay for them.

[A more liquid market: Offshore terminals and other tricks could promote greater trade in LNG](#)

Natural gas is cleaner than other fossil fuels, and gas-fired power plants are relatively cheap to build, prompting a "dash for gas" by European and American utilities in recent decades. Demand for gas is still growing in rich countries, even as their thirst for oil has faltered. But domestic supplies have been shrinking. Europe, in particular, is becoming ever more dependent on gas imported by pipeline from Russia.

That is where LNG comes in. It allows producing countries to profit from "stranded gas" located far from big markets, and lets consuming countries diversify their supplies. The gas for the Adriatic terminal will come by ship from Qatar. Another 14 countries, from Indonesia to Equatorial Guinea, export LNG; 18 import it. Whereas global gas consumption is growing by 2-3% a year, according to Royal Dutch Shell, another oil and gas firm, demand for LNG is growing by 7-10%. It now accounts for a quarter of the international trade in gas.

[Russia, Ukraine to switch to market gas prices in next 3 years](#)

NOVO-OGARYOVO (RIA Novosti) - Ukraine and Russia will switch to a new pricing scheme for Russian gas based on European market prices in the next three years, Ukraine's prime minister said on Thursday.

"In the next three years we will move over to usual market prices," Yulia Tymoshenko told her Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin during talks at his residence of Novo-Ogaryovo outside Moscow.

[Iran Would Trade Halt in Enrichment for Fuel Guarantee](#)

An Iranian official suggested on Thursday that his country would consider stopping sensitive uranium enrichment if guaranteed a supply of nuclear fuel from abroad.

[Shell Defers Planned Maintenance at Refinery in Louisiana](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Europe's largest oil company, will defer planned maintenance at the Motiva refinery in Norco, Louisiana, to recover from a shutdown

caused by hurricanes.

[ConocoPhillips sees 3rd-qtr output flat to lower](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - ConocoPhillips, the third-largest U.S. oil company, said on Thursday the hurricanes that swept through the Gulf of Mexico in the third quarter hurt operations at its refineries and weighed on its oil output.

The storms curtailed Conoco's output by about 20,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day, putting its quarterly production at flat to slightly below the second quarter level.

[District 6 City Council Candidate Statement: Phoebe Anne Sorgen](#)

We cherish wildlife and open spaces. Dead wood and underbrush that are fire hazards will be removed, while maintaining as much habitat as is safely possible. Invasive flammables such as eucalyptus should have been replaced by native species long ago. Public paths should have been opened long ago. During evacuation, they may save lives. The City will save funds and prepare for post peak oil by allowing community gardens on unused city land that is currently mowed, such as the field below Cragmont Park.

[China's solar giant makes U.S. move](#)

In another sign that the financial crisis is not slowing the solar industry, Suntech, the giant Chinese solar module maker, made a big move into the United States market on Thursday. The company announced a joint venture with green energy financier MMA Renewable Ventures to build solar power plants and said it would acquire California-based solar installer EI Solutions.

[Price of Oil: Speculation vs. Fundamentals](#)

The speculation versus fundamentals controversy is, in some respect, what Sherlock Holmes might have called 'The Final Problem'. It is final because the peak-oil quandary has, to a considerable extent, been settled: a majority of observers now accept that a global peaking of the oil output is quite conceivable, and could – not will – happen in the near as opposed to the distant future. The background to this update of a previous article with almost the same name is a short piece in the New York Review by George Soros, based on his testimony before the US Senate Commerce Committee Oversight Hearing on June 3, 2008, at which time he stated that “there is a bubble superimposed on an upward trend in oil prices”, where this trend is caused by “demand growing faster than the supply of available reserves”. Readers should focus on this remark, and especially the word ‘available’, because available doesn't mean the same thing as existing.

[Oil falls towards \\$94, focuses on demand](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Oil fell more than \$4 toward \$94 a barrel on Thursday, as the U.S. dollar rose and as the U.S. Senate's approval of a \$700 billion bailout of the financial sector failed to allay concerns over weakening fuel demand in the world's top energy consumer.

