



Drumbeat: April 1, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 1, 2010 - 9:13am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[ANALYSIS - China's diesel surplus could be for the long haul](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - Oil refiners from Europe to Japan to Singapore hoping for margins to recover from year-lows have a worrying trend to consider -- last year's diesel surplus in China looks set to become a permanent fixture.

Record crude imports and refinery output are being used to fuel the world's No.3 economy, but with China adding at least half a million bpd of crude processing units every year until 2015, it is producing diesel even faster than the country's double-digit growth can absorb.

While processing more crude to cover rebounding diesel use -- 40 percent of total demand in the world's No.2 oil consumer -- an additional factor behind refiners' plan to up runs by at least 600,000 barrels per day this year is the need for naphtha, the feedstock for a petrochemicals boom.

een a Jurassic sandstone full of crude oil; if Gollum were around nowadays, equally, I suspect he would be shilling for Cambridge Energy Research Associates, purveying energy misinformation to the media, and his "Preciousss" would be made of black gold. Certainly, though, the world's industrial societies right now are in much the same predicament as Bilbo, fumbling in the dark for answers to riddles that take on an increasingly threatening tone with each moment that passes.

[Oil Firms Could Produce on Atlantic Shelf in 7 Years - Study](#)

The offshore U.S. Atlantic Continental Shelf could contain 3.8 billion barrels (Bb) of oil and 137 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas. First production could be as early as seven years in the area that the Obama Administration announced will be open to exploration, but any current estimates are still very preliminary, according to IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates (IHS CERA).

[Uganda: Petrol scarcity paralyses country](#)

The shortage in petrol supplies has left the entire country paralysed. This insufficiency, which started a fortnight ago, has spread countrywide leaving several filling stations closed and causing agony for transporters and passengers in most towns.

[Canadian Natural Gas Enters 'New Reality' - NEB Report](#)

It's a new reality for Canadian natural gas with new plays, new technology, and shifts in gas type creating both challenges and opportunities for those working in the sector says a recent report from the National Energy Board.

In the report, Short Term Canadian Natural Gas Deliverability 2010-2012, the NEB sees a shift from Alberta to British Columbia in natural gas production. This is due to an increase in the production of tight and unconventional gas which has grown significantly in the northeast B.C. areas of Horn River and Montney. Over 210 wells could be drilled in Montney and 70 wells in Horn River in 2010 alone. Alberta's gas production is expected to decline over the next few years from 12.7 to 8.5 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d). Meanwhile, B.C. will see an increase from 2.7 to 3.7 Bcf/d.

[David Hargreaves: Mining analyst](#)

GEOFF CANDY: What exactly is shale gas?

DAVID HARGREAVES: Well if we look at all the forms of fuel, the most comfortable one is natural gas. You turn on the tap, you press the button and there it is - needn't worry you - nicer than oil, nicer than coal, nicer than nuclear but there's a bit of a shortage of it, and whilst the world has 60 years of reserves - we're told - America, which uses most of it and likes it, only has 11, but trapped deep in the earth in shale layers - shale is a soft grey friable rock - are gas quantities in large form. Nobody has been able to get it out but now some of the boffins say they do and so we all know where it is now. Much under the United States, lots under Canada - even some under Poland. If it becomes exploitable, it could change the face of immediate requirements, and perhaps long-term requirements of domestic fuel.

[Report: Gulf states face energy and food shortage](#)

(MENAFN - The Peninsula) Gulf states face crippling shortages of energy, water and food unless resource management is overhauled now, says a study conducted by New Economist Intelligence Unit.

[GCC countries face electricity squeeze](#)

GCC countries are gearing up for one of the biggest expansions of electricity-generating capacity in history, even as they confront difficulties in securing debt finance and fuel for the plants.

From Kuwait to Saudi Arabia to Abu Dhabi, it is the same story: power officials looking

at a doubling or tripling of consumption in the next two decades, but facing acute shortages of natural gas. With the easing of the economic crisis and renewed growth, this year could become an especially big year for the power industry, said Dietmar Siersdorfer, the chief executive of the Middle East energy cluster for Siemens, the German maker of generating equipment.

“Due to the financial crisis in the whole world, there was one year lost because there was no financing available here in the region and now there’s a certain backlog which has to go first,” he said. “We see at the moment many projects starting to fly in the region: both because of demand, but also by finance capabilities.”

