



## Drumbeat: February 26, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on February 26, 2010 - 9:08am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Oil Industry Booms - in North Dakota](#)

KILLDEER, N.D.—A massive oil reserve buried two miles underground has put North Dakota at the center of a revolution in the U.S. oil industry, a shift that has radically altered the fortunes of this remote area.

Harold Hamm, chief of Continental Resources, one of the biggest producers at the Bakken Shale in western North Dakota. He is pictured in April at an oil rig near Watford City, N.D.

The Bakken Shale deposit has been known and even tapped on occasion for decades. But technological improvements in the past two years have taken what was once a small, marginally profitable field and turned it into one of the fastest-growing oil-producing areas in the U.S.

The Bakken Shale had helped North Dakota oil production double in the past three years, surging to 80 million barrels in 2009—tiny relative to the more than seven billion barrels consumed by the U.S. every year, but enough to vault the state past Oklahoma and Louisiana to become the country's fourth-biggest oil producer, after Texas, Alaska and California. If current projections hold, North Dakota's oil production could pass Alaska's by the end of the decade.

"Most people felt like they could kind of write off the oil industry in the U.S., and that's just a long way from the truth," said Harold Hamm, chairman and chief executive of Continental Resources Inc., one of the biggest Bakken producers. "The fact of the matter is that a lot of people quit looking for oil." Continental reported Thursday that its North Dakota oil production doubled in 2009 and would continue to grow rapidly this year.

### [Like Rome Before the Fall? Not Yet](#)

VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN complains that he is being driven crazy because so many people are betting on America's demise. Reports of it are not just exaggerated; they are, he insists, ridiculous. Like President Obama, he will not accept "second place" for the United States. Despite the present crippling budget deficit and the crushing burden of projected debt, he denies that the country is destined to fulfill a "prophecy that we are going to be a great nation that has failed because we lost control of our economy and

overextended.”

Mr. Biden was referring in particular to the influential book “The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers” by Paul Kennedy, a British historian who teaches at Yale. Published in 1988, the book argues that the ascendancy of states or empires results from the superiority of their material resources, and that the wealth on which that dominance rests is eroded by the huge military expenditures needed to sustain national or imperial power, leading inexorably to its decline and fall. The thesis seems a tad schematic, but Professor Kennedy maintains it with dazzling cogency. In any debate about the development of the United States, one would certainly tend to side with the detached historian rather than the partisan politician.

### [US natural gas rig count climbs near 12-mth high](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The number of rigs drilling for natural gas in the United States climbed by 12 this week to near a one-year high of 905, according to a report on Friday by oil services firm Baker Hughes in Houston.

It was the ninth straight weekly gain and puts the gas rig count at its highest level since March 6, 2009, when there were 916 gas rigs operating.

### [Report says oil supplies in Fla. waters negligible](#)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Estimated reserves in Florida waters would provide the United States with less than a week's worth of oil and have no discernible effect on prices at the pump or U.S. reliance on foreign oil, says a report released Friday as part of a state Senate review of whether a ban on offshore drilling should be lifted.

The report is the latest indication that the push to open Florida waters as near as three miles from the state's beaches may be waning, at least for this year.

### [Lights failure throws Chavez into darkness](#)

A televised speech by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez was suddenly thrown into darkness when lights failed, at the Miraflores Palace in Caracas.

### [Japan's 2nd 'pluthermal' nuclear generation set to begin](#)

MATSUYAMA, Japan (AP) - (Kyodo)—A nuclear reactor in western Japan is in the final stage of preparation to become the country's second for "pluthermal" power generation using plutonium-uranium mixed oxide fuel.

### [Incentives to rise for home solar arrays](#)

At least 10 times a day Andrew Kin clicks onto the Internet for the pure joy of watching his electricity meter run backward.

The 30-year-old business consultant placed an array of rooftop solar panels on his Los Angeles area duplex last fall, and thanks to a Web site provided by his installer he has watched his monthly electricity bills drop, in real time, from \$50 to about \$10.

### [10 questions about the Bloom Energy Server](#)

Bloom Energy is developing a power box for the home too, a development that could fundamentally change the way home users buy energy, if (again) the Bloom box is the real deal. Ten questions to consider.

