



Drumbeat: November 9, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on November 9, 2010 - 9:27am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[As boomers age, 1 in 5 drivers will be oldsters](#)

Within 15 years more than one in five licensed drivers will be 65 or older, the safety board said. Their number will nearly double, from 30 million today to about 57 million in 2030, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Smarter cars and better designed roads may help keep them stay behind the wheel longer.

But eventually most people will outlive their driving ability — men by an average of six years and women by an average of 10 years. And since fewer Americans relocate when they retire, many of them probably will continue to live in suburban homes.

The result is a "mobility gap," said Joseph Coughlin, head of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's AgeLab, which develops technologies aimed at keeping older people active.

"For many, our homes will not be just a place to age, it will also be house arrest," said Coughlin.

ent was occurring at the same time—without headlines, but with far-reaching consequence for all nations.

That's the year that the world's conventional oil production likely reached its peak, the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Vienna, Austria, said Tuesday.

According to the 25-year forecast in the IEA's latest annual World Energy Outlook, the most likely scenario is for crude oil production to stay on a plateau at about 68 to 69 million barrels per day.

In this scenario, crude oil production "never regains its all-time peak of 70 million barrels per day reached in 2006," said IEA's World Energy Outlook 2010.

[Gas glut threatens investment in renewables sector, IEA warns](#)

A global gas glut which could last a decade will act as a "major barrier" to the

development of renewable energy, cleaner coal plants and nuclear power, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

"The golden age of gas" will lead to cheaper gas prices for consumers, particularly in Europe. But the IEA added that it is also likely to result in a rush to build gas-fired power plants at the expense of much cleaner forms of electricity generation.

[Peak Stuff: Are We There Yet?](#)

In the early 1990's I watched areas of Guangdong Province begin the slide from lush 3-crop-per-year productive farmland into what is now toxic (perhaps irreversibly so) industrial swamp. The factories I visited were making what the retail business calls "Trim-a-Tree," a product category that is the very epitome of "Stuff." You know what I mean; those holiday and licensed character-themed mantel figures, cookie jars, door decorations; those objects devoid of artistry that spend a few weeks in service, and a few centuries if not millennia decomposing in landfill. Thanks to the recession, among the things that Americans can no longer afford to order from Chinese factories is a large volume of "Stuff."

The economic paradigm I'm putting out here is that when the American consumer moves permanently beyond "Peak Stuff" it'll be a moment of great opportunity for the US-China economic relationship.

[Sustainable Growth Is An Oxymoron](#)

One of the most unnerving aspects of global climate change for the human psyche to absorb is that it drives home with absolute finality the notion that Earth is finite. I know, that sounds obvious, but people have never behaved as if Earth were finite. They have behaved as if Earth and its resources, the environment itself, were infinite.

[Qatar Oil Minister Doesn't See OPEC Changing Quotas Next Meet](#)

DOHA (Zawya Dow Jones)--Production quotas are unlikely to be changed when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries meets next month, Qatar Oil Minister Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah said Tuesday.

When asked whether OPEC would alter production levels he said: "I don't think so, so far."

[Petrobras Says Drill-Ships Contracts Aren't Behind Schedule- Estado](#)

RIO DE JANEIRO (Dow Jones) -- Brazilian oil giant Petroleo Brasileiro SA, or

Petrobras, denied reports that the process for contracting oil-well drilling ships in Brazil is behind schedule, local Estado newswire said Tuesday.

Contracting will proceed in line with planned delivery schedules which can still be met, Estado said, citing Chief Executive Officer Jose Sergio Gabrielli. Gabrielli was speaking during an event in Rio de Janeiro.

[Spill Panel Says Rig Culture Failed on Safety](#)

WASHINGTON—A federal panel probing the Gulf of Mexico oil spill on Tuesday put the spotlight on the safety culture at companies drilling the well, seeking to move beyond findings a day earlier that rig workers didn't consciously put costs ahead of safety.

"The problem here is that there was a culture that did not promote safety and that culture failed," said Bob Graham, co-chairman of the panel created by U.S. President Barack Obama. "Leaders did not take serious risks seriously enough; did not identify a risk that proved to be a failure."

[Experts say BP increased risk of blowout in Gulf](#)

WASHINGTON -- BP too often operated on the fly in the closing days of work on its doomed Gulf oil well, adding needless risk of a blowout, investigators, experts and panel members said at the presidential oil spill commission Tuesday.

