



Drumbeat: March 13, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 13, 2010 - 9:38am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Made in the U.S.A.: Efficiency Materials](#)

While solar and wind manufacturers struggle to fend off Chinese competition, energy efficiency equipment seems to have no such problem.

According to a recent study commissioned by efficiency advocates, equipment like caulking and insulation — basic tools for retrofitting the country's homes and businesses — is almost entirely made in the United States.

...Matt Golden, the chairman of Efficiency First, said he was surprised that the numbers were so high for caulking, but insulation was easier to explain.

"You don't want to make it in China, because a container full of insulation costs so little it's not worth shipping," Mr. Golden said.

—billions and billions of barrels of it. And it's all in U.S. waters.

[ANALYSIS - Finding deepwater oil proves tough slog for Mexico](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico's state oil company Pemex is learning the hard way why U.S. oilmen frustrated by failed multimillion dollar wells once dismissed the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico as "the Dead Sea."

The government says 29.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent could lie beneath the seabed in Mexico's part of the Gulf deep waters. But seven years after Pemex started to drill, the the company has little to show for its efforts.

[Exxon Mobil to proceed with LNG project](#)

Exxon Mobil Corporation says it will proceed with a multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Papua New Guinea.

Sales and purchase agreements with LNG buyers, and financing arrangements with lenders, have been completed, the company said on Saturday.

[Saudi, Conoco extend refinery bids deadline-sources](#)

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia (Reuters) - Saudi Aramco and U.S. firm ConocoPhillips have again extended the deadline for bids for a solids handling unit at their Yanbu refinery joint venture, industry sources said on Saturday.

The deadline is now June 1 for bids on the construction of the unit at the 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) refinery, two sources close to the bidding process said.

[Venezuela draws up plan to assure food distribution if energy crisis worsens](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) - The Venezuelan government and food producers have outlined a plan to guarantee the distribution of food if the South American nation's energy crisis worsens, an industry official said Friday.

Venezuelan Pork Federation president Alberto Cudemus said government and private-sector representatives met the previous evening on how to insulate the food sector from power outages. He said the plan involves reducing water use and investing to make food producers self-sufficient in energy within 90 to 360 days.

How long it takes will hinge on both the private sector's willingness to make the investments, and the government facilitating permits to import electrical generators and giving access to foreign currency to purchase the equipment, Cudemus said.

"We are sort of racing against the clock in the food sector and do not want to let the country down," he added.

[Rising energy costs fuel a return to heating residences with a fire](#)

Soaring energy prices are rekindling Britain's love affair with the warm glow of a open fire. Householders are ripping out gas devices and installing wood burners or opening chimneys to make a traditional blaze with coal.

Sales of wood burners are increasing by 40 per cent a year, says the Solid Fuel Association, which represents the industry.

[To solve our energy crisis, look to the sea](#)

"Spirit of Ireland", the impressive volunteer think-tank for energy independence, aims to find empty west-coast valleys to dam and flood with seawater – pumped storage for reserve hydropower linked to adjoining wind-farms. In a similar "Turlough Hill"

approach, the Organic Power company would use surplus wind-power to pump seawater up to reservoirs on Glinsk Mountain, above the cliffs of North Mayo. This will feed generating turbines, when needed, as it pours back down a shaft to the ocean.

In the crisis over climate change and energy, attention comes back to nature – even to the rocks the island is made of, and the seabed all around it. There is news of Ireland's first geothermal energy project, using the heat in deep rock strata hugging the mantle of the Earth. It will bore down to layers four kilometres deep under Newcastle, Co Dublin, and harness their heat, through a water network, to warm half the city.

[Out of the endless sprawl](#)

Conservatism itself is rooted more in the community and especially in the fertile soil of tradition than in the individual. In a land of strip malls and ten-lane freeways, of rampant materialism and unending competition, tradition and community become irrelevant – become skeletal ghosts on display behind panes of glass. Anymore, the American right views its historical patrons – Burke, Oakeshott, et alia – as somewhat quaint figures, whose philosophy should be cherry-picked for all the ripest talking-points.

