



Drumbeat: August 25, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 25, 2009 - 10:53am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Triumph of the commons: Helping the world to share](#)

Four decades ago, ecologist Garrett Hardin published a ground-breaking paper on this phenomenon, arguing that when personal and communal interests are at odds, overexploitation of resources is inevitable. His tragedy of the commons referred to the destruction of communal pasture when individual herders act rationally in their own best interests, each putting as many cows as possible onto the land. The same fate, he noted, is likely to befall any shared limited resource, from the atmosphere and oceans to national parks and rivers. Over the years, and with the rise of environmentalism, Hardin's ideas have become hugely influential.

Does this mean we are doomed to plunder the world's resources and trash our planet? Even Hardin wasn't entirely pessimistic. He noted that groups can create institutions to manage their communal resources, although these usually fail because of "free-riders" - individuals who try to reap the benefits of cooperation without paying any of the costs. The solution he came up with was "mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon by the majority of the people affected" (*Science*, vol 162, p 1243). In other words, people must give up their freedom to save the commons. I disagree.

[Big Penalties Loom for Chevron in Ecuador](#)

An Ecuadoran judge's ruling in an environmental case may make U.S. companies rethink the strategy of pushing lawsuits into overseas courts.

[Largest firms need to double pace of CO2 reductions to avoid dangerous climate change: report](#)

Based on current reduction targets, the world's largest companies are on track to reach the scientifically-recommended level of greenhouse gas cuts by 2089 – 39 years too late to avoid dangerous climate change, reveals a research report – The Carbon Chasm – released today by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP).

[U.S. Crop Yields Could Wilt in Heat](#)

Yields of three of the most important crops produced in the United States – corn, soybeans and cotton – are predicted to fall off a cliff if temperatures rise due to climate change.

[Saudi Blasts American Energy Policy](#)

The question of American “energy independence” clearly rankles officials in Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest exporter of crude oil, who seem increasingly puzzled by the energy policy of the United States, the world’s biggest oil consumer.

In a short and strongly-worded essay in Foreign Policy magazine, Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former ambassador to the United States and a nephew to King Abdullah, said that for American politicians, invoking energy independence “is now as essential as baby-kissing,” and accuses them of “demagoguery.”

[Peter Tertzakian: The biofuel factor on oil prices](#)

Inimitability is an important characteristic for businesses making high-value products like gold, oil and diamonds, because it protects their market share from unwanted substitutes. We know lead can't be turned into gold and diamonds are technically difficult to copy. But when it comes to oil modern day alchemists have perfected large-scale processes to make petroleum substitutes. And although making fuels like gasoline and diesel from sources other than oil is nothing new, the long-standing assumption that such substitutes can't steal significant market share and alter oil prices is potentially opening to challenge.

Not long ago bioethanol and biodiesel were fringe fuels, but recently they have been making a subtle, but material dent in the US transportation market. Were it not for the effects of the global recession, the growing biofuel trend would have been even more noticeable.

[Steve LeVine: Cyber-Attack Strategy: Part of Russian Attack on Georgian Pipelines, Report Finds](#)

John Bumgarner, a former cyber-security expert for the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies, is attracting much attention for his report concluding that Russia's military offensive in Georgia last year was coordinated with a pre-arranged civilian cyber-attack on the country. What appears to have gone unreported is Bumgarner's conclusion that the region's oil apparatus was a strategic target of the overall conventional-and-cyber offensive.

[One Start-Up's Quest To Prevent Oil Thefts](#)

Recently, Pemex has turned to Hi-G-Tek, which helps prevent theft by supplying fuel companies with remotely operated seals, locks and tags. These devices are embedded with sensors that alert the owner when an object is being moved, tampered with or opened. It also sells software to provide customers with a record of when and where the seals were opened.

Using radio frequency devices to track fuel shipments is nothing new, but most of the players in this space use passive tags, which only provide information when the tag is scanned. Since Hi-G-Tek's equipment is battery powered it provides constant status updates to a central location.

