



Drumbeat: March 16, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 16, 2010 - 9:00am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[“The Joint Operating Environment” on the Energy Crisis](#)

The U.S. Joint Forces Command published “The Joint Operating Environment” report which “seeks to provide the Joint Force an intellectual foundation upon which we will construct the concepts to guide our future force development.”

While many of the predictions may not be completely accurate, they are based on trends, challenges and current opportunities. The 74-page detailed report covers areas such as war in the 21st century, globalization, cyber, climate change and natural disasters to food, water and urbanization.

An alarming chapter of the report was the section on energy. “By the 2030s, oil requirements could go from 86 to 118 million barrels a day.” The report shows graphs for the projected energy resources and the future world oil production including development of new discoveries, non-conventional oil, enhanced oil resources, development of existing reserves and existing capacities.

The report summarizes the current energy crisis by stating that “energy production and distribution infrastructure must see significant new investment if energy demand is to be satisfied at a cost compatible with economic growth and prosperity.”

[Will oil hit \\$200 a barrel after all?](#)

What ever happened to \$200-a-barrel oil?

Maybe it's just been delayed in transit. A recession in the world's developed economies can do that.

Remember Arjun Murti's time in the sun when, in May 2008, the analyst at Goldman Sachs predicted that oil would soon hit \$200 a barrel? A number of other prognosticators weren't far behind. T. Boone Pickens predicted in 2008 that oil would hit \$150 before the year was out. Some guy named Jim Jubak in April 2008 called for \$180 a barrel within two years.

In case you haven't noticed, all of us were wrong. Oil peaked at \$147 a barrel in summer 2008 and then plunged to \$35 a barrel by June 2009.

[Coming Soon: Economic Growth Without Oil](#)

The world may soon achieve something long dreamed of by governments and policymakers: higher economic growth without using more oil.

Rising efficiency, conservation and substitution are steadily reducing the amount of oil needed to fuel an increase in the goods and services produced around the world.

[Oil Prices Rise Despite Oversupply, and OPEC Wins](#)

Oil futures prices have rallied lately, which might lead some to think that the demand for oil must be greater than the supply of oil. On the contrary, oil producers like OPEC are trying to gauge whether there is too much oil on the market. If prices were determined by supply and demand, then the prospect of too much oil would bring prices down; however, as Reuters reported on Thursday, oil prices have risen despite plentiful supplies, demonstrating (again) that the fundamentals of supply and demand have a limited influence on the price of oil.

David Hufton, an oil trader with the firm PVM, puts it another way: “Anybody who still believes that oil futures prices are a reflection of the true state of the physical market is living in a time warp.”

[Petrol to hit 120p a litre, as motorists 'mugged' by oil companies](#)

Petrol is due to hit a record of 120p a litre in a matter of days, even though the price of oil is little more than half the levels it was at its peak, the AA motoring group has warned.

[Re-Tooling Alberta's Energy Royalties](#)

Last week's decision is also fueled by Alberta's \$6 billion deficit, according to Thomas Homer-Dixon, a professor in the center for business and the environment at the University of Waterloo. “This change in policy is an attempt to staunch the bleeding,” he said in an e-mail message.

But some energy experts questioned the policy of discounting royalties in the short-term because the strategy could undermine the long-term value of the resource.

[MMS to Launch Central GOM Lease Sale 213 Tomorrow](#)

The Director of Minerals Management Service, Liz Birnbaum, will participate in the Central Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 213 in New Orleans on March 17. She will open the Federal oil and gas lease sale at 9 a.m. CDT at the Louisiana Superdome with brief remarks. Following the bid reading, she will hold a media availability to discuss the results of the sale.

[Will Iraq's Oil Production Increase?](#)

These circumstances suggest that the decline in Iraqi oil production since 1979 is due, at least in part, to above-ground factors rather than the normal maturation of its biggest fields. With additional investment, better security and technology, Iraq could boost its production above its 1979 highs.

[Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta](#)

An oil spill, polluting groundwater and ruining cropland, from a well owned by Shell that had been left abandoned for over 25 years. Badly maintained equipment is the cause of many leaks, but oil operators blame sabotage, saying oil spills are caused for compensation money.

[Encana aims to double gas production in five years](#)

EnCana Corp. is trumpeting its potential to double its natural gas production over the next five years.