### [Ethanol output rises in December: EIA](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. daily ethanol output rose in December for the third month in a row as distillers took advantage of low prices for corn and natural gas, the Energy Information Administration said.

Distillers made 787,870 barrels per day of the alternative motor fuel in December, the last month for which data was available. That was up from 786,400 barrels per day in November, and 740,000 bpd in October.

### [Belgium offers chickens to waste-cutting households](#)

Residents of a Belgian town are to be offered chickens as part of a campaign to reduce household waste.

The town of Mouscron has 50 pairs of chickens that it will distribute to families with sufficient space to keep the birds in their gardens.

Those who take part in the scheme must agree not to eat the chickens for at least two years, or to give them away.

Local officials are stressing that applicants could gain a supply of free, fresh eggs.

### [Helping plants fertilize themselves](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- A BYU researcher helped discover a cellular tool some plants use to fertilize themselves. This fundamental understanding is important in the effort to

reduce the 88 million tons of nitrogen fertilizer used worldwide every year. That in turn could help reduce fossil fuel use, because 3-5 percent of the world's natural gas is burned to make nitrogen fertilizer. The research is published in the journal *Science*.

### [Oil Industry Booms - in North Dakota](#)

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### [Mexico oil output falls amid delay on reforms](#)

Mexico's oil production continues to fall from year-ago levels as the government struggles to implement hard-fought energy reforms designed to boost exploration.

January crude production was 2.615 million barrels a day, a 2.6 percent decline from 2.685 million in the same month of 2009, state-run oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, known as Pemex, reported Thursday.

The bright side is that January output was the highest level in nine months, though still a significant drop-off from the record annual average of 3.4 million barrels a day in 2004.

### [Pemex Production Fell at Slowest Rate in Two Years](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleos Mexicanos's oil output fell 2.6 percent in January from a year earlier, the smallest decline since December 2007 as the state-owned oil company pumped more crude from onshore fields.

### [US Misses Deadline for Offshore Drilling Study](#)

The Obama administration failed to meet a deadline for submitting a court-ordered analysis of the environmental effects of offering new leases to drill in Alaskan coastal waters, the oil industry said Thursday.

### [Russia Making Oil Inroads Through Siberian Pipeline](#)

Refiners across Asia, including Unipet and Exxon Mobil, have warmed up to Russian ESPO crude barely two months after shipments began, raising eyebrows from Riyadh to Rio de Janeiro as producers vie for leadership in the world's fastest-growing oil market.

### [Nigerian refineries back online](#)

ABUJA, Nigeria (UPI) -- Nigerian petroleum officials said the resumption of activity at two refineries would ease fuel shortages plaguing the oil-rich country.

Levi Ajuonuma, a spokesman for the Nigerian National Petroleum Corp., said the Kaduna and Warri refining companies resumed production after regular maintenance, Nigeria's Next newspaper reports Friday.

### [Fuel shortage brought out the best and worst in people](#)

THAT THE petrol crisis has revealed our over dependence on cars will not surprise many on the island.

However, what is surprising is how even a temporary petrol scarcity has impacted on so many areas of peoples' lives.

An informal survey of readers' experiences, by the Cyprus Mail has shown how various sectors, such as from tourism, healthcare and education, suffered from a lack of infrastructure or provision for such an occurrence.

### [Rig Shortage Delays Ugandan Drilling Programs](#)

A shortage of drilling rigs is hampering appraisals and drilling activities in oil fields in Uganda's Block 2 and Block 4B, the senior geologist at the petroleum exploration and production department said Friday.

### [Lower Gas Prices Create Competition for Coal, BP's Ruehl Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Lower natural gas prices are creating competition with coal for U.S. power generation, BP Plc Chief Economist Christof Ruehl said.

"Gas can compete with coal as an input fuel for power generation again," Ruehl wrote in an article in Foreign Affairs published on the journal's Web site this week. "Consumers will benefit if the price of natural gas is progressively delinked from the price of crude oil."