They said the company was hurried and made confusing, last-minute changes to plans that were unusual in the complex environment of deep water. They said BP could have operated more safely if the company took the time to get the necessary equipment and materials.

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active.

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[Oil near \\$90. Thanks a lot, Fed.](#)

NEW YORK (CNMoney.com) -- Don't look now. But oil prices are getting close to \$90 again.

Crude is currently trading around \$87 a barrel. Prices have not topped \$90 in more than two years. But now that the Federal Reserve has made its latest round of quantitative easing official, some fear that crude at \$90 is likely in the not-so-distant future.

[Saudi oil policy still \\$70 to \\$80/barrel](#)

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's view that \$70 to \$80 a barrel is a good price range for consumers and producers is still unchanged, and the country is not worried about a weaker US dollar, a senior oil official said Monday.

[Heating bills may dip a bit](#)

Baby, it'll be cold outside, but the Michigan Public Service Commission predicts there will be no shortage of electrical or natural gas heat to keep Michiganders warm.

In its annual winter energy appraisal, the MPSC projected natural gas prices to be slightly lower this winter, although that could vary across the state. Electricity sales will increase by 7.6% this year after two years of decline, and natural gas sales will increase by 6% over 2009.

[EDF fixes household energy bills over winter](#)

(Reuters) - EDF said it would not raise gas or electricity prices for its British residential customers over the winter, with standard tariffs fixed until at least March 2011.

[EU's Oettinger Confident on Gas Supply](#)

BERLIN — European Union Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger said in an interview after a Moscow trip that close ties with supplier Russia would avert any new winter gas supply crisis.

Preparations have been taken to avoid a gas transit crisis as seen in January 2009, he said.

[Shah field is wide open for IOCs](#)

The opportunity for an IOC to participate in the Middle East's premier upstream gas project came back on the table in March. Oil & Gas Middle East investigates which companies are on the grid, and who is destined for pole position in the bid to net Abu Dhabi's giant sour gas project.

Abu Dhabi is thought to still be on the lookout for a major partner for its colossal, multi-billion dollar sour gas recovery project at the Shah Field, following the withdrawal of ConocoPhillips earlier this year.

[Private oil cos to get first Mexico deals by summer](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico will award private firms its first contracts to redevelop mature oil fields by the summer of 2011, a senior Mexican oil official said on Monday.

[Serious errors and complacency preceded U.S. spill: panel](#)

(Reuters) - BP and its partners all made serious mistakes in the run-up to the largest offshore oil spill in the U.S. history, illustrating the need for a better safety culture in the oil drilling sector, White House oil spill commission co-chair Bill Reilly said on Tuesday.

Complacency at BP, as well as Transocean Ltd and Halliburton, led to serious missteps prior to the rig explosion that unleashed millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico over the summer.

[Brazil's Petrobras says to borrow \\$32 bln by 2014](#)

(Reuters) - Brazilian state oil company Petrobras will raise \$32 billion by 2014, CEO Jose Sergio Gabrielli said on Tuesday, as part of a five-year investment plan focused on developing offshore crude reserves.

The company previously said it would borrow \$40 billion during the period and \$60 billion over the next five years, though Gabrielli said those figures were based on rough estimates.

[Energy crisis: Power-loom owners hoist black flags](#)

FAISALABAD: Power-loom owners of Faisalabad on Tuesday hoisted black flags to register their protest against the ongoing energy and yarn crises in Punjab.

They said two-day weekly blockage of gas had pushed the industry to the verge of destruction.

[Unipecc mulls import of high sulfur gasoil into China: source](#)

Unipecc, the trading arm of China's Sinopec, is mulling the import of high sulfur gasoil following a dramatic shortage of diesel in the country, which is an exporter of gasoil, a source familiar with the matter said Tuesday.

"It's still under consideration ... Not sure when, but it's pending," the source said.

[Gasoline Shortage Persists in Uzbekistan](#)

The gasoline shortage that began worsening in Uzbekistan in September is persisting, causing long lines at the gas pump and inducing people to switch to methane gas fuel systems, ferghana.ru reports.

Gas stations have already closed Sundays due to the shortages, and while there is gasoline available on Mondays, within a few days it begins to run short, causing lines to form early in the morning. Some people have already spent from \$670-900 adapting their cars to take methane gas for fuel, which is cheaper than gasoline.

[Gates: US open to request from Iraq to stay](#)

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia – The United States is open to the idea of keeping troops in Iraq past a deadline to leave next year if Iraq asks for it, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Tuesday.

