



## Two thoughts for a quiet Sunday

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on October 16, 2005 - 4:01pm

Topic: [Alternative energy](#)

Tags: [coal water slurry](#), [comminution](#), [diesel](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Watching CSPAN this morning I heard that the EIA believe that all the refineries will be back by Christmas- then hastily corrected to say within the limits of approximation. Then further corrected to there being about 300,000 bd short at that time (which is the Conoco Philips refinery with the flooded switchgear). They also expected Gulf production to be back at pre-Katrina levels by March, but it was not clear if this included some new production (say Thunder Horse) to make up the losses.

They also predict a slightly colder winter than NOAA, but clarified this by pointing out that they review heating needs, so that they look at who needs what where, rather than overall temperature changes. Thus there is a difference in the overall perception because, for example, a higher demand for fuel in the North East may over-ride a reduction in the South.

And to be mildly mischievous a response to a comment.

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In a comment on Saturday's open thread Dave said "you can't stoke coal into your car's engine to run it." Um! Actually there was a demonstration back when there was a British National Coal Board in which the Minister drove around London in a car powered by micro-fine coal suspended in water and used as a diesel fuel. It worked. There have been trains powered by this coal:water suspension, fed into their diesel engines, that have worked. (Since this was all before the Internet became popular I am having a hard time finding electronic references to these).

The [University of Alaska-Fairbanks](#) is supposed to be running a test with a generator to demonstrate that it is possible way of changing to coal. Unfortunately it appears that they cannot currently find an Alaskan supplier for the fuel, and so a preliminary test will take place in Kentucky with a smaller power system. However, to run this mixture the coal must first be ground to below 5 microns, and there were some problems in ensuring that enough ash is taken out of the coal to stop erosion of the cylinder walls of the engines, in the earlier test programs.

It does not appear to have a whole lot of momentum behind the program, but it does answer Dave's comment. (Oh, and yes there are better EROI figures on coal crushing than the usual ball mills etc, but that is another program that seems to have disappeared from the American scene, although there is an apparent current interest in picking up the idea in China.)



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