[OECD chief urges Mexico to seek green growth, cut fuel subsidies](#)

MEXICO CITY (Xinhua) -- Mexico should seek a green growth and cut fuel subsidies to boost both the economy and clean energy, the secretary-general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Jose Angel Gurria, said at a Monday conference organized by Mexico's Environment Ministry.

"Green growth is an opportunity for exports, jobs and wealth," Gurria told the conference. "Developing green technology could be a business opportunity for Mexico."

[China Racing Ahead of America in the Drive to Go Solar](#)

WUXI, China — President Obama wants to make the United States “the world’s leading exporter of renewable energy,” but in his seven months in office, it is China that has stepped on the gas in an effort to become the dominant player in green energy — especially in solar power, and even in the United States.

[Objectors to wind farms to be bought off](#)

Ministers are considering whether to establish a “conservation bank” to help overcome planning objections to wind farms and other renewable-energy projects.

[The Big Question: Should Africa be generating much of Europe's power?](#)

A new report by Usaid this week estimated that there are now one billion people living in Africa. Despite urbanisation, the majority of them live outside cities, or without access to basic services. Exporting African electricity to Europe's businesses and consumers strikes some as grotesquely wrong. Many development agencies favour a patchwork of smaller projects using existing solar technology – photovoltaic – which is cheaper and more suited to a dispersed population. In contrast, an open energy market would see Africans competing with far richer Europeans for electricity generated from their natural resources. Considering the scant benefits that have accrued to ordinary people

from other natural boons such as oil and minerals, these projects can be seen as a power grab.

[World faces hi-tech crunch as China eyes ban on rare metal exports](#)

Beijing is drawing up plans to prohibit or restrict exports of rare earth metals that are produced only in China and play a vital role in cutting edge technology, from hybrid cars and catalytic converters, to superconductors, and precision-guided weapons.

[How a Solar-Hydrogen Economy Could Supply the World's Energy Needs](#)

As the world's oil supply continues to dry out every day, the question of what will replace oil and other fossil fuels is becoming more and more urgent. According to the World Coal Institute, at the present rate of consumption, coal will run out in 130 years, natural gas in 60 years, and oil in 42 years. Around the world, researchers are investigating alternative energy technologies with encouraging progress - but the question still remains: which source(s) will prove to be most efficient and sustainable in 30, 50, or 100 years from now?

For Derek Abbott, Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Adelaide in Australia, the answer is clear. In an invited opinion piece to be published in the Proceedings of the IEEE, Abbott argues that a solar-hydrogen economy is more sustainable and provides a vastly higher total power output potential than any other alternative.

[A Rare Peek at Green Energy Economics](#)

California regulators have approved contracts for more than 8,600 megawatts of renewable energy, to be generated mostly by big solar power plants for the state's largest utilities. But the details of those deals and the emerging economics of green energy often remain shrouded in secrecy, subject to confidentiality agreements.

That black box cracked open a bit on Thursday, when the California Public Utilities Commission gave the green light to two 25-year power purchase agreements between Pacific Gas & Electric and BrightSource Energy, a solar power plant builder based in Oakland, Calif.

[Plotting the path of renewable power lines](#)

A new state report tries to tackle one of the touchiest issues in California's effort to expand renewable power, suggesting possible routes for new transmission lines to carry electricity from wind farms and solar plants.

Power lines often generate intense opposition from environmentalists and landowners. But without new lines, the solar power plants and wind farms planned throughout California won't be able to ship their electricity to the towns and cities that need it.

So several state agencies, electrical utilities, renewable power developers and environmental groups have joined together to figure out where to put new lines, hoping to prevent public fights. The effort, called the Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative, released its latest report this week.

[Plugging Into the Sun](#)

Sunlight bathes us in far more energy than we could ever need—if we could just catch enough.

[Watch out! Disaster looming for Kenya](#)

Politicians cared little about the burning of East Africa's largest forest – until the lights in Nairobi started going out.

[Extended drought threatens China farmland](#)

The extended drought in China's north and northeast regions now threatens over 8 million hectares of farmland. Heeding requests from the country's drought-fighting authority that more be done to alleviate the situation, the oil and power industries have joined the campaign to bring some relief to parched villagers.

Zhangjiakou city, in Hebei Province, is experiencing its worst drought in half a century.