### [BP and Shell face new shareholder revolt over tar sands](#)

Shareholders at BP and Shell will get the chance to vote at upcoming AGMs on whether to force oil giants to come clean on their Canadian tar sands involvement.

Institutional investors including The Co-operative Asset Management and Rathbone Greenbank have co-signed a 'special resolution,' which would force the two companies to fully disclose and justify their involvement in Canadian tar sands.

### [Australia: Dreams of statehood are buried in a sparsely populated area](#)

THIS week's announcement by federal Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson that the commonwealth's preferred site for a national radioactive waste depository is Muckaty station in the heart of the central desert foregrounds a bitter truth about Northern Territory politics.

### [FACTBOX-U.S. nuclear units seeking license renewal](#)

(Reuters) - A total of 59 nuclear reactors in the United States have obtained 20-year license extensions from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission since 2000, according to the Nuclear Energy Institute, a trade association. No applications have been rejected.

Currently, 19 renewal applications are under NRC review and 20 other reactors have indicated they will apply for extensions before 2017.

### [A curious blend of doom and optimism](#)



Former green Stewart Brand's new book proves a surprisingly useful source of arguments and facts against green dogmas. But critics of environmentalism should still be wary of him.

### [Using tech to save the planet](#)

In 2007, Starks set up AMEE (Avoidance of Mass Extinction Engine) with the UK government as his first client. The goal: to provide a neutral aggregator that could pull together all of the standards, all of the methods used to do calculations, and all of the raw data to provide the most detailed and accurate picture possible of how we consume our planet's resources.

### [The futility of alternative energy in the midst of hyper-population growth](#)

But let's return to the phrase, "...and keep our economy growing." That means to keep our population growing in order to create more production, consumption and use of natural resources. What those politicians fail to tell you: our non-renewable energy resources dwindle while our population accelerates on its way to adding 100 million people in the next 30 years.

### [Toxic towns: People of Mossville 'are like an experiment'](#)

For decades, Mossville residents have complained about their health problems to industry, and to state and federal agencies. Now with a new Environmental Protection Agency administrator outspoken about her commitment to environmental justice, expectations are growing.

### [Oil era not to end in coming decades - Shafranik](#)

LONDON, February 26 (Itar-Tass) --The oil era will not end in the coming decades, Yuri Shafranik, President of the Council of the Russian Union of Oil and Gas Producers, has said in an exclusive interview with Itar-Tass in London after his report at the British Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). He believes the "oil peak", in the form in which it is described by Western analysts, is hardly probable.

"Naturally, a peak and a recession will come some day, but not in the form of 'up and down.' Some day energy production will be stabilised, and not because of oil, but because of other energy sources, like shale gas, liquefied gas, nuclear and hydrogen power engineering ... Those energy sources will occupy their niches, because they offer no competition to oil. No one will lay a gas pipeline to tents of skin and bark, in which people live in the tundra, or to highland villages. Other energy sources will be used there. This is why I have long preferred the idea of stabilized oil production to the idea of an oil peak."

### [Europe to need Russian gas for years to come - Shafranik](#)

LONDON (Itar-Tass) -- Despite all alternative technologies, Europe will need Russian gas for a long time to come, Yuri Shafranik, President of the Council of the Russian Union of Oil and Gas Producers, has said in an exclusive interview with Itar-Tass after he made a report at the British Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).

“The greatest amounts of gas are delivered by gas pipelines, but the production of liquefied gas is developing, offering competition to the traditional natural gas. Of course, this competition does not make us happy. Nevertheless, gas consumption in Europe will continue to grow. The only problem is the dynamics of that growth,” Shafranik said. In his opinion, “the growth will not be great, because Europe is taking effective measures for introducing energy saving technologies and is confidently mastering other energy sources, including alternative ones. And still, Europe will need our gas for a long time to come. This is why the Nord Stream and South Stream pipelines, which are a supplement to the existing ones, are quite promising projects.”

### [Suicide bombers strike in heart of Kabul; 17 dead](#)

KABUL – Insurgents struck in the heart of the Afghan capital Friday with suicide attackers and a car bomb, targeting hotels used by foreigners and killing at least 17 people and wounding dozens, police said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks, which Afghan President Hamid Karzai said were aimed at Indians working in Kabul.