"We'll stand by," Gates said. "We're ready to have that discussion if and when they want to raise it with us."

[Green luxury? Mercedes-Benz to offer 4-cyl. in top-line S-Class](#)

Mercedes-Benz will offer a small, four-cylinder diesel engine in Europe for its top-line, typically V-8-powered S-Class sedan, the first four-banger in 60 years of the model.

To meet Euro carbon rules and sell cars to rich folks with a green bent, makes like M-B, Audi and BMW are looking for ways to put an eco spin on even their conspicuous consumption models. No word on whether the small diesel will be offered in the U.S.

[Solar shield to protect power grids from sun storms](#)

NASA has devised a new tool in the battle against massive eruptions from the sun: an early warning system to protect electrical grids on Earth from extremely powerful solar storms.

The new project, called Solar Shield, is designed to predict the severity of powerful sun storms at specific locations on Earth to help power companies plan responses and limit the potential damage to their equipment.

[Lester R. Brown: Reducing Urban Water Use](#)

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt once noted that “civilized people ought to know how to dispose of the sewage in some other way than putting it into the drinking water.”

The one-time use of water to disperse human and industrial wastes is an outmoded practice, made obsolete by new technologies and water shortages. Yet it is still common around much of the world. Water enters a city, becomes contaminated with human and industrial wastes, and leaves the city dangerously polluted. Toxic industrial wastes discharged into rivers and lakes or into wells also permeate aquifers, making water—both surface and underground—unsafe for drinking.

[10 "must-read" energy books](#)

When it comes to books on energy challenges, what do the experts recommend? We asked two. Here is their list of their 10 most highly recommended books.

[Cecile Richards and Bill McKibben Announced as Recipients of the 2010 Puffin/Nation Prize for Creative Citizenship](#)

NEW YORK - The Nation Institute announced today that Planned Parenthood president, Cecile Richards, and author, educator, and environmentalist Bill McKibben have both been chosen to receive the annual \$100,000 Puffin/Nation Prize for Creative Citizenship. This is the first year the prize has been awarded to two winners. McKibben and Richards will receive the award on December 6, 2010 at The Nation Institute Annual Dinner Gala in New York City.

[China's rare earth embargo triggers price hikes](#)

A Chinese embargo on rare earth elements is causing a dramatic spike in the price of materials, which is expected to lead to a jump in high-tech product prices before settling back down in a few years, according to report released today.

[Six worst pollutants? Study says they pose global threat](#)

The world's six worst pollutants, including lead and mercury, threaten the health of tens of millions of people, primarily children, says a report today by two environmental groups.

[Deformed bird beaks trigger environmental hunt](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The highest rate of beak abnormalities ever recorded in wild bird populations has been detected in Alaska and the Northwest, according to a new study.

"The prevalence of these strange deformities is more than 10 times what is normally expected in a wild bird population," said co-author and research biologist Colleen Handel.

[IEA sees oil peak looming](#)

PARIS/LONDON — Global oil supplies will come close to a peak by 2035 when oil prices will exceed US\$200 a barrel, the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday, as China and other emerging economies drive demand higher.

The IEA, in its 2010 World Energy Outlook, said it expected conventional crude oil output to flatten out in the next 10 years.

"Production in total does not peak before 2035, though it comes close to doing so," the Paris-based IEA said in the executive summary of the report. That projection was according to the central scenario of the report.

[More needs to be done to avoid oil spike, IEA says](#)

LONDON—Governments need to do more to increase efficiency and boost green technologies to avoid a spike in oil prices as energy demand is expected to jump 36 percent through 2035, the International Energy Agency warned Tuesday.

[China to Drive Energy Surge Through 2035, Warming Planet, IEA Outlook Says](#)

China will drive a surge in world energy demand over the next quarter century, as straining supply enhances OPEC's oil market share and growing coal use undermines efforts to contain global warming, according to a report.

Chinese demand will jump 75 percent, accounting for more than a third of an increase in energy use that will bring global consumption to 16.7 billion metric tons of oil equivalent by 2035, the International Energy Agency forecasts in its annual World Energy Outlook. Oil supplies will be pushed near their peak, thwarting government pledges to limit the increase in global temperature to 2 degrees Celsius.

[China's thirst to keep oil prices booming: IEA](#)

China's voracious appetite for fuel will push up oil prices substantially over the next two decades and will ensure that unconventional oil, notably Canada's oil sands, will play an increasingly important role in the global energy mix, the International Energy Agency said in its flagship World Energy Outlook report.

