



Drumbeat: December 28, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 28, 2009 - 9:22am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[As colleges add green majors and minors, classes fill up](#)

Colleges are rapidly adding new majors and minors in green studies, and students are filling them fast.

Nationwide, more than 100 majors, minors or certificates were created this year in energy and sustainability-focused programs at colleges big and small, says the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. That's up from just three programs added in 2005.

Two factors are driving the surge: Students want the courses, and employers want the trained students, says Paul Rowland, the association's executive director.

nently discarded inside the earth -- does not apply to drilling in many of the nation's booming new gas fields.

Three company spokesmen and a regulatory official said in separate interviews with ProPublica that as much as 85 percent of the fluids used during hydraulic fracturing is being left underground after wells are drilled in the Marcellus Shale, the massive gas deposit that stretches from New York to Tennessee.

[Oil jumps above \\$79 a barrel](#)

NEW YORK – Oil prices jumped above \$79 barrel Monday, rising to the highest level in seven weeks as an extended cold snap triggered an end-of-year rally in energy futures.

[Hungary says Russian oil supply may stop on Jan. 1](#)

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Russian oil deliveries to the European Union (EU) via Ukraine may halt as of the first day of next year, Hungary's Energy Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

It said earlier news issued by Slovakia about a possible stoppage was confirmed by Russian pipeline operator Transneft, the business partner of Hungarian oil group MOL. MOL.BU, and Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia could be directly affected.

[Russia-Ukraine oil row to be solved in days - source](#)

KIEV (Reuters) - A dispute over the terms of Russia's contract with Ukraine to transit oil to Europe will be solved within two days, a Kiev-based source close to the talks said on Monday.

[High-tech vehicles pose trouble for some mechanics](#)

(AP) -- A sign inside the Humming Motors auto repair shop says, "We do the worrying so you don't have to."

These days, owner David Baur spends a lot of time worrying in his full-service garage near downtown Los Angeles.

As cars become vastly more complicated than models made just a few years ago, Baur is often turning down jobs and referring customers to auto dealer shops. Like many other independent mechanics, he does not have the thousands of dollars to purchase the online manuals and specialized tools needed to fix the computer-controlled machines.

Baur says the dilemma has left customers with fewer options for repair work and given automakers an unfair advantage.

[Will the future rue the 'lost decade' in the climate war?](#)

The first decade of the 21st century dawned with a global strategy to fight climate change but ended in chaos and the UN system in tatters while greenhouse gases spewed with few constraints.

"Future generations will rue the years of inaction," says Steve Sawyer, a veteran observer who heads the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC), a Brussels green industry association. "Some generations will rue it very much – those that survive."

[As colleges add green majors and minors, classes fill up](#)

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[Russia Warns of Oil Cutoff to Europe Over Dispute With Ukraine](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia warned it may cut off oil supplies to Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic because of a dispute with Ukraine over transit of the commodity, the Slovak government said.

Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko notified the European Union of the possible stoppage, the Slovak government said in a statement today, citing an official letter it received from the European Commission, the EU's executive body.

[UAE has 14.6% of proven Arab oil reserves](#)

The UAE has the fourth-largest proven reserves of crude oil among Arab countries, accounting for 14.6 per cent of the Arab World's total, the Unified Arab Economic Report for 2009 said.

Saudi Arabia tops with 39.3 per cent of the total, followed by Iraq with 17.1 per cent and Kuwait with 15.1 per cent.

Libya is fifth with a share of 6.5 per cent.

[Energy becomes big issue in Atlantic Canada as N.B. ties hopes to Quebec](#)

HALIFAX, N.S. — Competing visions of how to wean Atlantic Canada from fossil fuels and hook it into a greener hydroelectric grid have caused premiers to clash and old hopes of regional unity to falter.

Debate over the region's energy future broke wide open on Oct. 30 when New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham announced his proposed \$4.8-billion deal to sell his province's utility to Hydro-Quebec.

It's a deal prompted partly by a desire to find alternatives to oil and coal, Graham said in a recent interview.

"We had to seize our own future," he said of the plans to sell NB Power and tie his province more closely to Quebec.

[Energy crisis growing rapidly in Pakistan](#)

Islamabad(IRNA) -- It is widely believed in Pakistan that Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project should be completed at the earliest to overcome energy crisis which Pakistan is currently facing.

The unannounced gas loadshedding in the country has put the CNG-run transport in troubled waters as well as taking toll on industry and other business activities, not to mention the hardships faced by domestic users.

People say that Iran has surplus gas and the completion of gas pipeline project is the only way out for Pakistan to overcome gas shortage.