### [Venezuela Plans to Keep Oil Production Levels Steady](#)

OPEC member Venezuela has no plans to increase to oil production levels near term, a top official said Thursday.

"We have a firm decision not to increase production," Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said. "We believe it isn't necessary to modify anything."

### [Spanish driller joins race for Falkland Islands oil bounty](#)

Spanish-Argentine oil group Repsol YPF said yesterday it plans to start drilling for oil at the end of the year in the Falklands basin near the Falkland Islands, which are claimed by Britain.



### [China oil company inks gas exploration deal with Thailand](#)

XI'AN: A State-owned oil company from Northwest China's Shaanxi province has inked a deal with Thailand to explore for natural gas in parts of the Khorat Basin, an oil-rich region 280 kilometers from Bangkok.

### [UK: Jump in energy group profits prompts call to cut prices](#)

Calls mounted for widespread cuts in energy bills yesterday after Centrica revealed record results at British Gas following a 58% leap in profits.

### [Centrica warns of higher gas and electricity prices](#)

Roger Carr, Centrica chairman and until recently head of Cadbury, cautioned that a combination of higher wholesale energy prices this year and the huge investment needed to ensure security of supply and meet environmental targets meant the group was in a "very different commodity price environment."

### [Why is Bloom Energy Lying to Us?](#)

Don't get me wrong, I'm extremely excited about Bloom Energy. I honestly think that their technology is a good thing for the world and that it might very well revolutionize the power infrastructure in America and throughout the world. And yes, it will create jobs and make a select few people very rich.

In fact, I think it's so revolutionary that it doesn't need to be inflated by false or misleading claims.

### [Will Google Charge Your Electric Cars?](#)

"Electricity is the new vehicle fuel," explains Dr. Will Kempton, Director, Center for Carbon-free Power Integration, University of Delaware. He is confident that the U.S. electric grid can support millions of electric cars that are likely to be added in the next decades. He observes that the U.S. total grid load is about 417 GW. If all U.S. cars will be converted to V2G plug-ins with an average of 15 kWh per vehicle, they would provide 2,865 GW. A U.S. fleet of electric vehicles could provide 7X entire electricity needed in U.S.

### [China's 'Overcrowded' Solar Sector Faces Lower Demand, More M&A](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China's "overcrowded" solar power industry faces lower demand this year from Germany, the biggest buyer of the technology, and an increase in the number

of mergers and acquisitions, according to Yuanta Securities Co.

Revenue may fall 40 percent in the second half of 2010 after the German government agreed this month on draft legislation to reduce subsidies to renewable energy users, said Min Li, a Hong Kong-based energy analyst at Yuanta Securities.

### [European take-up of small cars drives down average CO2](#)

Increasing take-up of small, low-CO2 cars, boosted by national scrappage schemes, is helping to drive down average CO2 emissions in Europe. So says JATO Dynamics, which has released new data showing that volume-weighted average CO2 emissions across all models and segments fell by 7.9g/km last year, with over half of all cars sold in Europe now emitting less than 140g/km.

### [Mammoth iceberg could alter ocean circulation: study](#)

An iceberg the size of Luxembourg knocked loose from the Antarctic continent earlier this month could disrupt the ocean currents driving weather patterns around the globe, researchers said Thursday.

While the impact would not be felt for decades or longer, a slowdown in the production of colder, dense water could result in less temperate winters in the north Atlantic, they said.

### [From ocean to ozone: Earth's nine life-support systems](#)

We have already overstepped three of nine planetary boundaries and are at grave risk of transgressing several others.

### [Global warming 'may cut deaths'](#)

The high number of people who die in Ireland during the winter months - particularly as a result of respiratory disease and heart failure - may reduce thanks to global warming, an all-Ireland conference on the health implications of climate change was told today.

### [OPEC Output Reaches 14-Month High on Saudi Gain, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries increased crude-oil production to a 14-month high in February, led by a Saudi Arabian gain, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Output rose 125,000 barrels a day, or 0.4 percent, to an average 29.17 million barrels a day, the highest level since December 2008, according to the survey of oil companies, producers and analysts. The January production total was revised 45,000 barrels a day higher.