[Credit crisis hits \\$20b UAE loans](#)

Until recently, project finance was a popular way to fund large industrial initiatives, including oil extraction facilities. Now, banks are charging a much higher rate for such loans, often making them prohibitively expensive.

[Political rows overshadow Russia-Ukraine gas talks](#)

NOVO-OGARYOVO, Russia, Oct 2 (Reuters) - Russia and Ukraine tried to reach a deal over natural gas supplies on Thursday, in talks overshadowed by political turmoil in Kiev and a deepening row over Ukraine's arms sales to Georgia.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko met outside Moscow to try to hammer out an agreement over the price Ukraine will pay next year for the Russian gas on which its economy depends.

[Medvedev Defends Gas Pipeline Against U.S. Influence](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said third countries shouldn't interfere in a planned natural-gas pipeline to Germany after a U.S. diplomat called for the project to be reconsidered.

"We hope that states outside the region that have nothing to do with the project won't try to influence its progress," Medvedev said today during talks in St. Petersburg with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

[Europe and Russia both have options](#)

Common wisdom says that Europe and Russia are bound by an umbilical cord - energy. EU members are dependent on Russia's oil and gas, while Russia depends on the enormous export revenues that the European market generates.

But over the next decade, both sides have more options than commonly assumed. And as the Georgia conflict vividly demonstrates, for geopolitical reasons each might exercise those options.

[Nigeria oil union extends deadline for Chevron deal](#)

LAGOS (Reuters) - Nigerian blue-collar oil workers' union NUPENG said on Thursday it had extended a deadline for threatened strike action over a labour dispute at U.S. oil firm Chevron until next Wednesday.

[Oil's green costs set to rise as Canada vote nears](#)

CALGARY, Alberta (Reuters) - Already struggling with the soaring costs of developing the Alberta oil sands, Canada's energy industry now also faces the prospect of tighter environmental controls regardless of which party wins the country's upcoming general election.

Environmental groups have pushed the harmful effects of oil sands development into the public consciousness in Canada and the United States, leaving political parties no choice but to respond in their campaigns for the October 14 vote.

[Mississippi: County ends 2008 with \\$200K deficit, mostly due to fuel](#)

Neshoba County ended the fiscal year 2008 with a deficit of nearly \$200,000, mostly because of higher fuel and energy costs, officials said.

While the county's general fund, as a whole, stayed pretty much within budget over the year, County Administrator Benjie Coats told the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday that the Road Department was over budget by about \$400,000 when the fiscal year ended.

[Many stories surround gas shortage](#)

While no one has committed unleaded assault at this QT, employees have seen almost every other type of behavior during the fuel shortage.

“We’ve had fights and shouting matches and people breaking in line,” Holsonbake said. “I heard somewhere that people themselves are smart, but in a group they can become panicky animals. I believe it.”

Just then, a van tried to bypass the queue and jump in line at the pumps. Holsonbake spotted the ploy, caught the driver’s eye and made a slashing motion across his neck, as if to say, “I saw you cut.” He pointed to the exit like an umpire ejecting a foul-mouthed manager. The van skulked away.

[Atlanta's Mail Carriers Hit By Gas Shortage](#)

ATLANTA, Ga. -- Before he can even begin his route, Stanley Whitney feels the bite of the gas shortage nawing at his nerves. He looks at his gas gauge near empty.

"This job is dependent on gas," said Whitney.

"For the most part our delivery vehicles gas up at commercial stations just as everyone else does," said Michael Miles, spokesman for U.S. Postal Service's Atlanta district.

Whitney is one of 4,000 postal carriers within the Atlanta district that covers a vast area from the Tennessee line to north of Macon. Their routes, their stops add up to about 12,000 gallons of gas a day.

"Our concern is that of the general public in that we are going to find ourselves in positions where our letter carriers, our delivery vehicles simply can't find gas," said Miles.