Over half of the arable land will not produce a harvest this year. Hundreds of thousand of people and livestock face a desperate shortage of drinking water.

[Driving new changes in Asian irrigation](#)

Without major reforms and innovations in the way water is used in agriculture, many developing countries will face severe food shortages in future, warns a new report *Revitalizing Asia's Irrigation: To Sustainably Meet Tomorrow's Food Needs*. It suggests the shift to a more economically viable approach.

[South Asia hit by sugar shortages](#)

Global sugar prices have been pushed up by growing demand in Brazil for sugar to be

turned into ethanol for vehicle fuel, and a sharp fall in production in India, the world's largest sugar consumer.

[Toyota to lift November Japan output: report](#)

TOKYO (Reuters) - Toyota Motor Corp plans to raise its production in Japan for the first time in 16 months in November thanks to a recovery in auto sales driven by government incentives, the Asahi newspaper reported on Tuesday.

But the boost is likely to be temporary, as the world's largest automaker is expected to reduce output again early next year when the incentive programs end, the Asahi said, and analysts said Toyota still needs to cut its capacity in Japan.

[Nuclear Weapons and 'Fourth Generation' Nuclear Power](#)

'Integral fast reactors' and other 'fourth generation' nuclear power concepts have been gaining attention, in part because of comments by US climate scientist James Hansen. While not a card-carrying convert, Hansen argues for more research: "We need hard-headed evaluation of how to get rid of long-lived nuclear waste and minimize dangers of proliferation and nuclear accidents. Fourth generation nuclear power seems to have the potential to solve the waste problem and minimize the others."

Others are less circumspect, with one advocate of integral fast reactors promoting them as the "holy grail" in the fight against global warming. There are two main problems with these arguments. Firstly, nuclear power could at most make a modest contribution to climate change abatement, mainly because it is used almost exclusively for electricity generation which accounts for about one-quarter of global greenhouse emissions. Doubling global nuclear power output (at the expense of coal) would reduce greenhouse emissions by about 5%. Building six nuclear power reactors in Australia (at the expense of coal) would reduce Australia's emissions by just 4%.

[NOAA, Coast Guard Hunt for Alaska Methane, Carbon Dioxide Sources](#)

Recent observations have suggested that the air above Alaska may already hold the first signs of a regional increase in greenhouse gas emissions that could contribute to climate change around the globe.

To learn more about the region's emissions, NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory in Boulder, Colo., has teamed up with the U.S. Coast Guard at Kodiak Island. The two partners are flying NOAA air-sampling devices aboard a Coast Guard C-130 aircraft conducting flights over the state through November.

[Michael Lynch: 'Peak Oil' Is a Waste of Energy](#)

REMEMBER “peak oil”? It’s the theory that geological scarcity will at some point make it impossible for global petroleum production to avoid falling, heralding the end of the oil age and, potentially, economic catastrophe. Well, just when we thought that the collapse in oil prices since last summer had put an end to such talk, along comes Fatih Birol, the top economist at the International Energy Agency, to insist that we’ll reach the peak moment in 10 years, a decade sooner than most previous predictions (although a few ardent pessimists believe the moment of no return has already come and gone).

Like many Malthusian beliefs, peak oil theory has been promoted by a motivated group of scientists and laymen who base their conclusions on poor analyses of data and misinterpretations of technical material. But because the news media and prominent figures like James Schlesinger, a former secretary of energy, and the oilman T. Boone Pickens have taken peak oil seriously, the public is understandably alarmed.

A careful examination of the facts shows that most arguments about peak oil are based on anecdotal information, vague references and ignorance of how the oil industry goes about finding fields and extracting petroleum. And this has been demonstrated over and over again: the founder of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil first claimed in 1989 that the peak had already been reached, and Mr. Schlesinger argued a decade earlier that production was unlikely to ever go much higher.

[Gazprom May Say Profit Fell 73% on Low Sales, High Prices](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom, the world’s largest gas producer, may say first-quarter profit plunged 73 percent on lower sales, hit by the economic slowdown, higher prices and a dispute with Ukraine in January.