Ahead of its investor day in Calgary, the natural gas giant says a new independent assessment has confirmed an "enormous inventory" of gas across its 12.7 million net acres.

[Qatar plans to sell more LNG to India](#)

VIENNA (Reuters) - Qatar is in talks to sell more liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India, its energy minister said on Tuesday.

Abdullah al-Attiyah is due to visit New Delhi next week. Qatar currently sells 7.5 million tonnes of LNG a year to India, he told reporters ahead of a Wednesday OPEC meeting.

[U.S. Automakers: Natural Gas? We Don't Need No Stinking Natural Gas](#)

U.S. automakers' muted response during CERAWEEK — an annual oil, gas and power conference where the report was released — stood out in an event that was dominated

by talk of natural gas. Automakers at the conference see natural gas-powered cars and trucks more as a niche market. They certainly don't view natural gas as a game-changer, as it's been described by folks in the oil and gas industry. And no amount of natural gas seems to be able to change their minds.

[Saudi power, water sectors occupy center stage](#)

Estimates about the amount of investment needed to enable Saudi Arabia's power and water sectors to grow fast enough for the next decade quite easily stretch into the hundreds of billions of riyals. Keeping investments in utilities infrastructure high is far from a luxury for a country where power demand outpaces supply in many areas during peak summer months, and natural renewable water resources are among the sparsest in the world.

While water and power generation projects are a top priority for the Saudi government, the utilities sector has suffered from insufficient investments by the public and private sectors in the past decade. This will need to be rectified in the coming years simply to complement domestic demand for utilities growing at a rate of around 8 percent per year.

[Study: Daylight saving time a waste of energy](#)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Daylight saving time is supposed to reduce energy use, but data gathered from a state in the US suggests it actually does the opposite.

[Replace stop signs that waste your time](#)

Lauder's idea, described in his 4½ minute talk at TED, is that the new sign could take the place of some stop signs and, in certain circumstances, avoid unnecessary stops, saving time, fuel and carbon emissions, while promoting smooth traffic flow. He estimated that one conventional stop sign on a particular road costs \$112,000 a year in fuel and lost time -- and "turns otherwise honest citizens into lawbreakers."

[Consumers Reject Lower Energy Use As The Answer to Reducing Reliance on Fossil Fuels and Energy Imports](#)

Three out of four consumers are concerned by energy and climate change issues, but nearly two thirds say that using less energy is not the answer to reducing reliance on fossil fuels or foreign energy supply, according to global research by Accenture (NYSE: ACN). The survey of 9,000 individuals in 22 countries also shows that almost nine out of ten consumers want more government intervention in the energy market.

[Clouds and the Alternative Energy Grid](#)

California's goal of generating 33 percent of its power from renewable energy sources by 2020 will be challenging on days when clouds shade acres of solar photovoltaic panels or when thousands of wind turbines spin more slowly during calm weather. However, researchers at the University of California, San Diego are developing sophisticated forecasting tools that will give California electricity distributors advance notice of meteorological changes that affect solar output. The technology is being developed to allow energy suppliers to more efficiently schedule their fossil-fuel fired plants or energy-storage facilities to meet the state's demand for electricity.

['Milestone' for wave energy plans](#)

Ten sites on the seabed off the north coast of Scotland have been leased out to power companies in an effort to generate wave and tidal energy.

In the first project of its kind in the world, areas in the Pentland Firth and around Orkney have been leased to seven companies by the Crown Estate.

The companies are to push forward plans to generate enough electricity to supply 750,000 homes by 2020.

[Sanyo sets up solar parking lots for electric bikes](#)

Japanese electronics giant Sanyo said Tuesday it had opened two "solar parking lots" in Tokyo where 100 electric hybrid bicycles can be recharged from sunlight-powered panels.

[Nuclear: It's a Safe and efficient way to meet this century's rising energy demands](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — What would help our economy create hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs, bring millions of dollars to federal and state treasuries, provide clean air, reduce our trade deficit and enable America to be less dependent on foreign oil? Building more nuclear plants, that's what!

Here is why it will happen: For starters, producing nuclear-generated electricity is cheaper than any other major source of power. Granted, the cost of building new nuclear plants is high, but comparatively low nuclear fuel costs yield a significant savings over a plant's lifetime.