[Cops Forced to Carpool](#)

The gas shortage in the Tennessee Valley hits those paid to protect you. Chattanooga Police tell us their fuel supply is so low, they're now having to put two patrolmen in one car.

[Researchers Working To Avoid Next Gas Crisis](#)

In laboratories all over America, including one at Georgia Tech, researchers are looking for ways to avoid the next gasoline crisis.

"It's already helping to relieve some of the pressure we're feeling," said Koros.

Dr. Koros and his team at Georgia Tech are leading the country in developing a technology that will refine the fuel refining process.

"Every BTU that I don't burn up making the fuel,? Koros said. "I get to use to do something like driving down the road."

[Coal scarcity hits India Nalco Sept alumina output](#)

BHUBANESWAR, India (Reuters) - India's National Aluminium Co's Damanjodi alumina refinery operated below capacity in September due to a coal shortage, but is now near normal, a senior company official said on Wednesday.

The Damanjodi refinery, in the eastern state of Orissa, normally produces about 4,500

tonnes of alumina a day, but had been down 10 to 12 percent.

[A \\$29 million green parking garage](#)

To build the LEED-certified car park, the designers used recycled steel and concrete from a bonding mixture that required less energy than cement. Reflective glass panels decorate the structure, maximizing natural light and reducing electricity consumption. Rooftop photovoltaic panels harness solar energy to generate one-third of the garage's electricity. And its water-recycling system channels nonsewage water to the sprinklers.

[Italy's Enel opens biggest wind farm in U.S.](#)

MILAN (Reuters) - Italian power company Enel SpA (ENEI.MI: Quote, Profile, Research, Stock Buzz) has inaugurated its biggest wind power project, a 250- megawatt U.S. wind farm, Enel said on Thursday.

The Smoky Hills plant in the state of Kansas will be operational by the end of the year, Enel said in a statement. It is the biggest wind power project built in Great Plains state.

[Western US may face "crippling" black outs](#)

A new study released this week highlights what experts have been saying for years: the U.S. faces significant risk of power brownouts and blackouts as early as next summer that may cost tens of billions of dollars and threaten lives.

The study, "[Lights Out In 2009?](#)" warns that the U.S. "faces potentially crippling electricity brownouts and blackouts beginning in the summer of 2009, which may cost tens of billions of dollars and threaten lives."

"If particularly vulnerable regions, like the Western U.S., experience unusually hot temperatures for prolonged periods of time in 2009, the potential for local brownouts or blackouts is high, with significant risk that local disruptions could cascade into regional outages that could cost the economy tens of billions of dollars," the report warned.

[Oil Spike: Will a Financial Bailout Push Crude Back Up?](#)

Congress might bail out more than just Wall Street—it could bail out OPEC, as well, keeping oil prices high and climbing into next year.

Despite all the market turmoil and fears of the biggest bang since the Great Depression, crude oil has stubbornly stuck around \$100 a barrel. Its most recent rebound came amid fresh hopes Congress would cobble together a bailout package, after earlier

pessimism that the U.S. rescue package would be too little to save the economy.

But one school of thought says that any sort of financial rescue package will shore up the world's biggest economy—and oil consumer—enough to send crude oil back toward record highs. We spoke with oil bull Jeff Rubin, chief economist at Canadian bank CIBC World Markets, who earlier predicted \$200 oil within a few years.

[When Will Financial Markets Become More Intelligent Than Henry Paulson?](#)

More government regulation of financial markets? Fugetaboutit. The real question about financial markets going forward might be whether we're willing to let the markets run themselves. In other words, Will we humans let machines take charge of the global money game? Because at some point soon, they will be able to run it better than we can.

Back in 2001, I had a conversation in Toronto with a quite-prescient Thomas Homer-Dixon, who had just published a book called *The Ingenuity Gap*. His basic premise: Humans are building systems as complex as weather, and human brains can't keep up. People can no longer understand and control the globally-networked technology we're creating. Amazingly, one of the examples he used that day was the global financial system - proclaiming that a meltdown was coming that no one would understand or know how to stop.