Net income probably dropped to 74.9 billion rubles (\$2.37 billion) from 273.4 billion rubles a year earlier, according to the median estimate of eight analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News. Sales probably slid 7 percent to 838.2 billion rubles as the economic slump eroded demand in the European market, the main source of revenue for the Moscow- based company.

[Oil firms win Bangladesh rights](#)

Bangladesh has granted Conoco Phillips of the US and Ireland's Tullow Oil three offshore exploration blocks in disputed waters in the Bay of Bengal.

The firms have been given the right to explore for gas, despite ownership claims on some of the territory by neighbouring India and Burma.

[Iraq to Publish Oil-Licensing Round Tender Protocol in November](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Iraq, which pre-qualified about 45 companies to bid on oil projects, will publish the tender protocol in November for the six partly developed and four undeveloped fields offered in its second licensing round.

Companies on the bidding list, including BP Plc and Exxon Mobil Corp., must hold at least 10 percent of any consortium and can participate in as many as four bids, Abdul Mahdy al-Ameedi, deputy director general at the Petroleum Contracts and Licensing Directorate, said today at a bidding-round roadshow in Istanbul. Iraq will take a 25 percent stake in licenses awarded in the second round, Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani said.

[Newfield Exploration to curtail portion of its natural gas production; maintains year outlook](#)

HOUSTON (AP) — Newfield Exploration Co. said it will voluntarily curtail about 2.5 billion cubic feet equivalent of its third-quarter production in response to low natural gas prices.

[SocGen Plans to Hire More People for Commodities Team](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Societe Generale SA, France's second-largest bank by market value, plans to expand its commodities team about 35 percent by the end of next year, seeking to double the size of the business.

[Centrica Prevails in Bid for Venture in North Sea](#)

Centrica has prevailed in its 1.3 billion pound hostile takeover bid for North Sea gas producer Venture Production, The Daily Telegraph reported. Centrica won the bid despite strong opposition from Venture's management.

[Qatar May Stop Importing Diesel Fuel, Official Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Qatar may stop importing diesel fuel by October as a new condensate refinery begins operation, the managing director of Qatar Fuel Co. said today.

The refinery in Ras Laffan will produce about 25,000 barrels a day of diesel, making government imports of the fuel unnecessary, Mohamed Khalifa Turki Al Sobai said in a press conference.

[Byron King: Update on Canada Oil Sands, Part I](#)

When we think about the concept of “Peak Oil” today, we need to keep in mind what we’re talking about. The curves show oil output peaking in so many parts of the world. This phenomenon is quite real, as long as you understand that it’s the “old fashioned” kind of oil deposit that Col. Drake was drilling. The light, sweet, easy-flowing oil is getting harder and harder to find, certainly in significant quantity.

But there are a lot of other hydrocarbon molecules out there. Most of those molecules are not light, sweet crude oil. Indeed, most of the hydrocarbon molecules that the world will use in the future will be “heavy,” with lots of carbon atoms and not so many hydrogen atoms.

[Cairn Energy Says Export Pipeline From Mangala May Face Delay](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Cairn Energy Plc, the U.K.-listed explorer focused on India, warned that the target for completing an export pipeline from its Mangala field by the end of the year looks to be “increasingly challenging.”

Output from the Mangala field in Rajasthan, set to reach plateau output of 175,000 barrels a day in 2011, is due to start on schedule this week, Chief Executive Officer Bill Gammell said today after Cairn posted a first-half loss. The fields will represent 20 percent of India’s domestic oil output.

[Pike River Falls Most in Five Months on Output Delay](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Pike River Coal Co. fell the most in five months in Wellington trading after the New Zealand miner delayed its first exports for the third time in six months.

The 60,000 metric-ton shipment to Japan, slated for mid- November, has been put back after road development slowed production rates, Wellington-based Pike River said in a statement today. The hold-up will require an extension of funding from investor Liberty Harbor LLC, it said. The stock fell as much as 12.3 percent.

[Report: N.O. flood controls unreliable](#)

WASHINGTON — Huge flood-control pumps installed in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina don't protect the city adequately and the Army Corps of Engineers could have saved \$430 million in replacement costs by buying proven equipment, a federal investigation finds.