[Post Carbon Exchange #1: Richard Heinberg & Lester Brown](#)

In this premier Post Carbon Exchange, Post Carbon Institute Senior Fellow Richard

Heinberg talks with Lester Brown, Founder of the Earth Policy Institute, about hopeful developments in alternative energy, as well as the importance of Brown's updated path toward a sustainable future, "Plan B 4.0".

[The Femivore's Dilemma](#)

Femivorism is grounded in the very principles of self-sufficiency, autonomy and personal fulfillment that drove women into the work force in the first place. Given how conscious (not to say obsessive) everyone has become about the source of their food — who these days can't wax poetic about compost? — it also confers instant legitimacy. Rather than embodying the limits of one movement, femivores expand those of another: feeding their families clean, flavorful food; reducing their carbon footprints; producing sustainably instead of consuming rampantly. What could be more vital, more gratifying, more morally defensible?

There is even an economic argument for choosing a literal nest egg over a figurative one. Conventional feminist wisdom held that two incomes were necessary to provide a family's basic needs — not to mention to guard against job loss, catastrophic illness, divorce or the death of a spouse. Femivores suggest that knowing how to feed and clothe yourself regardless of circumstance, to turn paucity into plenty, is an equal — possibly greater — safety net. After all, who is better equipped to weather this economy, the high-earning woman who loses her job or the frugal homemaker who can count her chickens?

[If you want a green career, you need to prepare for it](#)

Contrary to popular belief, the jobs that go begging don't require a Ph.D. or even a four-year college degree. The common denominator in these family-supporting green jobs that are available right now is that they require technical skills -- two years or more beyond high school at a community college or technical school, an apprenticeship or a special certificate or credential.

[Time's rising tide may swamp Delta marshes](#)

While marshes in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta area are currently keeping pace with rising sea levels, they may not be sustainable under future sea-level increases.

The current rate of vertical soil formation or accretion may not be enough to keep rising marshes from being flooded in the future. These results are part of a new study in the January 2009 issue of the journal, *Estuaries and Coast*, by Lab scientist Tom Brown in collaboration with Judith Drexler and Christian de Fontaine of the U.S. Geological Survey.

[Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Unfazed by the Recession](#)

It looks like even the recession can't slow down climate change.

New data from Norway's Zeppelin station show that, despite a global slowdown in industrial activity, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has hit a new high: 393.71 parts per million during the first two weeks of March, a 0.54 ppm increase from a year ago.

[Forecasts underestimate oil demand, study says](#)

Official forecasts may be underestimating the future demand for oil by 30 million barrels a day, according to a research paper by Joyce Dargay of the University of Leeds and Dermot Gately of New York University. If so, the next oil crisis is going to be a whopper.

Dargay and Gately base their logic on the observation that the demand for oil no longer appears to respond to price. While price increases in the 1970s hammered worldwide demand for the fuel, the heftier oil prices we've witnessed over the past decade had no such effect. Instead, worldwide demand for oil increased by 4% during that time.

The professors say the 1970s fall in demand was the result of taking advantage of simple, obvious economies such as moving away from using oil to generate power. But they caution that those successes can't be repeated.

[Police arrest 2 in Mumbai for planning strikes](#)

MUMBAI (Reuters) – Police in Mumbai said on Sunday they have arrested two men they say were preparing to attack several targets in the financial hub, including the offices of energy firm Oil and Natural Gas Corp.

Police said they believed the men were receiving directions from Pakistan. India has said militant groups based in Pakistan were responsible for the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai which killed 166 people.

[Pakistan scrambles to solve energy crisis](#)

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (UPI) -- Islamabad ordered its Finance Ministry to release emergency funds to the state energy sector to stave off an oil, gas and electricity crisis in the country.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani called on lawmakers to come up with ways to avoid defaulting on foreign payments against oil supplies as the country grapples with a looming energy crisis.

Islamabad was forced to consider international loans to help the energy sector, which is dragging on the embattled national economy. Pakistani Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin stepped down in February because of the economic turmoil.

[ONGC FY10 output may be lower than target](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) – Oil and Natural Gas Corp's domestic oil output is seen at 24.9 million tonnes in the current financial year ending March 31, lower than the 25.76 million tonnes target, an official said.