[More Insights: Clean Energy and the Credit Squeeze](#)

Global venture-capital investments in clean technology rose 37 percent in a year, to a record \$2.6 billion for the third quarter (July through September), according to the Cleantech Group, a research firm. Companies involved with smart-grid applications, algae and thin-film solar had a particularly good quarter.

And while some analysts are optimistic about clean energy's ability to weather the current storm, the Cleantech Group — whose numbers cover North America, Europe, China and India — anticipates a fourth-quarter pullback as financial conditions deteriorate and even venture capital firms close their wallets.

[World's first seed bank](#)

A few short decades from now, agricultural crops will face entirely new growing environments. In many countries, the coldest growing seasons of the future will be hotter than the hottest ever recorded in the past. Here's change you can believe in: The 11 hottest years on record have all occurred in the past 13 years.

Should we assume rice, wheat and corn varieties will be unaffected under environmental conditions they have never experienced? They won't. If today's corn varieties are still in the field in southern Africa two decades from now, production will drop by 30 per cent

because of climate change, and we will watch babies starve to death on TV due to our own lack of foresight and preparedness.

[Bush Approves Automaker Loan Program: But Will It Arrive in Time?](#)

President Bush on Sept. 30 signed a broad spending bill that keeps government operating in the new fiscal year, and includes \$7.5 billion to pay for a \$25 billion loan program to help automakers and supplier companies transition plants to building more fuel efficient vehicles.

General Motors, Ford and Chrysler are all facing liquidity problems as they try to restructure amidst the current economic calamity, and develop new models that will help them meet stricter fuel economy regulations between 2015 and 2020, as well as increased consumer demand for those vehicles. Some analysts believe GM, for example, could hit a critical shortage of liquidity by the middle of next year.

Starting today, the Department of Energy will begin a two month process in which it will write the parameters around which the auto companies can apply for the loans. Broadly speaking, each company will have to show that the money will be used to modernize plants and technology that will deliver more fuel efficient vehicles to the public.

[Crunch time for green housing](#)

Eco-towns are supposed to provide a 'template' for all other new housing, but the credit crunch has cast doubts over their future.

['Car sleepers' the new US homeless](#)

This new phenomenon of middle-class homelessness is hard to quantify, but New Beginnings, an organisation that runs the car park sleeping scheme in Santa Barbara, says they accommodate some 55 people in a dozen parking lots.

Outreach worker Nancy Kapp, once homeless herself, says there is a waiting list for car park spaces and she is getting more and more calls each day from people about to lose their homes.

[UK: Million more suffer fuel poverty](#)

The number of households in fuel poverty in the UK rose to 3.5 million in 2006, government figures show.

The figures from the Department for Environment and the Department for Business

show this is a an increase of one million on 2005 levels.

[Coal to Wood: The Conversion Calculus](#)

Making electricity from wood chips is trendy these days, as I have written before.

But here's an interesting twist: many newly announced biomass plants will actually be running on old coal boilers. Xcel Energy, a big Midwestern utility, announced this week that it would spend up to \$70 million to allow a coal boiler at a small power plant to run on gasified biomass (the plant's two other boilers already run on biomass).

[Russian Oil Output Heads for Annual Decline After Ninth Straight Monthly Decline](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia's oil production fell for the ninth straight month in September as producers struggled with rising costs and maturing fields, bringing the world's second-biggest crude exporter closer to its first annual drop in output since 1998.

Production fell 0.4 percent to 9.83 million barrels of crude a day (40.2 million metric tons a month) compared with a year earlier, according to figures released by the Energy Ministry's CDU-TEK unit.

Output in Russia's oil heartland of western Siberia is flagging as older fields mature and companies invest in harder- to-reach regions to tap deposits. In July, parliament approved tax breaks championed by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to spur investment in national production.