The investigation by the federal Office of Special Counsel finds there was "little logical justification" for the corps' decision to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the "untested" hydraulic pumps, which are meant to empty millions of gallons of water from the below-sea-level city during storm-related floods.

[A Rail Boondoggle, Moving at High Speed](#)

The Obama administration's enthusiasm for high-speed rail is a dispiriting example of government's inability to learn from past mistakes. Since 1971, the federal government has poured almost \$35 billion in subsidies into Amtrak with few public benefits. At most, we've gotten negligible reductions -- invisible and statistically insignificant -- in congestion, oil use or greenhouse gases. What's mainly being provided is subsidized transportation for a small sliver of the population. In a country where 140 million people go to work every day, Amtrak has 78,000 daily passengers. A typical trip is subsidized by about \$50.

[Our Energy Problems Are All Based In Human Nature](#)

I know some very smart people who are fully armed with the data on resource depletion and peak oil, and who still choose to believe in a cornucopian future where humanity acts wisely, humanely, justly, and in concert with a view toward long-term planning, solving all of our problems without any serious hardship.

This time, they contend, it will be different. After all, aren't we entering the Age of Aquarius, when humanity finally embraces unity and understanding?

Well, forgive me for being skeptical. The degree of cooperation they envisage has no precedent whatsoever in human history, and there are thousands of examples to the contrary.

[Lots of Food, but for How Long?](#)

In the city where I live, Vancouver, British Columbia, it has never been so easy to get food, any kind of food. You want a watermelon in January? Walk into the nearest supermarket. Complain about the prices if you must, but North Americans typically pay less than 15 per cent of their income to eat. That's half the percentage of some European nations. In poorer places, food often takes up more than 50 per cent of the family income.

But this glut of cheap food won't last if it's based on a false economy. Industrial agriculture doesn't pay the bills for the subsidized transportation network, to clean up its toxic runoff from fertilizers and chemicals, to bring life back into the topsoil it's stripping away, or to treat people for ill health from a dubious diet of "food products."

[Twist of fate: horse and buggies replacing cars](#)

While oil supplies decline, world demand increases, especially in China and India, both of

which have a growing middle class, Stephenson said.

“Basically, there won't be enough fuel to go around,” he observed.

Despite the growth of new technologies, Stephenson and Fernbach are both skeptical about humankind's willingness and ability to deal with what they believe is a rapidly approaching crisis. Oil shortages will have a huge impact on the world economy, said Stephenson, who uses his backyard to grow vegetables and is learning how to preserve and can food in anticipation of the food shortages he is convinced are inevitable.

Fernbach went further, suggesting that “a realistic future” could see the reappearance of horses and buggies on Canada's roads.

[Eco-convergence hits Montpelier](#)

MONTPELIER – There's an eco-friendly celebration going on in Montpelier and across central Vermont, a weeklong educational forum and festival to bring the sustainable living community together to envision, build and maintain a better future.

Called the Village Building Convergence, it's modeled loosely on an annual event in Portland, Ore. The Montpelier-based event features 34 projects and workshops, as well as music, picnics and more, to highlight the need for sustainable energy, food sources, economies, transportation and other critical components of day-to-day living in Vermont.

[Iran softens its nuclear stance - for now](#)

A new report on Iran's controversial nuclear program will be released this week by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), ahead of the September deadline set by the Barack Obama administration in anticipation of more multilateral sanctions on Iran. All indications are that after a temporary lull, the Iran nuclear crisis will loom large again come this autumn.

[Tokyo Electric to Restart Second Reactor at Quake-Hit Plant](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Tokyo Electric Power Co., Asia's biggest utility, will start a second reactor at the quake-hit Kashiwazaki Kariwa nuclear power plant tomorrow after getting final approval from the local government.

[Bulgarian nuke plant loan becomes callable](#)

SOFIA (Reuters) - Bulgaria's state power utility NEK will be forced to either renegotiate a 250 million euro (\$357.3 million) loan syndicated by BNP Paribas, or pay it early in

full, the economy and energy minister said on Tuesday.