[Energy in 2035: China and oil dominate](#)

Internationally, the use of renewable energy sources -- hydro, wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and marine energy -- is expected to triple between 2008 and 2035, according to the report. Governments are expected to feed this effort by ramping up investment in renewable energy sources such as biofuels to \$205 billion in 2035 from \$57 billion in 2009.

Use of nuclear power is also expected to increase, the report said.

But despite all the investment in cleaner alternatives, the overall mix of energy use is expected to be little changed, with oil remaining the most popular energy use in 2035, followed by coal, the report said.

[World should eradicate fossil fuel subsidies-IEA](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Eradicating fossil fuel subsidies would boost the global economy, environment and energy security, the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday, referring to a pledge made by G20 countries.

G20 leaders committed in Pittsburgh in 2009 to phase out, over the medium-term, inefficient fossil fuel subsidies which encouraged wasteful consumption.

[IEA says gas glut likely to 2020](#)

Global oversupply of gas is set to rise above 200 billion cubic metres next year and capacity is likely to exceed demand for another 10 years, despite rising gas use, the International Energy Agency said today.

[Oil Drops From Two-Year High Amid Forecasts U.S. Stockpiles of Crude Rose](#)

Oil surged to a two-year high as advancing equities and a weakening dollar tempered concern of rising excess crude supplies in the U.S., the world's largest oil consumer.

Futures advanced for a seventh day as the dollar retreated from a one-week high against the euro. An Energy Department report tomorrow may show that crude stockpiles in the U.S. increased 1.75 million barrels last week from 368.2 million, according to a Bloomberg News survey of analysts. That would take it to the largest amount since May 2009.

[Gas prices remain steady in the past two weeks](#)

CAMARILLO, Calif. — A new survey finds the average price of regular gasoline is remaining steady in the United States, with regular grade retailing at an average of \$2.83.

The Lundberg Survey of fuel prices released Sunday says the price of a gallon of regular has fluctuated less than half a cent over the last two weeks.

[Sinopec to hike oil processing to ease shortages](#)

BEIJING - China's major oil refiner, Sinopec, has taken measures, including boosting crude oil processing and importing diesel, to alleviate the severe diesel shortage currently plaguing some Chinese cities.

Daily processing of crude oil will increase to 4.27 million barrels per day in November, up 9.9 percent from last November or one percent increase from October, the company said in a statement.

[In the U.S., Sticker Shock in Reverse](#)

While exact rates vary from country to country, gas sells for the equivalent of about \$6 to \$8 per gallon in the European Union. About three-quarters of that is government-imposed tax.

Gas prices are high enough in Europe that it becomes a significant cost and discourages driving, at least to some extent.

[BP's Dudley Shrinks Trading as Stagnant Oil Prices Crimp Profit](#)

BP Plc's Robert Dudley said he's shrinking oil trading after the least volatile prices in seven years made buying and selling commodities less profitable.

[BP May Pay Billions for 'Missed Signals' That Led to Disaster](#)

BP Plc remains at risk for billions of dollars in fines and legal costs even after a U.S. commission said safety wasn't sacrificed for profit in the weeks and days leading up to the worst U.S. offshore oil spill.

[Chevron to acquire Atlas Energy for \\$4.3B](#)

NEW YORK — Chevron will buy natural producer Atlas Energy Inc. in a cash-and-stock deal worth \$3.2 billion, the companies said Tuesday.

Including debt of about \$1.1 billion, the deal is worth \$4.3 billion in all.

[Kazakh Oil Fund May Cut Holdings of U.S. Treasuries, Add Emerging Markets](#)

Kazakhstan's National Oil Fund may reduce holdings of U.S. Treasuries and invest in Brazilian and South Korean debt, central bank Chairman Grigori Marchenko said.

"There won't be a radical cut in the share of National Oil Fund assets invested in U.S. debt," Marchenko said during a Nov. 2 interview in the financial capital, Almaty. "In theory, the share could be cut to 35 percent from 40 percent, but this must be a considered, step-by-step decision."

[Africa - The Energy Continent](#)

The significant worldwide growth in energy demand (expected to rise by some 57% by 2025), has put Africa firmly on the industry's radar. According to BP's Statistical Review of World Energy Report (June 2010), in 2009 (the BP 2009 Statistics) Africa consumed only 3.7% of the global commercial energy supply but its share of global energy production was some 12%. But is Africa's potential one of the short to medium term answers to supply tightening?