[U.S. Wasted NASA and Opportunity for Energy Independence](#)

Until now I have remained silent, except to a few movers and shakers in the NASA establishment (who basically agree with me, but say that politics has essentially trumped practicality), but a just-published piece in Sunday’s *Washington Post*, “NASA’s \$9.4 billion mission to nowhere,” (NASA’s \$9.4 billion mission to nowhere) was the last straw. Had we pursued what was already on the drawing board in 1978, we would be essentially finished today. The few items in popular use that might still require fossil fuels would not necessitate overseas imports for hundreds of years, and given the rate of technological advance, even those few would probably have yielded alternative methods by now.

[Nuclear power – yes please, and lots of it](#)

This new nuclear capacity is required not simply to meet growing demand, but also to fill the gaping hole of diminishing supply. Nine of Britain’s 10 nuclear power stations are due to close over the next 20 years. Old, dirty coal plants are also being shut down. For all the fanfare about renewable energy, its rapid growth is from a low base (around 5 per cent of UK supply). There is no prospect that renewable energy sources will be sufficient, on their own, to bridge the gap.

[Fuel efficiency rules aimed at advanced vehicles](#)

WASHINGTON - The Obama administration is setting tough gas mileage standards for new cars and trucks, spurring the next generation of fuel-sipping gas-electric hybrids, efficient engines and electric cars.

[Mexico City drastically reduced air pollutants since 1990s](#)

MEXICO CITY -- This megalopolis once had the world's worst air, with skies so poisonous that birds dropped dead in flight. Today, efforts to clean the smog are showing visible progress, revealing stunning views of snow-capped volcanoes -- and offering a

model for the developing world.

[Chemical exposure may triple breast cancer risk](#)

LONDON - Exposure to certain chemicals and pollutants before a woman reaches her mid-30s could triple her risk of developing breast cancer after the menopause, Canadian scientists said on Thursday.

In a study in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, a British Medical Journal title, the researchers found that women exposed to synthetic fibers and petrol products during the course of their work appeared to be most at risk.

[How slums can save the planet](#)

The magic of squatter cities is that they are improved steadily and gradually by their residents. To a planner's eye, these cities look chaotic. I trained as a biologist and to my eye, they look organic. Squatter cities are also unexpectedly green. They have maximum density—1m people per square mile in some areas of Mumbai—and have minimum energy and material use. People get around by foot, bicycle, rickshaw, or the universal shared taxi.

Not everything is efficient in the slums, though. In the Brazilian favelas where electricity is stolen and therefore free, people leave their lights on all day. But in most slums recycling is literally a way of life. The Dharavi slum in Mumbai has 400 recycling units and 30,000 ragpickers. Six thousand tons of rubbish are sorted every day. In 2007, the Economist reported that in Vietnam and Mozambique, “Waves of gleaners sift the sweepings of Hanoi's streets, just as Mozambiquan children pick over the rubbish of Maputo's main tip. Every city in Asia and Latin America has an industry based on gathering up old cardboard boxes.” There's even a book on the subject: The World's Scavengers (2007) by Martin Medina. Lagos, Nigeria, widely considered the world's most chaotic city, has an environment day on the last Saturday of every month. From 7am to 10am nobody drives, and the city tidies itself up.

[Sustainability is the new American Dream \(2010 post-recession consumer study\)](#)

Today's consumer is emerging from the recession with a radically new definition of the American Dream and a renewed sense in their own resourcefulness and priorities according to a just released quantitative study of 1200 consumers and qualitative research with nearly 700, conducted by Ogilvy & Mather Chicago in partnership with leading consumer insight company Communispace.

Among the study's key findings is that “having it all” is an unrealistic goal with 75% of those surveyed saying they would rather get out of the rat race than climb the corporate ladder – and instead, 76% said they would rather spend more time with family than make more money. Moreover, Americans are showing disenchantment with the pursuit

of money with 75% again saying they would trade job security over a job that offered an opportunity for raises.

[Say it loud: I'm childfree and I'm proud](#)

In 1969, graduating college senior Stephanie Mills made national headlines with a commencement address exclaiming that, in the face of impending ecological devastation, she was choosing to forgo parenthood. "I am terribly saddened by the fact that the most humane thing for me to do is to have no children at all," she told her classmates.

I come here before you today to make the same proclamation — with a twist. I am thoroughly *delighted* by the fact that the most humane thing for me to do is to have no children at all.

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[Oil price bulls make some noise with rise in global demand](#)

Those persistent oil price bulls are threatening to crash through the gates of their holding pen once again.