[Saudi's Naimi Sees No Need to Alter OPEC Production](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabia, the biggest and most influential member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, said oil prices are in the right range and there's no need to change production policy.

"We are extremely happy with the market, the economy is doing well, it will do better down the road, so I don't see any reason to disturb this happy situation," Saudi Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi said late yesterday in Vienna, where OPEC meets tomorrow. "The price has stayed very well in the range of \$70 to \$80. It is in a very happy situation."

[Interview with David Shields - update on Mexico and oil](#)

SA: A recent New York Times article asserts that Mexico's basic problem is that a lot of it's easy oil is "used up." That's a very imprecise turn of phrase, but do you generally agree with it?

Shields: I think a large amount of it is already used up. As a ballpark figure, roughly 70% of Mexico's proven reserves have been consumed. So I think there is an awareness at Pemex that the future is about secondary oil recovery, enhanced oil recovery, and about finding more reserves, which is easier said than done. And also, peak water is an issue for Mexico going forward, but it's an area in which we have no experience. And so it will be hard to do that unless the ways of working in Mexico are changed quite substantially which is political out of bounds right now.

[Matthew Simmons' Awesome Presentation On The Coming Oil & Water Shortage](#)

Oil industry analyst Matthew Simmons is one of the most influential proponents of the idea the notion that oil is growing increasingly scarce, and that our future will be characterized by shortages and price spikes.

At a recent, he recently delivered an excellent presentation on the coming oil and water shortage.

(There's a similar presentation, in color, at the Simmons & Co. [web site](#).)

[OMV Said to Hire Banks to Refinance 1.5 Billion Euros of Loans](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OMV AG, central Europe's biggest oil company, hired banks to arrange 1.5 billion euros (\$2 billion) of loans to refinance debt, two people familiar with the situation said.

Lenders including Barclays Capital, Deutsche Bank AG, Erste Group Bank AG, Raiffeisen Zentralbank Oesterreich AG and Societe Generale SA are arranging the five-year revolving credit to refinance a facility maturing next year, said the people, who declined to be identified because the information isn't public.

[Citadel Close to Raising \\$2.2 Billion for Egypt Oil Refinery](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Citadel Capital, an Egyptian private equity firm with \$8.3 billion of investments, is close to raise \$2.2 billion to build an oil refinery in the Arab country.

[Oil and Gas Companies Warm to Possibility of Higher Taxes at the Pump](#)

As a rule, big business hates higher taxes. So it would come as no surprise to find the oil and gas industry upset about climate change legislation that would increase levies at the gas pump.

But industry groups are open to the idea now under consideration by senators writing climate legislation -- provided the additional money goes into the cash-strapped Highway Trust Fund.

"Our position on raising gas taxes is neutral to agnostic," said Cathy Landry, a spokeswoman for the American Petroleum Institute (API).

[Shell says will slash another 1,000 jobs by 2011](#)

LONDON (AFP) – Global energy giant Royal Dutch Shell revealed Tuesday that it will axe another 1,000 positions by 2011, on top of the 1,000 job losses already earmarked for this year.

[Shell to Spend More Than \\$100 Billion to Boost Output](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc, reeling from seven years of falling output, will spend more than \$100 billion by 2014 to revive production growth.

Shell, vying with BP Plc as Europe's biggest oil company, expects output to rise by 11 percent to 3.5 million barrels of oil equivalent a day in 2012.

[Rosneft Sees Russia Keeping Oil Tax Break to Support Production](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer, expects the government to preserve tax exemptions for eastern Siberian crude exports at least through this year to support output.

"We don't anticipate any changes in 2010," Rosneft Vice President Peter O'Brien said today in an interview in London. "If this zero export duty were taken away we would need to bring investment down to achieve our leverage target."

[An Unconditional Surrender](#)

I knew a change was on the horizon.

Even my Canadian readers in Alberta who felt they weren't getting their *fair share* had to have known the royalty time bomb had to be defused. Let's face it: the Alberta oil and gas royalty changes were inevitable.

[BHP Says Hay Point Coal Terminal Remains Shut After Poor Weather](#)

(Bloomberg) -- BHP Billiton Ltd. said the Hay Point port in Queensland state remains closed after shipping was suspended March 11 because of strong winds.

