



## Drumbeat: February 21, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on February 21, 2010 - 9:04am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Tug of war between producers and consumers on the cards](#)

Although there is little talk "yet" of a "double-dip" recession, fears are mounting that the pace of economic recovery in the euro zone will be extremely slow, increasing the investors' appetite for the US dollar. And this increased appetite for the US dollar among investors could also begin to put downward pressure on oil prices.

Market fundamentals are also weighing in on prices. Supplies from non-OPEC producers and OPEC NGLs and other liquids are expected to rise by nearly 1 million bpd in 2010, offsetting most of the expected demand growth. Global inventories are projected to rise sharply in the second quarter, despite heavy maintenance, after a modest fall in the first, the CGES report projected.

BP chief economist Christof Ruehl also believes that huge price spikes, like the \$147 a barrel seen in summer 2008, seems unlikely. The reduction in OPEC output quotas, which amounted to 4.2 million barrels a day, was the main driver of the price increase last year, Ruehl said. It will take more time for faster economic growth to push prices up further, he said.

"Even if the good years were to return tomorrow, then too it would take three years to burn through this excess capacity and bring it down to a level where it was before the crisis of '08," Ruehl said. "That means in the foreseeable future, the next two or three years, sudden oil-price spikes are unlikely."

9 million barrels of condensate gas, an energy official said yesterday.

Iran said it had discovered the Soumar oilfield and Halgan gasfield with total value of reserves at \$85 billion.

### [Iran calls on IAEA not to surrender to will of certain states](#)

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said Sunday that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should not surrender to the will of certain states over Iran's nuclear program, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The international nuclear watchdog should uphold its prestige and identity and never let

the will of certain states be imposed on the international community, Mehman-Parast was quoted by the report as saying.

### [Nuclear scientists have made Pak's defense invincible with their hard work: PM](#)

KHUSHAB/ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that the defense of Pakistan has become invincible due to the hard work of its nuclear scientists, adding that the peaceful use of nuclear energy has helped in improving the economy of the country and resolving the energy crisis. "Defense of Pakistan is a sacred duty and its security is a tough responsibility which the Pakistan army could not perform alone. To perform it in a better way, the help of the Pakistani nation and nuclear scientists is a must", he said while addressing the employees and nuclear scientists of the Khushab Nuclear Complex here on Saturday.

### [UK plans first nuclear fusion power plant](#)

BRITISH scientists have drawn up plans to build the world's first nuclear fusion power station. They say it could be pouring electricity into the National Grid within 20 years.

Nuclear fusion, the power that lies at the heart of the sun, offers the prospect of clean, safe, carbon-free power with a minimum of radioactive waste. But despite decades of research the technical problems have seemed insurmountable.

This weekend, however, Research Councils UK (RCUK), which oversees the British government's spending on science and technology, has said it believes that many of those obstacles are close to being overcome.

### [U.S. turns to Sweden as model in nuclear waste storage](#)

While progress here has lagged, the Scandinavian country has successfully chosen a site for a geological repository after including citizens and local government in the discussion.

### [From hot to rot for wonder crop](#)

Tony Wood, president director of the P\*ryy Forestry Industry, said a combination of bad headlines and a lack of investment interest had seen enthusiasm for jatropa crash in 2009, with most major projects in Indonesia put on hold.

"Where previously a range of consultants had been running all over the country looking for potential jatropa areas," Wood said, "suddenly these same people found themselves back on the job market."

### [Green in 2010: Windfarms on your house](#)

That's just one of the things pitched to consumers at this year's Green Products Expo in New York. Others include ultra efficient toilets and plates made from leaves.

### [First-time buyer? More \\$100,000 green homes are available](#)

If you want a new green home but are tight on cash, good news. The number of affordable, energy-efficient modular homes continues to increase as Pennsylvania-based builder Excel Homes offers a new line aimed at first-time buyers.

The homes in its "Starting Line Up Series" are targeted to be sold for under \$100,000, and depending on region, for as low as \$60,000. They have less than 1,000 square feet, but with vaulted ceilings, sunken living rooms and hardwood floors, Excel Homes says they have all the style of larger homes.