After repeatedly bumping up against the ceiling of their six-monthlong trading range for the past several weeks, crude prices look ready to bust out.

[Oil prices will be stable for some time - OPEC](#)

World prices on oil will remain stable till the end of this year and will be kept at the level

of slightly above 80 dollars per barrel. Such is the forecast, given by the President of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Ecuadorian Minister Germanico Pinto.

[Rosneft seeks Venezuela oil assets in Germany - sources](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian oil major Rosneft is seeking to buy stakes in four German refineries from Venezuela as part of a Kremlin drive to encourage its firms to own assets all over the world, industry sources told Reuters.

[Shell May Exit Retail, Marketing in 21 Africa Nations](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Europe's largest oil company, wants to sell most of its downstream operations in 21 African countries, cutting back further in refining and marketing.

"While a number of options are being considered, the preferred outcome is the sale of most businesses in scope as going concerns," the company said on its Web site today.

[Pakistan to protect gas pipeline for India](#)

CANCUN, Mexico (UPI) -- Pakistan would provide India with security guarantees for a pipeline from the South Pars gas complex in Iran as an incentive to join, officials said in Mexico.

"We will guarantee for the safe delivery of gas (at Pakistan-India border)," said Mohammed Chaudhry Ejaz, the deputy petroleum secretary for Pakistan told the Press Trust of India.

[Turkey to help Pakistan overcome energy crisis: Gul](#)

LAHORE (APP): Turkish President Abdullah Gul has said the Turkish people are fully aware of the energy crisis being faced by Pakistan and Turkey will provide all possible help to overcome the problem. He was addressing the Pak-Turkey CEO forum organized by Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PIBT) at a local hotel on Thursday.

[Green shoots of a different kind: Signs of relocalisation?](#)

After decades of sending manufacturing operations to cheaper labour markets overseas, could the West be seeing the first signs of a sea change? Is it possible the next great

economic shift will be away from globalised markets and back to local manufacturing?

[Arab states urged to push for renewable energy](#)

Arab states, likely to be among those hit hardest by climate change, are not doing enough to promote renewable energy, environmental experts said at a conference here.

Carbon dioxide emissions in the region are increasing at one of the fastest rates in the world, nearly doubling in the period 1990-2003, a UN Arab Human Development Report said.

[The big melt](#)

PRINCETON, NJ. On the last day of the month, Climate Central has just published an interactive animated map showing what we might expect in Marches to come as the climate warms. Developed by Climate Central scientists, the map uses special high-resolution projections covering the Lower 48 states to show where average March temperatures are expected to be above or below freezing each decade this century. The map also compares projections under a low, reduced carbon pollution scenario versus a high one that extends current trends.

[Bill McKibben: Bless Bolivia for re-charging the fight to rescue our climate](#)

In a week when the American president has decided our energy policy should involve lots more offshore oil drilling, it's easy to despair--it doesn't look like it's going to be much of an Earth Day in the U.S. this April. But maybe we'll get a jolt of political energy from the south, courtesy of the groups and leaders assembling from across the world in Cochabamba, Bolivia. This People's Summit on Climate Change will be seen as naive by precisely the kind of people applauding the president for turning on the oil spigots today--after all, its by definition a People's Summit, free from the kind of corporate interference that helped sink the Copenhagen conference in December (Bolivia's Supreme Court having not yet decided that corporations are people).

[Follow the Trace](#)

The most simply I can put complex variables is that the US faces one of three futures, one of which (#2) cannot be prepared against. Those are:

1. The Greater Depression, which might last as long as Japan's, now rising two decades.
2. Dictatorship.
3. The complete breakdown of the economy and any sort of cohesiveness or order, which James Howard Kunstler refers to as *The Long Emergency*, Rawles covers in

Patriot, and is the theme of similar works of semi-fiction such as *The Day After* and *Lights Out*.

If you want to make easy, relatively inexpensive, minimal preparations, I concur with Trace, with one addition: pick up an old, but serviceable, motor home which will probably run you a couple of thousand dollars, or an old travel trailer if you have a van or truck that will pull it. Use that to store your food supplies, your "Bug Out Bag" (BOB), and such luxuries as you can fit in, including clothing for both hot and cold weather. The reasoning is obvious: it makes no sense whatsoever to leave your emergency food supplies behind, and if time is critically short almost everything you need is already packed. We live in an increasingly violent world, and if you evacuate for what you think will be a short period, either you could be wrong about the duration or you could return to find your home had been raided, trashed, or even destroyed by those who hadn't bothered to prepare and helped themselves to your possessions.