[Oil prices fall, ending brief rally](#)

LONDON (AFP) - Oil prices dropped Thursday as the market refocused on data revealing a jump in American crude stockpiles, after a brief rally in response to the US Senate's approval of a revised financial bailout.

London's Brent North Sea crude for delivery in November dropped 1.24 dollars to 94.08 dollars a barrel.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for November, fell 95 cents to 97.58 dollars a barrel.

[Oil May Fall to \\$50 in Global Recession, Merrill Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude-oil prices may fall as low as \$50 a barrel next year, about half current levels, in the ``unlikely" event of a global recession, weighing on shares of

petroleum producers, Merrill Lynch & Co. said.

Such a scenario, where global growth in Gross Domestic Product falls to 1.5 percent, isn't the base-case forecast, the bank said today in a report. Merrill cut its 2009 average price estimate for West Texas Intermediate, the U.S. benchmark oil grade, by 16 percent to \$90, citing falling demand and the start of new fields in Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

[Companies Scramble for Ever-Scarcer Resources](#)

NEW YORK (IPS) - As humanity runs out of oil and minerals, the extraction of previously untouched deposits suddenly pays off -- financially. But experts warn that it will likely further accelerate climate change and seriously damage the environment.

Back in the 19th century it was easy to discover an oil well: one could accidentally step in a puddle of "black gold" -- it made its way to the surface voluntarily. But with conventional oil wells running dry, the industry is shifting to so-called "unconventional" sources like tar sands -- but not without problems.

"It takes two to three times more energy to get a barrel back from tar sands than from conventional crude oil," said Steve Andrews, co-founder of the U.S.-based Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (ASPO), in an interview with IPS.

[Bailout Passes After Ornaments Attached](#)

Gasoline rationing is in force in several southern states with many operators placing a limit of \$30 per transaction to insure everyone gets fuel. AAA expects the shortage to last another 2-3 weeks. Most stations around Atlanta are out with pumps covered with out of service signs. Traffic has slowed significantly and lines are forming well in advance of scheduled fuel deliveries so drivers can be assured of having a place in land. Drivers are not only filling their tanks but many are filling gas cans, milk jugs and anything else that will hold gas and that is just adding to the shortage for everyone else. This is a prime example of what we will face on a permanent basis once peak oil arrives in a couple years.

[America's Oil Export Problem \(Yes, Export\)](#)

The U.S. could cut oil imports by nearly 15% tomorrow without using less gasoline, invading a foreign country or driving up prices at the pump. How? By cutting exports.

Yes, exports.

This will come as a surprise to many, but in the past four years U.S. oil and petroleum exports have reached four consecutive record highs--at least since the early '80s. In 2007, the U.S. exported 1.43 million barrels of oil per day; up by roughly half a million

barrels of oil per day since 2004.

[Credit worries slow OTC oil trading](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Credit market strains have sliced the volume of over-the-counter trading in oil markets, made traders more careful about who they do business with and some deals harder to finance.

Analysts said this stems from the worst financial crisis since the 1930s, which has toppled Wall St firms and contributed to a near 10-percent slide in crude oil prices on Monday and a partial recovery on Tuesday.

[U.S. Approves 900,000-Barrel Oil Reserve Release](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The U.S. approved the release of as much as 900,000 barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to two unidentified refiners, after a request for more supplies to ease fuel shortages in the Southeast.

The refiners receiving the oil will be announced ``if/when the shipment happens," department spokeswoman Healy Baumgardner said in an e-mailed statement. Today's release would bring to a total of 5.69 million barrels the amount of oil the department has provided since hurricanes Gustav and Ike stormed the Gulf Coast last month.

[Gas shortage has politicians making tough calls](#)

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Tired of waiting in long lines or simply running out of gas, angry drivers in the Southeast are lashing out at politicians, demanding that their leaders do more to get fuel flowing to the region.