### [Smoke bomb: The other climate culprits](#)

When China and India reduce their sulphur dioxide emissions, the rate at which the planet is warming will rise dramatically. Satellite measurements show that China is already making headway, says Frank Raes of the European Commission Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy. As a result, the rate of warming could increase from the current 0.2 °C per decade to 0.3 or 0.4 °C per decade. "Locally, it might go to 0.8 °C per decade," Raes says. Such rapid change would make it much harder for both people and wildlife to adapt.

### [The world-saving habit you'll hate \(and the great puzzle of the well-intentioned do-nothings\)](#)

Last week we received a letter at the Post Carbon Institute office from Scott B., a sports car owner/engine rebuilder/computer programmer, whose frustration is boiling over at the lack of attention paid his Big Idea to Save the Planet (BISP).

Scott's letter presented a very, very simple idea, one that has been gnawing at me since I read it, forcing me to take a closer look at a perhaps unsolvable equation (more on the Great Puzzle below). Scott's idea:

*Cap the national driving speed limit at 34 MPH (55 KMH).*

### [Envisioning sustainable communities](#)

We want to take the discussion further by arguing that the best way to motivate people to adopt the profound changes that real social change would require is to show them a

successful model in action. This is likely a goal of Transition Towns and many other sustainability movements, but most of these are framed within the existing economic and social structures of mainstream U.S. society. Unasked is the question of how such reform initiatives can resist the centralizing and hierarchy-inducing influences of corporate America.

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### [French oil refineries strike spreads](#)

PARIS (AFP) – Strikes at French refineries look likely to spread as Exxonmobil employees were called to join a protest at oil giant Total that has raised fears of supply cuts.

Total's management told AFP on Friday it had started halting refining operations after unions extended their two-day strike, in protest at the closure of a plant in Dunkirk, to an unlimited action. The group has six refineries in France.

### [Aramco, Total Said to Hire Bankers to Issue Sukuk for Refinery](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the world's biggest crude producer, and Total SA hired banks to sell Islamic bonds to help fund the construction of a \$12 billion oil refinery, said two bankers familiar with the transaction.

### [Energy minister calls for creation of national hydrocarbon monitoring system](#)

MOSCOW (Itar-Tass) -- Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko called for creating a national system that would monitor the movement of hydrocarbons in the country.

“Russia needs to create a unified state information system that will use modern means for monitoring the movement of hydrocarbons on all of the transport routs in the country,” he said on Saturday.

“In the past, only Transneft had a system of export schedules. Now we are considering the possibility of having a unified information system in order to get data on the movement of hydrocarbons by all means of transportation,” the minister said.

### [Plan to truck hydrofracking wastewater to Finger Lakes shelved for now](#)

A drama that linked Pennsylvania, a tiny Finger Lakes town and 663 million gallons of chemical-laden water is foreshadowing a problem New York will face if it allows high-volume natural gas drilling.

Oil and gas companies drilling for natural gas in Pennsylvania are running out of ways to dispose of the millions of gallons of wastewater produced by “hydrofracking” the Marcellus Shale.

One gas company proposed a solution: Bring the dirty water to New York’s Finger Lakes.

Chesapeake Energy Corp., an Oklahoma City company that holds dozens of drilling leases in Central New York, wanted to store up to 663 million gallons of wastewater from Pennsylvania in a converted natural gas well 87 miles west of Syracuse, in the Steuben County town of Pulteney. The town sits less than a mile from Keuka Lake.

### [EPA official focuses on formulas, not feelings](#)

He remembers the date clearly -- May 23, 2007. He was an assistant professor at SMU, watching a webcast as state regulators voted on an air pollution plan.

Just before the vote, a group of representatives from the oil and gas industry spoke up, using numbers Armendariz instantly felt were wrong. He thought the regulators had miscalculated how much ozone-forming pollution was coming from natural gas compressor engines in North Texas. The plan was approved anyway.

"It was amazing that that kind of error could happen," Armendariz said this month during a talk with a group of neighborhood activists concerned about gas drilling in Fort Worth.

### [In Wyoming, Debate Swirls on Taxing Wind Industry](#)

With currents of powerful wind gusts whipping across its plains and plateaus, Wyoming has become a new frontier for the wind industry — the latest energy development for a state that only recently experienced a natural gas boom.

But in a place that is both cautious about such growth and interested in the potential benefits, some believe that those behind the wave of wind farms and turbines need to pay their fair share.