[Chris Martenson: Getting the story right](#)

When I had the chance at the UK Parliament talk, I gave one “solution” (more of a ‘response’, really, but people like the word solution) – I proposed that we create a national or even international organization to study net energy and energy flows. It should be extremely well-funded and attract our best and brightest, so that we can answer such simple questions as, *“Should we retroactively insulate existing structures, or should we build a new light rail system?”* Because we only know the economics of that question, we can't answer the most important question of all: *“Which offers the higher energy returned on energy invested?”*

[Made in the U.S.A.: Efficiency Materials](#)

While solar and wind manufacturers struggle to fend off Chinese competition, energy efficiency equipment seems to have no such problem.

According to a recent study commissioned by efficiency advocates, equipment like caulking and insulation — basic tools for retrofitting the country's homes and businesses — is almost entirely made in the United States.

...Matt Golden, the chairman of Efficiency First, said he was surprised that the numbers were so high for caulking, but insulation was easier to explain.

“You don't want to make it in China, because a container full of insulation costs so little it's not worth shipping,” Mr. Golden said.

[Crude Oil Falls as U.S. Consumer Sentiment Unexpectedly Drops](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil declined for the first time in three days after a report showed that confidence among U.S. consumers unexpectedly dropped this month.

Oil fell 1.1 percent as the Reuters/University of Michigan preliminary consumer sentiment index dropped to 72.5 from February's reading of 73.6. A gain to 74 was forecast, according to the median of 68 estimates in a Bloomberg News survey. Prearranged orders to sell oil at specific prices, known as stops, may have been triggered as oil declined.

[Conoco Proposes Spending \\$13 Billion on Norway Fields](#)

(Bloomberg) -- ConocoPhillips, the third-largest U.S. oil company, proposed development plans for the North Sea Eldfisk and Ekofisk South fields offshore Norway valued at as much as \$13 billion to prolong their production lives.

[Déjà vu: Energy Prices](#)

It's hard to believe it's been two years this month since this column first revealed that speculators were running riot in the oil futures market. I pointed out that unrestrained commodities speculators were causing the oil price climb we were seeing, which would send the cost of crude to a peak of \$147 a barrel by the summer of 2008. At the time most "experts" quoted in the media were saying that oil prices were skyrocketing because world supplies couldn't keep up with demand, or because we had passed the point of Peak Oil. Neither position was true, of course; just looking at tanker shipments and worldwide oil supplies on hand, those concepts were obviously invalid.

[Pakistan's War on Terror and the New Cold War](#)

A new Cold war is in beginning. This time centre of this cold war is not Europe but South Central and Euro- Asia. Keeping in mind peak oil and conflicting interests of dominant powers, probability of return of cold war is a logical conclusion.

At Strategic level we see shift in policies of all concerned powers in Afghanistan and Central Asia. US Policy has at last tilted in Pakistan's Favor and India is on retreat. Pakistan and US are coordinating with each other against extremism and results are coming both in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

[China looks to 'combustible ice' as a fuel source](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Buried below the tundra of China's Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is a type of frozen natural gas containing methane and ice crystals that could supply energy to China for 90 years. China discovered the large reserve of methane hydrate last September, and last week the Qinghai Province announced that it plans to allow researchers and energy companies to tap the energy source. Although methane hydrate is plentiful throughout the world, the key challenge for China and other nations will be to develop technologies to excavate the fuel without damaging the environment.

[Process could clean up water used in natural gas drilling](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Texas A&M Engineering is playing a role in a technological breakthrough that could clean up the contaminated water recovered from drilling natural gas wells in shale deposits through the process of "hydraulic fracturing."

David Burnett of Texas A&M's Global Petroleum Research Institute -- in partnership with the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and Carl Vavra of the TEES Food Protein R&D Center Separation Sciences Laboratory, developed the membrane filtration technology -- which has been licensed to a major oil field service company for commercialization.