An increasing import dependence from the western world coupled with significant and accelerating new demand from emerging economies, such as China and India, has placed pressure on Africa's 38 net oil exporting countries to develop their reserves and increase production for further export. George W Bush's strategy of reducing oil imports from the Middle East in 2006 increased the importance of Africa in the supply mix, and industry commentators predicted that Africa's growth as an energy region had become a long term trend.

[China, Brazil May Expand Oil-for-Loans Program, Deepening Ties, CBN Says](#)

China and Brazil may expand an oil-for-loans program to intensify energy cooperation, China Business News reported, citing an unidentified official at the National Energy Administration in Beijing.

Energy officials from the two nations may meet in Beijing in the fourth quarter "to discuss many topics," the Chinese-language newspaper said today, citing the official.

[General Electric Plans to Invest \\$2 Billion in China](#)

"China and India will lead future growth in energy demand," Zhang Shun, a Beijing-based analyst with Ping An Securities Co., said by phone today. "They will need more roads, more power plants and more railways to meet the needs of their soaring economies, generating opportunities for equipment manufacturers and technology providers like GE."

[Indian Point Reactor Shut Down After Transformer Blast](#)

A transformer exploded on Sunday evening at the Indian Point 2 nuclear plant in northern Westchester County, N.Y., causing a fire and an automatic shutdown of the reactor, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Monday. No one was injured and no radiation was released, the commission said.

[Investing For The End Of The 28-Year Bull Market In Bonds](#)

In July of 2008 commodities in general and oil in particular were on a seemingly unstoppable trajectory higher. The PowerShares DB Commodity Index Tracking Fund (DBC) peaked at \$46.42 at the beginning of July before bottoming at \$19.11 in February of 2009. In May of 2008 it was reported that Goldman Sachs analysts had called for \$200 per barrel crude and noted oil guru and "Peak Oil" theorist, Matt Simmons, opined at the Offshore Technology Conference held in Houston that oil was on its way to \$300. Goldman turned bearish later that year. I remember well the day oil peaked. It was mid-July and the euphoria around oil was ubiquitous. It seemed there were no more pessimists on the asset class, and when the last pessimist becomes an optimist it is time

to sell.

[Alternative Energy and Climate Change Mutual Funds, Part II](#)

The Alternative Energy sector is not yet well understood by most investors. On one hand, a large portion of the population still denies the reality of Climate Change and is blithely unaware of Peak Oil. On the other hand, we have a contingent of true believers, who understand both Climate Change and Peak Oil, but who are blinded by the unrealistic hope that Alternative Energy will allow us to replace fossil fuels without fundamentally changing the way we live.

[The gold standard and the doomed U.S. dollar](#)

The idea of a global minimum wage is reminiscent of Henry Ford's introduction of a \$5/hour wage which first brought the American consumer to prominence in the first place. The irony is that while Detroit is a shadow of its former self, the emerging Chinese middle class are buying new cars — some made by General Motors — at a rate of 1,500 a day.

However, America and its rivals grew by feasting on cheap oil. Read the new revised paperback edition of Jeff Rubin's bestselling *Why Your World is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller* (Vantage Canada) and you'll be convinced the combination of peak oil and rising demand means oil is just as likely to soar in price as the greenback is likely to fall.

[If We Followed Through With "The Right Moves" For Our Economy, We'd End Up In Another Crisis](#)

The level of private debt is 1.7 times what it was back in the 1930s, which implies that the deleveraging pressure will last much longer than it did back then; on the other hand, the larger government sector and its rapid response to this crisis works in the opposite direction. This however implies a Japanese-like outcome: decades of sub-par growth. I expect instead that the other major forces of our time—Peak Oil and Global Warming —will kick in and force significant changes in human behavior long before the politicians confront the financial sector.

[What Energy Collapse Might Look Like \(Video\)](#)

When I interviewed my friend Tim Toben, he argued that one of the most important things we can do is to "tell the story about the transformation from a world powered by fossil fuels to a world powered by renewable energy -- in poetry, music, art, dance. Make it real for people who can't imagine their way out of the hole we find ourselves in." I've just come across a fascinating multimedia (or transmedia, apparently) project that aims to do just that. The only trouble is, it makes for some pretty bleak viewing.