"We have a gas crisis!" one frustrated motorist recently e-mailed to Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory, a Republican running for governor. "Do you exist?"

Elected leaders, especially in Georgia and North Carolina, where gas supplies remain low three weeks after Hurricane Ike, are wrestling with judgment calls about how much government should do to respond.

Should they declare an emergency and restrict gas purchases, or let the markets take their course? Should they simply urge conservation or work the phones to try to persuade gasoline distributors to release more of their supplies? And will their actions create more havoc than help?

Whatever the result, somebody is going to be unhappy.

[Gazprom, E.ON clinch deal on Siberian gas field](#)

MOSCOW/FRANKFURT (Reuters) - Russia's Gazprom, the world's largest natural-gas company, agreed to give German utility E.ON a stake in a Siberian gas field, ending speculation that four years of talks might fail.

E.ON will give back to Gazprom a stake of about 1.42 percent in the Russian company, and the German utility will in exchange receive a quarter minus one share of the Yuzhno Russkoye gas field, the two companies said on Thursday.

[Exxon to boost gas output under Sakhalin I in Russia's Far East](#)

YUZHNO-SAKHALINSK (RIA Novosti) - Exxon Neftegas Limited, a subsidiary of U.S. oil major Exxon and operator of the Sakhalin-I oil and gas project off Russia's Pacific Coast, said on Thursday that it plans to boost gas output.

Exxon Neftegas CEO James Taylor said the company plans to raise gas production at the Chaivo deposit, and that this will require the drilling of additional gas wells and the expansion of existing coastal and offshore facilities.

Taylor said the project would help increase gas sales on the domestic and international markets.

[Nigeria's Chanomi Creek Oil Pipeline Is Ruptured, Punch Reports](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Nigeria's Chanomi Creek oil pipeline in Delta State has been ruptured, potentially forcing the shutdown of the Warri oil refinery by tomorrow, the Punch newspaper reported,

No group has claimed responsibility for the damage, Punch said, citing ``unconfirmed reports" that it may have been attacked by militants.

[U.S. car sales in September were the worst since 1993](#)

Americans felt too broke to buy new cars and trucks last month, making September the first month with total sales below a million since February 1993.

A drumbeat of bad economic news drove a sales decline for every major automaker as total light-vehicle sales tumbled to 964,873, down 26.6% compared with September 2007, sales tracker Autodata reported Wednesday.

"I'm shocked by what's happened," says Clinton, Iowa, auto dealer John McEleney. Gas prices "have been trumped by the credit crisis" in spooking would-be buyers, he says.

His Iowa dealerships sell Toyota, Hyundai, General Motors and Chrysler brands.

[Canadian September Auto Sales Rise, Helped by Toyota](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Auto sales in Canada rose 1.7 percent in September as an increase for Toyota Motor Corp. vehicles helped outweigh declines at General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co., according to figures compiled by a consulting firm.

...The monthly increase, the second in five months, was buoyed by car sales, which climbed 5.1 percent. Light truck sales fell 2.2 percent.

[Mitsubishi Motors set to test electric cars in Europe](#)

PARIS (Reuters) - Japan's Mitsubishi Motors said on Wednesday it will begin testing its electric cars in Europe next month as it aims to beat rivals to the uncharted market and promote itself as the pioneer of the zero-emission vehicles.

Competitors such as General Motors Corp and the Renault-Nissan alliance have been winning the publicity game with promises to be the first mass producers of electric cars, but Mitsubishi Motors has the advantage of being the only mass-production carmaker with a working model being tested on the road today: the bubbly, four-seater i-MiEV hatchback.

[New Zealand - Peak oil and public transport: Cullen's revelation](#)

The Green Party have challenged Labour to redirect the billions of dollars earmarked for New Zealand's largest ever roading programme into public transport, following Dr Cullen's admission yesterday that people will choose public transport if it is provided and that Peak Oil is real.