OPEC cut its production quotas by 4.2 million barrels to 24.845 million barrels a day beginning in January 2009 as fuel demand tumbled during the worst global recession since World War II. The group left the targets unchanged at a Dec. 22 meeting in Luanda, Angola. Ministers are next scheduled to gather on March 17 in Vienna.

"At \$70 there is really no incentive for OPEC to cut production," said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research in Winchester, Massachusetts. "OPEC should be worried because rising production and economic uncertainty isn't the recipe for a bull market."

### [Oil hovers above \\$78 amid mixed crude demand signs](#)

Oil prices have bobbed between \$70 and \$80 for most of the last six months as investors mull growing crude demand in developing countries such as China offset by flagging consumption in developed countries.

Even a cold winter in the U.S. has failed to boost demand for heating oil.

"The absence of any sustained seasonal draw in heating oil inventories is still striking," Barclays Capital said in a report. "The inventory overhang remains stubbornly high."

### [Oil Set for Monthly Gain as Economy Recovers, Stockpiles Drop](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil is poised for the biggest monthly advance since October as the U.S. economy starts to recover and fuel inventories fall.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke said this week the U.S. economy is in a "nascent" recovery. The U.K. emerged from recession in the fourth quarter at a faster pace than previously estimated, a report today showed. The amount of crude stored in tankers fell to 25 million barrels this month from levels of more than 80 million barrels last year, Poten & Partners said.

### [Tanaka warns of downside risk to oil](#)

There is more downside risk to oil demand than upside risk, the International Energy Agency's head Nobuo Tanaka said today.

"In terms of the oil demand, it is more the downside possibility," Reuters quoted Tanaka, as saying to a two-day oil market forum in Tokyo.

### [Oil May Reach \\$81 Next Week, Passes 'Cloud': Technical Analysis](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil prices may rise to \$81 a barrel within the next week, according to indicators on a Japanese charting method called Ichimoku Kinko Hyo, or "one- glance cloud chart," said Mitsubishi Corp.

### [Did 'unsafe' natural gas release lead to power plant explosion?](#)

Enough natural gas to fill a basketball arena was released just before an explosion at a Connecticut power plant, say federal investigators, who call it an 'unsafe' practice.

### [Sarkozy's Refinery Gamble Pushes Up Closure Cost for Total](#)

(Bloomberg) -- French President Nicolas Sarkozy's intervention in Total SA's plan to shut a refinery near the northern port of Dunkirk may have raised the cost of the closure for France's largest company.

The government's bid to delay the plan until after regional elections next month backfired, as unions widened a strike across Total's refineries and pushed France to the verge of fuel shortages this week. The government was concerned about the political fallout from the closure, which risked the livelihoods of about 400 sub-contractors.

### [BP Seen Investing More Than \\$2B in Oil Sands Project](#)

BP PLC is expected to invest more than \$2 billion in Value Creation Inc.'s oil-sands project in Alberta, beating out rival bidder India's Reliance Industries Ltd. (500325.BY), according to an industry source.

Though the final terms could change, at this stage in the negotiations BP is expected to pay \$500 million for a 75% working interest in Value Creation's oil-sands project plus a commitment to invest an additional \$1.6 billion to help develop the project, according to the source.

### [Statoil Ordered by Nigerian Court to Set Aside Crude Revenue](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Statoil ASA, Norway's biggest oil and natural-gas producer, was ordered by a Nigerian court to set aside all revenue from its stake in an oil field following a claim from a local businessman.

### [BG, Eni Oil Venture Faces Kazakh Tax, Contract Review](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kazakhstan is preparing tax claims against the BG Group Plc and Eni SpA-led Karachaganak project, and may challenge the production-sharing agreement as the government seeks a stake in the oil field.

### [Indonesia Bank Row May Hinder Cut in \\$11 Billion Fuel Subsidies](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Indonesia may delay raising energy prices as a dispute over a 2008 bank bailout divides President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's coalition, PT Bank Danamon said, undermining efforts to rein in almost \$11 billion in subsidies.