A new bill being pushed by Gov. Dave Freudenthal would change the state's renewable energy landscape by levying an excise tax on wind energy production, the first tax of its kind in the United States, energy experts say.

### [Is K.R. Sridhar's 'magic box' ready for prime time?](#)

The Bloom Energy CEO is finally unveiling his entry in the fuel-cell arena after years of playing it close to the vest.

### [Snail mail may soon be delivered by e-vans](#)

LOS ANGELES — In the e-mail era, the U.S. Postal Service hardly seems plugged in — but at least it wants its vehicles to be.

The Postal Service has awarded contracts to several California firms to develop a prototype postal van that would run on electricity.

### [An audience with the UK Met Office](#)

Dr Matt Huddleston, principal consultant on climate change at the UK Met Office, talks to Stella Farrington about changing weather patterns and their future effect on energy demand.

### [U2 Guitarist's Plans for Development Don't Find Green Harmony](#)

Public access verses exclusive seclusion is an ever-ranging debate that has enveloped a member of the environmentally conscious rock band.

### [National survey of Canada's infrastructure engineers about climate change](#) (free registration)

Canada's built infrastructure is often intended to have a useful service life of many decades. This can either be extended or degraded depending on a multitude of factors such as: initial design, proper operations and maintenance, as well as weather and climate factors. All of these act in combination to affect an infrastructure's useful life.

Furthermore, Climate Change – the fact that historical weather patterns may no longer be indicative of what will happen in the future, could exacerbate the vulnerability of infrastructure in terms of degraded service life or premature failure. Many fields of engineering still rely heavily on historical weather data. Presently, future-looking weather data that is suitable for use in day-to-day engineering practice is often not readily available to Canadian engineers. Furthermore, many existing technical codes and standards still reference historical weather data. This adds to the complexity and uncertainty associated with engineering decisions about infrastructure.

### [On ice](#)

From 2006 to 2008, a team led by Das and Washington University scientist Ian Joughin recorded the drainage of a 2.2-square-mile supraglacial lake that astoundingly emptied most of its 11.6 billion gallons of water in 90 minutes, with a volume that sometimes surpassed that of Niagara Falls.

It also formed “the tallest waterfall on the planet for that brief period - 6.2 miles,” said Das.

### [Climate change's impact on forests being measured via expanding tree trunks](#)

Last year, when Parker analyzed the mountain of data his team had collected, he found something surprising: Their trees were adding bulk at a surprisingly fast rate.

Parker said the best explanations for this all seemed to relate to climate change. Temperatures in the area have risen by three-tenths of a degree; the growing season has lengthened by 7.8 days; and the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen. All of those might speed up photosynthesis, the engine of tree growth.

### [Saving the Amazon may be the most cost-effective way to cut greenhouse gas emissions](#)

If the U.S. adopts a cap-and-trade program, companies facing carbon controls could meet part of their obligations by preserving Earth's largest tropical forest.

### [Companies fund projects to preserve Amazon rain forest](#)

Families in Boa Frente receive \$29 a month to spend in a town upriver. The village also has a new brick walkway, rainwater cisterns and a new school with solar panels and Internet access. In exchange, residents agree to protect the forest surrounding their plots instead of clearing more trees for farming or fuel.

The windfall comes courtesy of Marriott International Inc., the \$12-billion hotel chain. It is part of a complex -- and controversial -- plan to save the world's rain forests with the help of big business.

### [Geo-engineering: the planet's savior or untested danger?](#)

SAN DIEGO, California (AFP) – US researchers are studying the steam from ships, condensation trails of airplanes and volcanic eruptions as they try to understand how and even if the fledgling science of geo-engineering could slow global warming.

But where some researchers are forging ahead with the new science of tinkering with the atmosphere to change the climate, many others are warning that geo-engineering is untested, potentially dangerous and distracting the world from reducing greenhouse gases.

### [Economic View: A Small Price for a Large Benefit](#)

FORECASTS involving climate change are highly uncertain, denialists assert — a point that climate researchers themselves readily concede. The denialists view the uncertainty as strengthening their case for inaction, yet a careful weighing of the relevant costs and benefits supports taking exactly the opposite course.

Organizers of the recent climate conference in Copenhagen sought, unsuccessfully, to forge agreements to limit global warming to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century. But even an increase that small would cause deadly harm. And far greater damage is likely if we do nothing.



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