[Hedging against Peak Oil Shocks](#)

Many policymakers and pundits have made the case that the United States should become "energy independent." One economic interpretation of energy independence is that increased domestic energy production leads to greater risk sharing in the presence of imperfect capital markets. The wealth effects of energy production increase during peak oil shocks that help energy-producing states hedge against peak oil shocks. I test this hypothesis using consumption and gross state product data for US states for the period 1963-2007. I find that risk sharing is approximately 50 percent higher in energy producing states than non-energy states. The results suggest that oil shocks have different effects on energy and non-energy producing states. I offer two explanations for the finding. First, residents of non-energy producing states do not place enough of the assets in their wealth portfolio in energy stocks that allow them to hedge against peak oil shocks. Second, the wealth effects of energy production increase during peak oil shocks which helps residents (in energy producing states) smooth consumption and income. The analysis has two policy implications: 1) non-energy states should increase the share of energy stocks in their wealth portfolios; and 2) an increase in domestic energy production should increase risk sharing in the United States.

[Oil rises above \\$84, extending 2-month rally](#)

Oil prices rose above \$84 a barrel Thursday, extending a two-month rally amid surging regional stock markets ahead of the Good Friday holiday.

By early afternoon in Europe, benchmark crude for May delivery was up 65 cents to \$84.41 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract climbed by \$1.39 to settle at \$83.76 on Wednesday.

Oil prices have jumped from \$69 a barrel in early February on investor expectations that a gradual recovery in the U.S. economy this year will eventually boost crude consumption.

So far, however, demand remains sluggish. The Energy Information Administration said crude inventories rose by 2.9 million barrels last week, slightly more than analysts expected.

"A good portion of the buying seems to have come on 'good vibrations,' the vague sense that the economic recovery is gaining momentum, and that that should lead to heavier demand for oil products," consultancy Cameron Hanover said in a report.

[Oil May Fall as Supplies Gain, Fuel Use Declines, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Crude oil may fall next week as U.S. inventories increase and fuel consumption declines, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Fourteen of 31 analysts, or 45 percent, forecast oil will drop through April 9. Twelve respondents, or 39 percent, predicted that futures will increase and five said the contract will be little changed. Last week, 38 percent of analysts said there would be a decrease in prices.

[Saudi Arabia to Raise May Arab Light for Asia on Gasoil Margin](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the world's biggest crude exporter, may raise official prices for May loading Arab Light and Extra Light grades to Asian buyers on rising refinery processing profits for light products.

[Saudi Arabia Lowers April LPG Prices Amid Decline in Demand](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the largest supplier of liquefied petroleum gas to Asia, cut prices for cargoes loading in April on lower demand following the end of winter and a decline in petrochemical use.

[Obama opens new oil drilling offshore in climate drive](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Barack Obama unveiled plans on Wednesday for a limited expansion of U.S. offshore oil and gas drilling in an effort to win Republican support for new proposals to fight climate change.

Opening up parts of the U.S. Atlantic coast, Alaska and possibly offshore Florida to exploration is Obama's latest effort to woo legislators needed to pass a climate bill before mid-term elections in November.

[Reaction mixed to idea of East Coast drilling](#)

RICHMOND, Va.—Some coastal residents applauded President Barack Obama's decision to open portions of the East Coast to oil and gas exploration as a way to create jobs and ease the country's reliance on foreign oil. Others feared marine life could be harmed by drilling or that tourists would shun a resort area if a nearby oil rig were to be involved in a spill.

[Large supplies possible from new drilling](#)

Opening more of America's coastlines to oil and natural gas drilling won't cut energy prices anytime soon. And it won't greatly reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil.

But it could bring sizable royalties for a handful of states and soften the blow of future price spikes.

[Boehner rebukes Obama offshore drilling plan](#)

President Barack Obama's plan to allow expanded offshore oil and gas exploration won rebuke from the top House Republican on Wednesday.

House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) dismissed the president's plan as not going far enough in opening up U.S. waters for exploration.

Obama's decision "continues to defy the will of the American people," Boehner said in a statement, pointing to the president's decision to open Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico waters, while leaving Pacific and many Alaskan waters largely closed to exploration.