In a speech yesterday, Dr Cullen admitted both that "we have to come to terms with a new set of circumstances - the emerging reality of Peak Oil," and that "we can get people out of cars and onto public transport."

[We can't afford to keep Sydney running: Rees](#)

SYDNEY has grossly under-estimated the population explosion that will squeeze its resources over the next 20 years, but the cash-strapped Premier admits it is "pointless" to promise the billions of dollars in extra spending the city will need.

Nathan Rees yesterday signalled deep cuts in the capital spending program and a radical

departure from the \$140 billion infrastructure strategy of the former premier, Morris Iemma.

...Treasury pressure on infrastructure spending is apparent again today, as the *Herald* reveals the Government is facing renewed pressure from its officials to dump Mr Iemma's promised \$1.36 billion South West Rail Link, a 13-kilometre line to the new population growth centre at Edmondson Park and Leppington. Expressions of interest were invited only weeks ago from companies to build the line.

[New Zealand: Lifestyle News Headline Feed Raglan leading the way towards an eco-friendly society](#)

'Transition Town' is an initiative that has arisen from peak oil and climate change concerns.

In a nutshell, it is change at a community level, a transition away from oil dependency to alternative fuels, but more than that too.

So far in New Zealand, just a handful of towns are taking the idea seriously. Campbell Live went to one - Raglan.

[Future Scenarios](#)

What will the next 10-20 years be like? With global climate change and peak oil what can we expect? David Holmgren co-originator of the permaculture concept has developed a new website investigating some possible outcomes.

[Google presents \\$4.4 trillion energy plan for 'debate'](#)

SAN FRANCISCO (MarketWatch) -- Google Inc. on Wednesday unveiled a \$4.4 trillion energy plan to greatly reduce U.S. use of fossil fuels by 2030 by tapping alternative sources, including wind and solar power.

[Curb sprawl to help climate? California will try](#)

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation Tuesday that attempts to ease greenhouse gas emissions by giving priority to transportation projects that limit commutes and curb urban sprawl.

Supporters said the legislation is needed to help implement a 2006 law that requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

[98 months, and counting](#)

Governments moved quickly to rescue our banks. Why does it take any longer to act to save the planet from runaway warming?

[Palin: cause of global warming 'doesn't matter'](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin said Tuesday that global warming is "real," but stressed that it "kind of doesn't matter" whether or not humans are to blame for climate change.

Human activity has "contributed to the issues that we're dealing with now with these impacts" on the earth's climate, Palin, who is Republican standardbearer John McCain's running mate, said in an interview aired Tuesday with CBS News' Katie Couric.

"I'm not going to solely blame all of man's activities on changes in climate because the world's weather patterns are cyclical, and over history we have seen changes there.

"But it kind of doesn't matter at this point in the debate what caused it. The point is it's real, we need do something about it."

[Experts warn species in peril from climate change](#)

ORLANDO, Fla. - Climate change threatens to kill off up to a third of the planet's species by the end of the century if urgent action isn't taken to restore fragile ecosystems, protect endangered animals and manage growth, scientists warned Wednesday as a wildlife summit opened.

"Much of the predictions are gloom and doom. The ray of hope, however, is that we have not lost our opportunity. We still have time if we act now," said Jean Brennan, a senior scientist with Defenders of Wildlife and co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for her work on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

[Small sacrifice can save the planet](#)

AUSTRALIANS will be driving clean electric cars, giving up their lamb roast and rump steaks for chicken and pork, living in higher-density cities and swapping cheap air flights for interstate trains.

In the outback, millions of beef cattle and sheep will disappear from the marginal rangelands, farmers will grow grasses and eucalypts for carbon trading and kangaroos will dominate the bush, potentially becoming one of the nation's biggest export meats.

This image of a sustainable future for Australia has now become a mainstream view with

the release of Professor Ross Garnaut's final sweeping report on how the nation can take up the fight against climate change. It can be achieved for a modest increase in our electricity bills - but the overall cost will be less than the impact of the GST.



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