[Coal brings Wyoming, Queensland together](#)

CHEYENNE -- Though they are on opposite sides of the world, Wyoming and Queensland, Australia, have something in common.

Coal.

And both states have critical economic interests in keeping coal saleable despite climate-change concerns.

[Is Creating Green Jobs a "Sensible Aspiration" for Governments?](#)

That's the topic of an ongoing online debate over at the Economist.com. In one corner, green jobs advocate Van Jones, who argues that governments should engage in the active practice of creating green jobs, by, for example, incentivizing clean energy projects. In the other, Andrew P. Morriss, a professor of business and law at the University of Illinois, who argues that green job creation should be left to the marketplace.

It's a fascinating debate, and one that needs to be had. After all, Spain solar power industry just underwent a painful collapse due to miscalculated subsidies, and policy ideas for green job generation are being considered at this very moment in the US Senate.

[Slick, slim rail design to unclog city routes](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- A driverless, electric-powered light rail system designed to whisk commuters more efficiently around central Auckland (New Zealand) and across the harbour bridge could appeal to people who snub existing public transport, says its creator.

[The New Road to Energy Sustainability](#)

Dear Congress,

We, the American People, want a New Deal for energy.

We're tired of watching the rest of the world kick the clean energy industry into high gear while we're still stuck in neutral, debating a weak cap-and-trade bill that doesn't come close to meeting our energy challenge.

[Lexicon of Change: The Rise of Transition Culture](#)

You may or may not have heard of the Transition movement — described by its founder, Rob Hopkins, as “an exercise in engaged optimism”— yet Transition’s ideas are informing and even guiding the conversation of how communities confront the twin crises of peak oil and climate change.

The movement is driven by one simple idea: Rather than hand-wringing and lamenting dwindling energy reserves and climate change, Transition wants people to envision and create models for that future — and find much to be cheerful about.

[Board Extends Deadline for Everglades Land Deal](#)

OKEECHOBEE, Fla. — Facing legal challenges and growing deficits, South Florida water officials on Thursday gave themselves six more months to finance a controversial \$536 million purchase of land from United States Sugar for the Everglades.

The unanimous vote by the nine-member board of the South Florida Water Management District will keep the deal alive, but officials said they continued to struggle with whether the agency could afford it.

[Is nuclear necessary? Duke study touts power of renewables](#)

How necessary is nuclear power? Renewable energy, including solar, wind and

hydroelectric, can provide all but 6% of North Carolina's electricity, finds a new Duke University study.

[NRG Says Texas Power Agreements Are 'Stumbling Block' for Solar](#)

(Bloomberg) -- NRG Energy Inc. said the power- purchase agreements in Texas, which appropriate money one year at a time rather than several years, are a "stumbling block" to developing solar electricity plants in the state.

[Wind resistance: Analysis suggests generating electricity from large-scale wind farms could influence climate](#)

In a paper published online Feb. 22 in Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics, Wang and Prinn suggest that using wind turbines to meet 10 percent of global energy demand in 2100 could cause temperatures to rise by one degree Celsius in the regions on land where the wind farms are installed, including a smaller increase in areas beyond those regions. Their analysis indicates the opposite result for wind turbines installed in water: a drop in temperatures by one degree Celsius over those regions. The researchers also suggest that the intermittency of wind power could require significant and costly backup options, such as natural gas-fired power plants.

[Aquatic 'dead zones' contributing to climate change](#)

"As the volume of hypoxic waters move towards the sea surface and expands along our coasts, their ability to produce the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide increases," explains Dr. Codispoti of the UMCES Horn Point Laboratory. "With low-oxygen waters currently producing about half of the ocean's net nitrous oxide, we could see an additional significant atmospheric increase if these 'dead zones' continue to expand."

[Report: The Case for Global Warming Stronger Than Ever](#)

One of the many crimes that climate scientists have been accused of lately is that they claim absolute certainty in a field of research fraught with uncertainty. Sure, the planet is warming, say skeptics, but that's happened throughout Earth's history, long before humans were burning fossil fuels. So, how can we be sure this isn't just a natural phenomenon?



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