### [Sempra Plans to Exit Commodities Venture With RBS](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Sempra Energy, owner of the largest U.S. natural-gas utility, said it plans to exit the remaining parts of a commodities-trading joint venture it has with Royal Bank of Scotland Group Plc.

Selling its stake in North American gas and power trading would dissolve the venture and free up cash for stock buybacks and investment, the San Diego-based company said today in slides posted on its Web site. Staying in the venture would have required the company to issue about \$2 billion in equity, Chief Executive Officer Don Felsing said.

### [Are Investors Tough, Blind or Crazy?](#)

The eurozone is on the brink of chaos. A host of countries are trembling on the brink of sovereign default. Many people believe the US can't service its debts. California is sinking into the mire. Nobody knows how Japan services its mighty deficit. China is in protectionist mode. People are worrying about peak oil again. And the England football team is heading to the World Cup without a recognised left back.

### [Hummer in a Peak Oil-Fearing Era: Why China Couldn't Buy the Brand](#)

General Motor's failure to sell off its Hummer brand to Chinese manufacturer Sichuan Tengzhong Heavy Industrial Machines highlights the country's hyper-awareness of its growing energy appetite.

The Chinese government's decision to scuttle the deal suggests it's worried whether the global oil supply can meet the country's energy demands in the long-term. China wants to promote efficient, gas-sipping cars, not massive SUVs with poor fuel economy.

### [Odierno requests more combat forces in Iraq -- beyond the Obama deadline](#)

In a move that could force President Obama to break his vow to get all combat troops out of Iraq by August of this year, his top commander in Iraq recently officially requested keeping a combat brigade in the northern part of the country beyond that deadline, three people close to the situation said Wednesday.

### [FPL's Hay Relies on Wind as Rate Case Clouds Utility Outlook](#)

(Bloomberg) -- FPL Group Inc. became the largest U.S. electricity producer by investing \$11 billion in wind and solar power around the country. Those holdings are more critical to the bottom line after a utility rate ruling in Florida dimmed earnings prospects at the company's flagship unit.

### [Sales of ethanol-free gasoline](#)

The tow truck driver seemed sympathetic as he wrote out the receipt at the repair shop. It sounded to him like another car that wouldn't run due to a faulty fuel pump, or maybe the fuel injectors. He had towed many of them after Oregon mandated 10 percent ethanol in pump gasoline beginning in January 2009.

Thanks to legislation presented by local state Reps. Bruce Hanna and Tim Freeman, Oregonians can now choose more conveniently to opt out of ethanol fuel.

### [German wind power firm to withdraw from Taiwan](#)

TAIPEI (AFP) – Germany-based InfraVest, the largest private wind power company in Taiwan, said Friday it will withdraw from the island because it does not have confidence in the government's energy policies.

InfraVest said a newly announced government purchasing price for wind power was below the cost of producing it, forcing the company to concentrate on mainland China instead.

### [World's Biggest Power Plan May Be Thwarted by Congo](#)

(Bloomberg) -- A plan to build the world's biggest power complex in the Democratic Republic of Congo may never happen because the government is too indecisive, the head of a venture that had planned to invest \$5.2 billion said.

### [Skipper unveils world's biggest solar-powered boat](#)



KIEL, Germany (AFP) – A skipper hoping to become the first to sail round the world using solar power said his catamaran could carve a wake for pollution-free shipping as he unveiled the record-breaking yacht Thursday.

### [Spaceship Earth is running out of fuel](#)

It has almost become impossible to read a story about energy without finding the word "sustainable" used at some point. We all have some basic understanding of what is meant. The current supplies of oil and natural gas are limited and those new fields being found are increasingly expensive to maintain. Therefore, our current pace of using up the supply of fossil fuels is not sustainable, or will not be for very long. That discussion is generally focused on peak oil.

Often, this basic definition is followed by someone's favorite solution for maintaining economic growth in the face of such diminished supply of energy. Sometimes, these solutions are reasonable, like an increased use of wind and solar. Sometimes they pose a technological challenge with promise of a future energy supply, such as biofuels from algae. Others so defy rational analysis that they could exist only in a bad sci-fi movie.