[Newcastle Coal Exports Drop After Train Derails](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Coal shipments from Australia's Newcastle port, the world's biggest export harbor for the fuel, fell by 22.6 percent last week after scheduled track maintenance and a train derailment disrupted supplies from mines.

[Final destination Iran?](#)

Hundreds of powerful US "bunker-buster" bombs are being shipped from California to the British island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean in preparation for a possible attack on Iran.

The Sunday Herald can reveal that the US government signed a contract in January to transport 10 ammunition containers to the island. According to a cargo manifest from the US navy, this included 387 “Blu” bombs used for blasting hardened or underground structures.

[Minister's ambition for future Welsh green energy](#)

Wales has the potential to generate twice its electricity needs from renewable sources within 15 years, says Environment Minister Jane Davidson.

She said Wales was fortunate to have more than 1,200 km of coastline with significant amounts of marine energy.

[High-Speed Rail Gains Traction in Spain](#)

Since a high-speed rail connection — called AVE for Alta Velocidad Española — opened in 2008, the 520-kilometer journey, or 325 miles, between Barcelona and Madrid that takes six hours by car can now be completed in just 2 hours and 38 minutes.

Two years ago, nearly 90 percent of the six million people traveling between Madrid and Barcelona went by air. But early this year the number of train travelers on the route surpassed fliers. The trajectory is ever upward.

[What is "Unsustainable" Really?](#)

The undeniable truth is, the ideal of "infinite economic growth" is closing in on a wall known as "finite resources". Growth cannot continue at the current pace, because for the first time in our history, we are pushing the limits of what the Earth can sustain. Tying back to what I mentioned earlier, climate change has become a very serious issue, and peak oil and peak commodities are just over the horizon. But these are actually just symptoms of the greater issue that is uncontrolled growth. Yet the human population continues to multiply, with each person making a bigger impact on the planet as standards of living rise. With our current level of technology, we cannot outgrow our planet, but it seems like we want to try anyway.

[How to Protect the Economy From Impending Oil Crisis](#)

I'm boring people to death on this subject, so I'll summarize the effort here with a very simple statement: the U.S. needs to significantly reduce foreign oil imports by adopting the only abundant, clean, and cheap domestic resource that can be scaled up to do so: natural gas. Since U.S. Energy Secretary Chu does not understand this simple fact, a

logical first step is for Chu to resign or for Obama to fire him. I don't care which happens as long as it happens. Instead of filling up an NGV in my garage with domestically produced natural gas at \$10/tank I have no option but to spend \$35 to fill my tank with 65% foreign oil. This is absurd. Congress needs to pass HR1835 (the so-called Natural Gas Act) today.

[The war for survival cannot be won using the language of the civil rights movement](#)

"Yet, it is interesting that even in 2010 so many environmentalists are obsessed, first and foremost, about social justice and human 'rights'," said Murray. "Military strategists always warn about trying to fight a contemporary war with the tactics of the last one. But in the face of growing scarcity the Green-Left continues to argue that "there is enough to go around" if only there was just and efficient distribution of existing resources, and "rich" energy hogs were kicked out of the trough.

"All sin is vested in the profit motive---banish that, and a planned economy of some kind will conjure up loaves and fishes for everyone and all of humanity can live within the environment's absorptive capacity. They can't grasp the fact that 6.8 billion people have so degraded the environment that only a fraction of that number could sustainably live on what is left. No Spartan regime of vastly reduced consumption will suffice to support all of us indefinitely.

"A planet of 6.8 billion vegans will not resuscitate our exhausted soils when oil-based fertilizers become scarce, nor will they re-stock the oceans with extinct or endangered species. But then, "sustainable" for them is just an adjective to adorn press releases and policy announcements---it is devoid of meaningful content."

[Is Ecological, Community-based Economic Planning Our Salvation?](#)

We have for decades now had the economists telling us that we need to be competitive, that as long as our economic models create not equilibrium but supply driven demand based on access to credit, we could support our role in a global economic community. It has been the driving economic thought of the GOP for over 30 years with their embracing the philosophy of Milton Friedman. Now it would seem that the advisers to President Obama seem to be following this same failed course. Why? Because it insures that they keep their millions and the rest of Americans get left behind. As long as people do not understand economics, especially the Tragedy of the Commons, they will not understand that the land is being destroyed, their way of life stripped from them until it is too late.