NEK agreed the five-year syndicated loan in May 2007 and used the proceeds to launch the construction of a 4 billion euro nuclear power plant at the Danube river town of Belene.

But a plunge in power consumption following the global downturn worsened NEK's results and it breached the liquidity conditions on the loan making it callable, Economy and Energy Minister Traicho Traikov said.

[Electric DeLorean Foretells Hurdles for Ghosn's Nissan Leaf Car](#)

(Bloomberg) -- In the 1985 movie "Back to the Future," Christopher Lloyd has trouble fueling his DeLorean car after altering it to run on plutonium. Today, Tomoyasu Fujii has the same problem after converting his DeLorean to electric power.

"My biggest headache is that the parking lot in my apartment complex doesn't have a power outlet," said Fujii, 39, an advertising salesman at a Hiroshima newspaper, adding that the building manager won't install a socket. "Since no one else has an electric car, they don't see why they have to bother."

[Charging ahead](#)

GM was not an ostrich, ignoring all that was going on around it in hope problems would go away. The tall foreheads at the automaker knew all about the forecasts of peak oil ... and believed them. They also knew that the hybrid field had pretty much been captured by Toyota. So GM required something absolutely radical and new. It needed to move car technology past the hybrid with a great leap forward. Thus the electric/gas Chevy Volt.

[A Farm on Every Floor](#)

IF climate change and population growth progress at their current pace, in roughly 50 years farming as we know it will no longer exist. This means that the majority of people could soon be without enough food or water. But there is a solution that is surprisingly within reach: Move most farming into cities, and grow crops in tall, specially constructed buildings. It's called vertical farming.

[Even Small Towns Are Looking to Go Solar Power](#)

In New York State, two smallish towns are taking on the big task of promoting solar energy, which may be the nation's salvation now that even Oil Drum experts are talking Peak Oil by 2015.

In Colonie, population 8,591 (as of July 2008), the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) is offering to pay up to \$25,000 for businesses to install solar energy arrays. With perhaps a dozen firms competing for the privilege – the much-larger Albany is only few miles away – the outlay is unlikely to be significant, but the very fact that the town is thinking solar is a sign that America's energy paradigm has shifted, albeit subtly, from fossil fuels to "clean" energy alternatives like solar.

[Interview with solar power entrepreneur and clean energy advocate Jeremy Leggett](#)

Jeremy Leggett has undergone quite a few large career changes, from oil industry consultant to Greenpeace scientist to solar entrepreneur. A geologist by training, he worked with the oil industry until his studies brought him face-to-face with the growing evidence of global warming. In an industry refusing to change, Leggett moved to Greenpeace and was part of the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) talks up to the Kyoto Protocol. Seeing the strong resistance to renewable energy, Leggett decided to move in that direction himself, setting up SolarCentury, the UK's largest solar energy company, which helps support the sustainable development organization SolarAid. Leggett shared his experiences with Conducive Mag's Christine Shearer, including his thoughts on the upcoming IPCC meeting in Copenhagen, what he sees as promising developments for renewable energy, and why he regards culture as the key to tackling climate change.

[Biggest Solar Panels Still Not Big Enough](#)

Considering that the world's largest solar project (in Germany) covers about 210 football fields with approximately 560,000 thin-film First Solar panels – projected to top out at 700,000 – and still produces a mere 53 megawatts, or enough to power 15,000 households, it's clear that solar efficiencies are the underlying problem when it comes to solar's thin share of the electricity generation marketplace.

[Powerful Ideas: Spray-On Solar Cells](#)

Solar cells soon could be painted onto the sides of buildings or rooftops with nanoparticle inks, according to one chemical engineer.

The new nano-ink process could replace the standard method of manufacturing solar cells, which requires high temperatures and is relatively expensive, said Brian Korgel of the University of Texas at Austin.

"The sun provides a nearly unlimited energy resource, but existing solar energy harvesting technologies are prohibitively expensive and cannot compete with fossil fuels," Korgel said.

[Suzlon Says Orders May Increase by Year End on Project Funding](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Suzlon Energy Ltd., India's biggest maker of wind turbine generators, said orders may increase by the end of this year as funding starts for alternative-energy projects, helping the company meet its sales forecast.