The focus on energy, as important and immediate as that is, allows us to ignore the very basic notion of what it would take to be truly sustainable. Some have tried to explain this with the analogy of a spaceship.

### [Only crisis will convince climate deniers, audience told](#)

Crop failures and famine may ultimately convince people who still deny the world's climate is changing.

But even then, a Lethbridge audience was warned Thursday, some leaders may refuse to act. But the longer politicians and the energy industry try to postpone real change, the higher the price to be paid by Canada's next generations.

Students and experts at the University of Lethbridge debated "tipping points" during a mid-day forum, as part of the "Peak Week" examination of oil and energy issues facing Albertans. While scientists around the world are reporting climate change data almost daily, guest speaker Thomas Homer-Dixon said many politicians and industry-backed "think tanks" are still refusing to believe it.

### ["The future of our cities lies in their integration with the environment"](#)

A conversation with Daniel Lerch, author of *Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty*, to understand how we can build cities that are resilient to climate change and able to meet their own energy needs without depending on oil.

### [Pacific nations vie to create OPEC-style tuna cartel](#)

KOROR (AFP) – Leaders of eight Pacific nations responsible for a quarter of the world's tuna catch vowed Thursday to conserve stocks of the fish and increase their own financial return from the lucrative industry.

Despite their waters producing much of the world's tuna, the impoverished nations receive only three to four percent of the wholesale value of the catch, which is mainly controlled by foreign companies.

### [Wal-Mart Unveils Plan to Make Supply Chain Greener](#)

Wal-Mart, the nation's largest retailer, announced on Thursday that it would cut some 20 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from its supply chain by the end of 2015 – the equivalent of removing more than 3.8 million cars from the road for a year.

The company plans to achieve that goal by focusing on popular product categories with the highest embedded carbon – milk, bread, meat, clothing – and by pressing its suppliers to rethink how they source, manufacture, package and transport those goods. Essentially, suppliers are being asked to examine the carbon lifecycle of their products, from the raw materials used in manufacturing all the way through to the recycling phase.

### [Vancouver Olympics going for the green](#)

Reporting from Vancouver, Canada - As is normally the case for top city officials during the Olympics, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson has a car and driver assigned to shepherd him through the whirl of the Winter Games.

But the 45-year-old former organic farmer, who earlier ran the Happy Planet juice company, has shown up for most Olympic events as he always does: on his battered but serviceable mountain bike, suit pants tucked into his socks.

Since he became mayor in December 2008, Robertson has doubled Vancouver's bicycle infrastructure budget, set landmark electric-vehicle-charging standards for new buildings, and expanded the city's "car-free" days.

### [Clearing the Air at American Ports](#)

The Teamsters union and environmental activists have formed an unlikely and outspoken alliance aiming to clear the air in American ports, and perhaps bolster the Teamsters' ranks in the process.

### [Climate Scientists Possible Criminals, Says Sen. Inhofe](#)

Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) has called for leading climate scientists to face criminal charges for their role in “Climategate,” the scandal that has cast doubt on the validity of man-made global warming theories.

### [UN to review controversial climate panel](#)

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AFP) – The United Nations said Friday it would conduct an independent review of its Nobel prize-winning climate panel, whose credibility has been hit by errors in a key report on global warming.

The UN's plan was announced as environmental experts at an international meeting hailed the opportunity to make progress on climate change after last year's Copenhagen talks ended in chaos and urged India and China to come on board.

### [Road Transportation Emerges as Key Driver of Warming in New Analysis from NASA](#)

In a paper published online on Feb. 3 by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Unger and colleagues described how they used a climate model to estimate the impact of 13 sectors of the economy from 2000 to 2100. They based their calculations on real-world inventories of emissions collected by scientists around the world, and they assumed that those emissions would stay relatively constant in the future.

In their analysis, motor vehicles emerged as the greatest contributor to atmospheric warming now and in the near term. Cars, buses, and trucks release pollutants and greenhouse gases that promote warming, while emitting few aerosols that counteract it.

The researchers found that the burning of household biofuels -- primarily wood and animal dung for home heating and cooking -- contribute the second most warming. And raising livestock, particularly methane-producing cattle, contribute the third most.



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