[Researcher finds people forgo luxury for green products when status is on mind](#)

In the recently published paper "Going Green to Be Seen: Status, Reputation, and Conspicuous Conservation," Griskevicius and co-authors find that people will forgo luxury and comfort for a green item. The catch? People will forgo indulging for

themselves only when others can see it. "Many green purchases are rooted in the evolutionary idea of competitive altruism, the notion that people compete for status by trying to appear more altruistic," says Griskevicius. His research finds that when people shop alone online, they choose products that are luxurious and enhance comfort. But when in public, people's preferences for green products increases because most people want to be seen as caring altruists.

[Exploring status quo bias in the human brain](#)

The more difficult the decision we face, the more likely we are not to act, according to new research by UCL scientists that examines the neural pathways involved in 'status quo bias' in the human brain.

First author Stephen Fleming, Wellcome Trust Centre for Neuroimaging at UCL, said: "When faced with a complex decision people tend to accept the status quo, hence the old saying 'When in doubt, do nothing.'

[Renewables Take a Bigger Share of Power Sector M&A, PWC Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Renewable energy, fueled by hydro power, grabbed a bigger share of mergers and acquisitions in the electric industry last year, PricewaterhouseCoopers said.

[Japan aims its home fuel cells at Europe](#)

Following the success of a half-price subsidy for CO₂-busting fuel-cell heat and energy generators for homes, Japan is now poised to ship its attention to supplying the UK and Germany with this hi-tech next-generation energy source.

With over 5,000 fuel cells providing heat and energy for conventional homes up and down Japan, the BBC has learnt that companies such as electronics giant Panasonic are in talks with EU governments about the possibility of bringing these proven energy and carbon-saving devices to market in Europe and elsewhere.

[For Renters, Solar Comes in Shares](#)

What happens if a renter wants solar power?

Most of the time, it's tough luck, unless the home's owner agrees to add panels. But a new solution is springing up in pockets of the country: community solar arrays.

Sometimes called solar gardens or farms, the idea is that utilities build the arrays, and customers — renters, people with shady roofs and even condo owners — can buy a

share.

[Governors Seek National Power Standard to Boost Wind Industry](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Congress must set a national renewable-power standard and revamp the electric grid to help the burgeoning U.S. wind-energy industry reach its potential and compete globally, governors from 29 states said.

A jumble of state laws should be replaced by a federal edict, according to a report from the Governors' Wind Energy Coalition, which includes California, Florida and Massachusetts. The plan would help spur development and efficiency, which would create jobs, curb greenhouse-gas emissions and reduce dependency on oil imports, the coalition said.

[Some Nukes](#)

There has always been something intuitively disproportionate about nuclear power plants, which, like coal-fired ones, use steam turbines to generate electricity. Converting mass to energy by atomic fission in order to achieve temperatures normally found only on the surface of stars like the sun and then using that extraterrestrial heat to boil water —well, it smacks of (to borrow a term from the nuclear dark side) overkill. To be fair, boiling water by burning black rocks made of petrified vegetable matter from the age of the dinosaurs is a little strange, too. And nuclear power plants have one great advantage over the fossil-fuel kind: they do not emit carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that is hastening the world toward climatic disruption and disaster.

[Nevada Wind Turbine Factory to Create 1,000 Jobs, Backers Say](#)

A consortium of Chinese and American renewable energy firms said last week that they had chosen Nevada as the location of a 320,000-square-foot wind turbine manufacturing and assembly plant.

The turbine plant, whose precise site has yet to be announced, will create an estimated 1,000 long-term manufacturing jobs in the state and is expected to be up and running by 2011.

[Japan auto, power giants target global electric car standard](#)

Four Japanese auto giants and the country's largest power company joined forces Monday to set up a common system to recharge electric cars, with the aim of creating a global standard.

The growth of the electric vehicle sector has been hampered by the chicken-or-egg question of what should come first: zero-emission cars or the networks of recharging stations to keep them on the road.

[Tracking Electric Use Could Allow Utilities to Track You, Too](#)

Smart electric grids are championed by the federal government, conservation groups and industry as good for the economy and the environment. The digital meters in homes enable measurement and two-way communication with utilities so consumers can trim electricity use.