[Tanzania: Two Factories Close Shop in Zanzibar, As Power Shortage Bites](#)

Zanzibar — AT least two factories in Unguja Island have closed down their business due to reasons linked to lack of electricity since December 10, this year, it has been learnt.

Mr Abdallah Abbasi, the president of Zanzibar National Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (ZNCCIA) told the 'Daily News' that Huda Tissues factory and Zanzibar Poultry Company (ZAPOCO) have closed their business.

[Need to import coal comes early](#)

VietNamNet Bridge – Viet Nam may need to start importing coal as early as 2012, three years earlier than expected, to meet its electricity demands.

[Old King Coal will stay on the commodities throne for years](#)

There are many dismissing coal as the unwanted black sheep of the fossil fuel family, blamed for 40pc of the world's carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming.

But in defiance of environmental concerns, there has been little sign that any fall off in coal demand this year is due to anything other than the recession.

[India: How not to tackle food inflation](#)

The rise in prices essentially reflects supply shortages, including the effect of a weak monsoon. It may not respond to monetary policy.

Certain experts have pointed out that inflation in respect of items such as food and fuel is outside the purview of monetary action, citing similar views of monetarist guru, Mr Milton Friedman, to support their argument. Perhaps, this is why the US Federal

Reserve concentrates on the consumer price index, excluding food and fuel. Be that as it may, the authorities are getting ready for further tightening the screws, albeit in the form of CRR rise to begin with.

[Aides to Iran's Opposition Leaders Said to Be Arrested](#)

BEIRUT, Lebanon — A number of opposition figures were arrested Monday in the wake of violent nationwide protests a day earlier, Web sites reported, including three top aides to the opposition leader Mir Hussein Moussavi and the leader of a banned political group, Ibrahim Yazdi.

[Basking in nuclear power's glow](#)

As the antinuclear power movement, which lasted about 30 years, has subsided, nuclear power plants came into the spotlight again as a source of clean energy that is safe and does not produce greenhouse gases. Now, France, Japan and Korea have emerged as leading contenders in the market for nuclear power plant construction, which will eventually grow to trillions of dollars.

[Winning more than losing](#)

President Barack Obama's chief science adviser, John Holdren, had this to say at the end of the rough-and-tumble climate talks in Copenhagen this month: "I think we're winning more than we're losing."

Really? How? Diplomats had just failed to produce a binding treaty to control global warming in any meaningful way.

But maybe Mr. Holdren's right. I attended the climate conference myself, representing Marylanders concerned about sea-level rise and the need for clean energy. And I think - just maybe - we did win more than we lost in Copenhagen.

[Return of the Fungi](#)

Paul Stamets is on a quest to find an endangered mushroom that could cure smallpox, TB, and even bird flu. Can he unlock its secrets before deforestation and climate change wipe it out?

[Metro areas get chunk of rural stimulus aid](#)

WASHINGTON — More than \$2.7 billion of stimulus aid for struggling parts of rural

America has gone to the nation's biggest metropolitan areas.

That's nearly a quarter of the \$12 billion in rural assistance the government has paid out so far under President Obama's economic stimulus package, a USA TODAY review shows. It went to small, far-flung suburbs in metropolitan areas with more than a million residents, including growing towns around Atlanta and Phoenix.

The spending reignites a longstanding debate over what "rural" really means in an increasingly urban nation.

[Want to help environment? Alter your habits](#)

My last example is an article about the difference in Great Britain between a popular diesel-powered sedan or small wagon that is slated to come to the U.S. The U.S. version will have 35 additional horsepower to offset the inefficiencies of the automatic transmission and reduce the fuel from 49 MPG to 44. That amounts to an 11.36 percent fuel inefficiency that we can eliminate by teaching at least the new drivers to drive standard shift cars.

[Tanker Glut Signals 25% Drop on 26-Mile Line of Ships](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A 26-mile-long line of idled oil tankers, enough to blockade the English Channel, may signal a 25 percent slump in freight rates next year.

The ships will unload 26 percent of the crude and oil products they are storing in six months, adding to vessel supply and pushing rates for supertankers down to an average of \$30,000 a day next year, compared with \$40,212 now, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg News survey of 15 analysts, traders and shipbrokers. That's below what Frontline Ltd., the biggest operator of the ships, says it needs to break even.

[Oil holds near \\$78 a barrel in Asia](#)

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia – Oil prices held near \$78 a barrel Monday in Asia ahead of inventory figures later in the week that could send it through the \$80 mark.