"There is a high degree of optimism globally in terms of the outlook," Sumant Sinha, chief operating officer, said in an interview. "We are seeing some early signs of recovery, though there is a bit of lag in action on the ground in terms of project financing."

[Husky to get subsidy for ethanol plant](#)

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (Reuters) - Husky Energy will collect an operating subsidy of up to C\$72.8 million (\$67.4 million) for its ethanol plant in Minnedosa, Manitoba, the Canadian government announced on Monday.

The money comes from a federal fund established in 2008 to boost production of renewable fuels. Ethanol from grain, such as that produced at the Minnedosa plant, generates up to 40 percent less greenhouse gas emissions than gasoline, the government said.

[Fires rob pollution-choked Athens of fresh air filter](#)

ATHENS (AFP) – The latest fires to ravage woodland around Athens are an ecological disaster which will affect the quality of life of the capital's 4.5 million residents for years, environmental experts said Monday.

"It's not really the first time that Attica (the prefecture including Athens) has been affected, but we have never seen a fire on such a scale before in the region," said Dimitris Karavellas, the Greek head of the environmental pressure group WWF.

[Mexico water body warns of 'critical' shortage](#)

MEXICO CITY (AFP) – Mexico's water commission warned Monday of the risk of a "critical" water shortage at the start of 2010 and called on state governments to act now to save water.

"El Nino (seasonal warming), climate change and low rainfall could increase drought in the country, and cause a critical situation in the first quarter of 2010," a Conagua statement said.

Farming and some water supplies across the country have already been hard hit by this year's drought.

[Senators tour US park, hear about global warming](#)

ESTES PARK, Colo. – Global warming is threatening America's national parks. But there is no consensus about how to prevent the harm.

[Climate protesters play cat and mouse with police](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Climate change campaigners will pitch their tents in a still-secret location in London on Wednesday at the start of a week of protests against financial institutions, multi-national companies and the government.

Organisers say more than 1,000 people will protest against what they see as the "green posturing" of politicians and firms who talk about saving the environment while expanding airports and coal-fired power stations.

[EU warns dirty airlines to clean up or face ban](#)

Over 3,500 airlines and business jet operators globally will have to sign up to the new European Union Emissions Trading Scheme by 2012 or face financial penalties when flying to the continent, the EU has warned.

In its official gazette, the EU has published a list of operators, which includes the likes of Lufthansa, Qantas, KLM, Emirates and United, that could be penalised unless they comply.

[Exxon Works Up New Recipe for Frying the Planet](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Exxon Mobil Corp. is trying to put one over on you.

The world's biggest publicly traded oil company wants you to believe that it actually supports the fight against global warming. But its tactics, which have been unfolding on opposite sides of the globe, are just another recipe for cooking the planet in three easy steps. Exxon's old formula wasn't working any more. The oil giant used to bankroll scientists who claimed all that stuff about starving polar bears and melting ice caps was just mumbo jumbo. In a 1998 memo, the American Petroleum Institute -- the industry group in which Exxon has long been dominant -- said it would achieve "victory" when doubts about climate science become "part of the 'conventional wisdom.'" That helped create a noisy minority of skeptics, but it won't block climate legislation forever.

[UN scientist backs '350' target for CO2 reduction](#)

PARIS (AFP) – The UN's top climate scientist has, for the first time, backed ambitious goals for slashing greenhouse gas emissions that many climate negotiators say are beyond reach.

[Report: Future U.S. heat waves will be worse](#)

The nation is headed for strong heat waves in coming decades that will hit cities and farmers and threaten wildlife with extinction, a new global warming report warns.

The report, "More Extreme Heat Waves: Global Warming's Wake Up Call," sponsored by medical, environmental and civil rights organizations, comes as a legislative fight over a climate change bill gets ready to resume next month in Congress. Its remedies are based on recent findings of global warming effects by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which coordinates climate research across federal agencies.

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce seeks trial on global warming](#)

The business lobby, hoping to fend off potentially sweeping emission limits, wants the EPA to hold a 'Scopes'-like hearing on the evidence that climate change is man-made.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).