But some technology policy organizations worry that smart meters pose a potential threat to privacy and could be exploited by online marketers, government agencies, criminals and others.

[China Halts Start of New Tungsten, Rare Earth Mines](#)

(Bloomberg) -- China, supplier of 90 percent of the world's rare earth minerals, stopped accepting applications for new mines to produce the materials until June 30, 2011, the land ministry said.

It also stopped accepting applications for tungsten and antimony mines, the Ministry of Land and Resources said in a statement on its Web site late yesterday. Shares of producers rose after the announcement.

The policy, aimed at protecting resources, may benefit producers such as Hunan Nonferrous Metals Corp. and Inner Mongolia Baotou Steel Rare-Earth Hi-tech Co. The government wants to help producers increase bargaining power in price talks, said Yao Chunlei, analyst at Guoyuan Securities Co.

[Florida Company Builds a Safer C.F.L. Bulb, but Does it Matter?](#)

Mr. Irvine said his product is meant to provide peace of mind in households with children and pregnant women – sectors of the population thought to be more vulnerable to potential health impacts from mercury exposure.

But there is a debate as to whether the small concentration of mercury in fluorescent lighting products poses a real threat to anyone.

[In U.S., Many Environmental Issues at 20-Year-Low Concern](#)

PRINCETON, NJ -- Americans are less worried about each of eight specific environmental problems than they were a year ago, and on all but global warming and maintenance of the nation's fresh water supply, concern is the lowest Gallup has measured. Americans worry most about drinking-water pollution and least about global warming.

[Lingle, others urge EPA restraint on emission rules](#)

Gov. Linda Lingle is among a group of mostly Republican U.S. governors urging federal lawmakers to stop the Obama administration from regulating greenhouse gases under an existing law.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "is not equipped to consider the very real potential for economic harm when regulating emissions," the 20 governors, including Republican Haley Barbour of Mississippi and Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia, said in a letter to House and Senate leaders.

[Democrats look to industry for help in climate bill](#)

As he toured union halls and factory floors in his 2006 Senate campaign, Ohio Democrat Sherrod Brown repeatedly railed against the "prescription bill the drug companies wrote," the "energy bill the oil companies wrote" and all the other policy decisions dominated by special interests.

Now halfway through his first Senate term, Brown seems to see at least one major Washington policy push differently.

Brown is one of a handful of senators trying to line up support for a climate bill that would put new limits on greenhouse gas emissions and spur production of renewable energy.

[EPA Studying Own Carbon-Trading System, Official Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Obama administration is considering a carbon-trading system under existing law if Congress doesn't pass cap-and-trade legislation that allows companies to buy and sell the right to pollute, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official said today.

The existing Clean Air Act "could enable us to include emissions trading" within agency regulations aimed at reducing carbon dioxide and other gases that scientists have linked to climate change, Anna Marie Wood, a senior policy analyst at the EPA, said at an event in Washington hosted by the American Bar Association.

[A Tale of Two Countries: Japan, China, and the Low-Carbon Economy](#)

Japan's enlightened business leaders are focused on how to move forward on a low-carbon economy, though my conclusion is that they don't have much more of a plan to get there than do the Americans. At the events I attended, there was much discussion about how to achieve the green vision of Hatoyama, the first prime minister who seems to "get it," when it comes to the economic potential of cleantech and a green economy, but whose vision is thwarted by the legislature. That was one recurring theme. Another was commiserating over how to motivate employees to engage in green practices. They expressed frustration in Japanese consumers' willingness to buy green products. They wondered how stable oil prices will affect progress, not to mention the impacts of the global economic recession. They asked repeatedly about President Obama's "New Green Deal," a remnant of the 2008 campaign that, far as I can tell, has disappeared into the ether.

[A Risk of Poisoning the Deepest Wells](#)

Fertilizing the oceans with iron has been proposed as a way of fighting climate change. The idea is that iron will promote blooms of phytoplankton that will remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. When the phytoplankton dies and sinks, the carbon will effectively be sequestered in the deep ocean.

Enthusiasm for the idea has waned, in part because of concerns about large-scale manipulation of ocean ecosystems. Now, a study in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences points out a specific risk: by promoting the growth of certain organisms, iron enrichment may result in the harmful production of a neurotoxin.



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