[Russia blames Ukraine politicians for oil row](#)

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (Reuters) - Russia's pipeline monopoly on Monday blamed Ukrainian politicians for setting new "unacceptable" terms for oil transit via the port of Yuzhny, saying it will cut supplies if no quick deal was reached.

[Putin launches new Russia oil route to Asia](#)

MOSCOW — Prime Minister Vladimir Putin launched Russia's long-awaited Siberian oil export route Monday, giving energy-hungry Asia a new supply source from the world's largest crude exporter seeking to diversify its client base away from Europe.

Putin, clad in a heavy winter parka, pushed a button that initiated the first filling of an oil tanker bound for Hong Kong at a new oil terminal near the Russian Pacific port of Nakhodka, the projected terminus of the new Siberian oil pipeline.

[Gazprom eyes 2010 Sakhalin-1 deal](#)

Russia's Gazprom expects to wrap up a deal on gas supplies from the ExxonMobil-led Sakhalin-1 project next year, Gazprom's deputy head Alexander Ananenko said today.

[China's 2010 Energy Demand May Rise 3.6%, Securities News Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China's 2010 energy demand may rise 3.6 percent to the equivalent of 2.85 billion metric tons of standard coal from this year, the Shanghai Securities News said, citing National Energy Administration Director Zhang Guobao.

[Yemen arrests 29 al Qaeda suspects after raids](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Yemen has arrested 29 suspected al Qaeda members since raiding the group to foil attacks on oil installations and foreign interests including the British embassy, national security chief Ali Mohammad Al-Ansi said.

[NTPC Signs Initial Agreement to Build Bhutan Hydropower Plant](#)

(Bloomberg) -- NTPC Ltd., India's biggest power producer, signed a preliminary agreement with Bhutan to set up a hydro-electric project in the eastern Himalayan nation.

[Eskom Loaned 1.19 Billion Euros by Paribas, Calyon](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Eskom Holdings Ltd., the South African power utility facing an expansion funding shortfall, agreed a 1.19 billion euro (\$1.7 billion) loan facility with five French banks.

Eskom will borrow money from BNP Paribas SA, Calyon, Societe Generale SA, Natixis SA and Credit Industriel et Commercial, the Johannesburg-based company said in an e-mailed statement today.

[The Year in Energy](#)

Liquid batteries, giant lasers, and vast new reserves of natural gas highlight the fundamental energy advances of the past 12 months.

[Events of the decade on the scientific front](#)

From its power sources to its cars, the nation got a glimpse of what a post-petroleum world might be like.

"Peak oil" entered the lexicon; petroleum is finite. Officials also are increasingly concerned about global warming emissions related to burning fossil fuels.

So the decade has seen a boom in renewable energy, which in 2008 provided 7 percent of U.S. energy needs.

[Korea Electric Surges on \\$20 Billion U.A.E. Order](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Korea Electric Power Corp. shares surged after it led a group of bidders that won a \$20 billion contract for four nuclear plants in the United Arab Emirates, beating General Electric Co. and Areva SA, the world's biggest builder of atomic plants.

The order announced yesterday is the first nuclear project awarded by a Gulf Arab nation and will be South Korea's first export of atomic plants. Korea Electric's winning group included Doosan Heavy Industries & Construction Co., the nation's biggest power-equipment maker, signaling Korean companies are contenders to win more nuclear orders.

[German Solar Industry to Offer Subsidy Cuts, Handelsblatt Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- German makers of solar panels will propose subsidy cuts for electricity generated from solar cells at a Jan. 13 ministerial hearing, Handelsblatt reported, citing industry members it didn't identify.

The solar-panel makers, represented by the BSW industry lobby, will suggest to accelerate the pace at which subsidies are cut by as much as 5 percentage points from the start of 2011, the newspaper said.

[Japan May Set 20% Renewable-Energy Target, Daily Yomiuri Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Japan aims to have solar power and other forms of renewable energy supply at least 20 percent of the country's total generation by 2020, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, citing an interview with Environment Minister Sakihito Ozawa on Saturday.

[Senate moderates wary of cap-and-trade](#)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- Moderate U.S. Senate Democrats say they're urging President Obama to back off efforts to include cap-and-trade as part of a climate bill next year.

[Thomas L. Friedman: Off to the Races](#)

I've long believed there are two basic strategies for dealing with climate change — the “Earth Day” strategy and the “Earth Race” strategy. This Copenhagen climate summit was based on the Earth Day strategy. It was not very impressive. This conference produced a series of limited, conditional, messy compromises, which it is not at all clear will get us any closer to mitigating climate change at the speed and scale we need.



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