[Drill, baby, drill: The myth of energy independence](#)

President Obama, like his predecessors, mentioned energy "independence." Such a thing is not possible, especially since the U.S. hit national peak oil in 1973, and even less so since we were an oil superpower in the mid-20th century -- no small element in winning World War II. We will be more interdependent than ever. George W. Bush talked more about peak oil, albeit parenthetically, than Mr. Obama. The president had better start preparing the American people for a very different future than the past.

[Risk Is Clear in Drilling: Payoff Isn't](#)

WASHINGTON — In proposing a major expansion of offshore oil and gas development, President Obama set out to fashion a carefully balanced plan that would attract bipartisan support for climate and energy legislation while increasing production of domestic oil.

It is not clear that the plan announced Wednesday will do either.

While the oil industry, business groups and some Republicans offered muted support for the proposal, most environmental groups denounced it. And the senators whose support Mr. Obama is courting for highly contentious climate and energy legislation to be introduced in the coming weeks gave decidedly mixed reactions: For every senator who praised it as at least a partial answer to the nation's energy needs, another raised alarms about befouled beaches and continued dependence on fossil fuels.

[Japan May Buy More LNG From Australia's Coal-Seam Gas Ventures](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Tokyo Gas Co.'s decision to buy liquefied natural gas from BG Group Plc's project in Australia signals that companies in Japan will likely order more of the fuel from Queensland coal-bed methane ventures, analysts said.

"I don't think that's the end of it," John Young, an analyst at Wilson HTM Group in Melbourne, said by phone today.

[Russia's Economic Slump Eased to 3.8% in 4th Quarter](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia's economic slump eased in the fourth quarter as oil, gas and metals exporters benefited from higher prices after gross domestic product slumped by a record in the first half of the year.

Output of the world's biggest energy exporter shrank an annual 3.8 percent in the last three months of 2009 after contracting a revised 7.7 percent in the third quarter and a revised 10.8 percent in the second, the Federal Statistics Service said today. GDP fell 7.9 percent in 2009, the biggest contraction since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

A surge in oil prices bolstered state finances as the price of Urals crude more than doubled in the quarter from a low of \$32.34 a year earlier. Leaner inventories, improved global sales and higher raw materials prices prompted companies including iron ore producer OAO Metalloinvest to boost output. The momentum may stall as rising joblessness and low demand for credit damp growth this year.

[Indonesia's Pertamina eyes expired oil blocks](#)

JAKARTA (Reuters) - Indonesia may revise its oil and gas law to give state oil firm Pertamina first right to take over any blocks whose contracts are expiring, members of parliament said on Thursday, a move likely to upset foreign players.

Pertamina wants to expand its upstream activities to boost oil and gas production, and has identified several oil and gas fields that it wants to take over from foreign majors.

[Putin Visits Chavez in Russian Bid to Grow in Obama's Backyard](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will pay his first visit to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez tomorrow as Russia seeks to regain lost influence in Latin America through energy and arms deals.

The highlight of the one-day trip to Caracas may be the formation of a joint venture to pump oil from Venezuela's Orinoco Belt. Putin also plans to meet Bolivia's Evo Morales, who like Chavez opposes U.S. policy in the region.

Chavez, who visited Russia eight times during his decade in power, has wooed Putin by signing more than \$4 billion in arms deals and inviting state energy companies OAO Gazprom and OAO Rosneft to explore for oil. Venezuela was a lone supporter of Russia during the five-day Georgian war in 2008 and hosted joint naval war games later that year.

[FACTBOX - Saudi oil refining IPOs, fund raising](#)

(Reuters) - Following are the oil refineries Saudi Arabia has offered or will offer initial public offers (IPOs) and fund raising.

[Indian Oil Starts \\$3.2 Billion Cracker to Meet Plastic Demand](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Indian Oil Corp., the nation's second-biggest refiner, started a \$3.2 billion naphtha cracker in northern India to meet demand from plastic makers.

[China to lower fuel oil surcharge of domestic airlines](#)

China will reduce the per-passenger fuel surcharge rate for its domestic airlines by 3 percent from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, according to a release from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) on April 1.

[Chinese President Hu to attend Washington nuclear meet](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) – Chinese President Hu Jintao will attend a summit on nuclear security in Washington this month, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Thursday, adding to signs that tensions between the two nations are ebbing.

China had been coy for weeks about whether Hu would go to the multi-nation meeting hosted by President Barack Obama.

[Council paves message of fair funding for roads and bridges](#)

As gasoline taxes and vehicle registration revenue — two main sources of funding for Michigan's roads and bridges — have dropped, the state can no longer adequately maintain roads and bridges, “resulting in a rapidly deteriorating transportation infrastructure,” according to the resolution.

...Michigan is now in jeopardy of not being able to fund a 20-percent match on federal road and bridges funds.

[Activism Beats Prophecy: Wishful Thinking is Not a Strategy](#)

"Climate change says we should change. Peak oil says we must change."

I've heard this refrain, or something similar, from many a peak oil activist. And I think it goes some way to explaining why peak oil is such a compelling meme for many of us environmentalists. But while there is much truth to the idea that impending peak oil can and should provide an impetus for stepping up our efforts for a sustainable society, there is also a danger in assuming we know what the future holds. And that danger stretches well beyond peak oil—everyone who wants to make the world a better place would do well to remember that the future is not yet written.

[Improving fuel economy of tractor-trailers, buses, work trucks](#)

WASHINGTON -- A new congressionally mandated report from the National Research Council evaluates various technologies and methods that could improve the fuel economy of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, such as tractor-trailers, transit buses, and work trucks. The report also recommends approaches that federal agencies could use to regulate these vehicles' fuel consumption. Currently there are no fuel consumption standards for such vehicles, which account for about 26 percent of the transportation fuel used in the U.S.

[Ford, Microsoft to work on electric-car charging](#)

(AP) -- Ford Motor Co. and Microsoft Corp. have signed a deal to work together on a computerized link between houses, electric cars and utility companies to help manage energy use.

[Japanese start buying affordable electric cars](#)

TOKYO — Japan's first mass-market electric car went on sale in showrooms Thursday as the futuristic technology becomes more affordable amid a burgeoning price war.

[Plan B 4.0 by the Numbers - Data Highlights on Solar Energy](#)

Concerns about global warming, rising fossil fuel prices, and oil insecurity have prompted calls for a new energy economy, one that replaces fossil fuels with renewables. The sun is an enormous reservoir of energy; in fact, the sunlight reaching Earth in just one hour is enough to power the global economy for a whole year. Harnessing some of this energy is an essential component of Earth Policy Institute's carbon cutting plan, as presented in Chapter 5 of Plan B 4.0. Here are some highlights from the accompanying data on three types of solar energy: solar photovoltaics (PVs), concentrated solar thermal power (CSP), and solar water and space heating.

[Tidal power? No thanks](#)

In practice, only relatively small amounts of energy are available from tides, and extracting it will have devastating effects on the ocean ecosystem.

[Developer Defends Ethiopian Hydro Project](#)

Responding to complaints about the Gibe III hydroelectric dam project in Ethiopia, Salini Costruttori, the Italian hydropower developer behind the project, issued a statement late last week arguing that the project's critics are opposed to Africa's development.

"The campaign against the construction of the Gibe plant in Ethiopia is merely another initiative without a technical and scientific basis," the company said.

[Harvesting the air](#)

ROUTE 83, south of Minot, North Dakota, is a particularly barren stretch of a barren state. Last year, however, nearby fields sprouted a new crop: a \$250m, 80-turbine wind farm. Not far west is Fort Berthold, home to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation. Wind hurtles across the reservation, careening around houses and over hilltops. The Indian tribe has just one turbine to catch it.

The tribes of the northern plains are mostly destitute; their lands include three of America's ten poorest counties and six of its poorest 25. Virtually every tribe, however, is rich in wind. Tribes in the Dakotas and Montana alone have enough wind to generate more than 886m megawatt hours a year. Even if only one per cent were developed, this would bring in \$3.6 billion over 20 years, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Now a growing number of tribes on the plains hope that wind will bring prosperity, at last. They are not alone. Indian nations across the country are

exploring renewable energy, from solar to geothermal. A new bill would speed development. But tribes may have to wait a while yet.

[For the Smart Grid, a 'Synchophasor'](#)

The hope is that synchophasors, when deployed by the hundreds, will increase the amount of energy that can be reliably transmitted on the high-voltage grid, which will be necessary if North America is to integrate more wind and solar power.

[Colorado Senate passes clean-air bill favoring natural gas](#)

Xcel Energy got a green light from the state legislature Tuesday to start a comprehensive plan to cut air pollution at aging coal-fired power plants — with "primary consideration" to switching to natural gas.

[World Bank Mulls \\$3.75 Billion for South African Coal Power Expansion](#)

The World Bank is calling on its members to back a contentious \$3.75 billion loan request from Eskom, South Africa's state run electricity supplier, to finance initiatives that would shore-up the country's struggling power sector.

[In fiscal pinch, transit agencies offer less for more](#)

Eight in 10 bus and subway agencies are raising fares and cutting service or considering such measures as a budget crisis racks mass transit.

The dramatic moves are the biggest ever for many of the transit operators.

[American industry's thirst for water: First study of its kind in 30 years](#)

How many gallons of water does it take to produce \$1 worth of sugar, dog and cat food, or milk? The answers appear in the first comprehensive study in 30 years documenting American industry's thirst for this precious resource. The study, which could lead to better ways to conserve water, is in ACS' *Environmental Science & Technology*, a semi-monthly journal.

[Court Ruling May Imperil Florida Deal](#)

MIAMI — The federal judge supervising Everglades restoration issued a ruling on

Wednesday that could make it impossible for Gov. Charlie Crist to complete a land acquisition he has described as the signature environmental achievement of his administration.

[Computers Just Keep Getting Cheaper and Better](#)

Thankfully, the comparison of today's economy to the Great Depression have started to fade, because it was easy for many to think our standard of living would somehow return to the level of the 1930s. This comparison of computer prices helps us appreciate how technological improvements elevate the standard of living of the average American to levels that previous generations couldn't have even imagined. Another lesson here might be that even a Great Recession can't stop the progress of human ingenuity, technological improvements, and the entrepreneurial spirit that will continue the relentless trend towards better and cheaper products, and a continually rising standard of living.

[Armed with information, people make poor choices, study finds](#)

When faced with a choice that could yield either short-term satisfaction or longer-term benefits, people with complete information about the options generally go for the quick reward, according to new research from University of Texas at Austin psychologists.

[Koch Industries Responds to Greenpeace](#)

In a consistent, principled effort for more than 50 years – long before climate change was a key policy issue – Koch companies and Koch foundations have worked to advance economic freedom and market-based policy solutions to challenges faced by society. These efforts are about creating more opportunity and prosperity for all, as it's a historical fact that economic freedom best fosters innovation, environmental protection and improved quality of life in a society.

The Greenpeace report mischaracterizes these efforts and distorts the environmental record of our companies. Koch companies have long supported science-based inquiry and dialogue about climate change and proposed responses to it. Koch companies have put tremendous energy into achieving sound environmental stewardship and consistently implemented innovative and cost-effective ways to reduce waste and emissions, including greenhouse gases, associated with our manufacturing and products.

[Will Apple's iPad add to or alleviate climate change?](#)

A new report linking Apple's iPad, which debuts Saturday, to global warming has prompted debate among environmentalists about the true planetary impact of these mobile devices.

The report by Greenpeace, an environmental activist group, says the iPad's fun features -- streaming video, downloading music and books -- rely on "cloud-based computing" in which vast amounts of data are stored at data centers for instantaneous retrieval.

[EU Cap-and-Trade Emissions Fall More Than Forecast](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Carbon dioxide emissions from factories and power stations in the European Union's cap-and-trade program fell faster than estimated as the region's economy contracted, according to preliminary data from the regulator.

EU permits for 2010 delivery fell as much as 1.4 percent in London after the European Commission published data on its Web site showing that verified emissions were 1.69 billion metric tons for 2009, down from 1.9 billion in 2008. A March 30 survey of eight analysts by Bloomberg News forecast a drop of 10.2 percent. The figures reflect data that is 88 percent complete.

[Competing Catastrophes: What's the Bigger Menace, an Asteroid Impact or Climate Change?](#)

If you ask the average person whether in the long run it is climate change or an asteroid/comet impact that's expected to kill more people annually, you'll undoubtedly get some confused replies. Those asteroid movies are scary, but there are no verified instances of an asteroid strike killing any humans, are there? Meanwhile, the science of climate change is currently being overshadowed by a media-driven public debate, mainly in the U.S.

In fact, the expected annual fatality rate due to climate change is estimated to be far higher than that due to an asteroid or comet impact — 150,000 versus 91, per the World Health Organization (WHO) and Alan Harris of the Space Science Institute, respectively. You won't, however, see that 150,000 figure in the main body of the Washington, D.C.-based National Research Council report on near-Earth object (NEO) surveys and mitigation strategies. (The report was written by a total of 42 scientists.)



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