Collapsus, which was directed by Tommy Pallotta—the producer of *Scanner Darkly* and *Waking Life*—is described by its makers as "a new experience in transmedia storytelling". Combining traditional documentary footage with animation, mini-games and movie fragments, the audience is invited to participate by making decisions to try to avoid future blackouts and create a more livable future.

[America Has Less Than 10 Years To Build An Entirely New Transportation Network](#)

Anthony Perl at Simon Fraser University says America has less than 10 years to undergo a transportation revolution. He made this argument in an excellent presentation at the recent ASPO-USA conference.

[Biden unveils plan to score homes for energy efficiency](#)

U.S. homeowners will be able to get low-cost energy audits that rank a home's efficiency on a scale of one to 10 and get federally insured loans for upgrades, under an Obama administration plan to be announced today.

[DOE's Jeffrey Baker: Building green, saving green](#)

Jeffrey Baker has been the driving force behind the Department of Energy's (DOE) construction of the largest net-zero energy office building in the world, creating a ground-breaking approach for industry to improve energy performance and environmental quality, as well as save money.

[Cyclists Condemn Prosecutor's Decision](#)

Last week The Vail Daily News reported that an Eagle County, Colo., prosecutor had declined to press felony charges against Martin Joel Erzinger, a financial manager who fled the site of a crash with a cyclist in July.

"Felony convictions have some pretty serious job implications for someone in Mr. Erzinger's profession, and that entered into it," Mark Hurlbert, the prosecutor, said of the manager, told the paper. "When you're talking about restitution, you don't want to take away his ability to pay."

[Japan 2009/10 emissions likely meet Kyoto goal](#)

(Reuters) - Japan seems to have met its goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol in the past two years, helped by a slumping economy and buying carbon offsets from abroad.

But an expected recovery from its worst recession in decades means Japan, the world's fifth-biggest greenhouse gas emitter, is facing a more difficult road ahead, analysts said.

[For Canada, climate file is unfolding as it should](#)

At his post-shellacking press conference last week, U.S. President Barack Obama acknowledged that, in light of the mid-term election results, he'd not have the votes in Congress "this year or next year or the year after that" to pass comprehensive climate change legislation. Without such legislation, the international negotiations that foundered in Copenhagen will continue to go nowhere. And Kyoto will die a natural death in 2012.

The good news in this for Canada is that we'll not now be subject to the huge financial penalties that would have accrued from having signed an agreement that successive governments made no effort to implement after the United States – our most important trading partner – failed to ratify it.

[Alberta carbon capture bill in controversy](#)

Alberta's energy minister says proposed rules that could put the province on the hook should anything go wrong with carbon capture projects are the best way to the launch the technology, but opponents say taxpayers are paying a high price.

[Making Climate Change Cool in the Classroom](#)

That's what ACE was launched to do. Al Gore opened the door on climate education with his venerable slideshow, and later with the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. But while Gore's cerebral, stat-heavy style might work for science wonks, there was also a need for something that had what Williams calls "the cool factor."

[A Novel Tactic in Climate Fight Gains Some Traction](#)

WASHINGTON — With energy legislation shelved in the United States and little hope for a global climate change agreement this year, some policy experts are proposing a novel approach to curbing global warming: including greenhouse gases under an existing and highly successful international treaty ratified more than 20 years ago.

The treaty, the Montreal Protocol, was adopted in 1987 for a completely different purpose, to eliminate aerosols and other chemicals that were blowing a hole in the Earth's protective ozone layer.

But as the signers of the protocol convened the 22nd annual meeting in Bangkok on Monday, negotiators are considering a proposed expansion in the ozone treaty to phase out the production and use of the industrial chemicals known as hydrofluorocarbons or

HFCs The chemicals have thousands of times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide, the most prevalent greenhouse gas.

[Dirty Coal, Clean Future](#)

To environmentalists, “clean coal” is an insulting oxymoron. But for now, the only way to meet the world’s energy needs, and to arrest climate change before it produces irreversible cataclysm, is to use coal—dirty, sooty, toxic coal—in more-sustainable ways. The good news is that new technologies are making this possible. China is now the leader in this area, the Google and Intel of the energy world. If we are serious about global warming, America needs to work with China to build a greener future on a foundation of coal. Otherwise, the clean-energy revolution will leave us behind, with grave costs for the world’s climate and our economy.

[The view from beneath the waves: climate change in the Solomon Islands](#)

Climate change and rising sea levels are devouring the low-lying lands of the Solomon Islands, with crops failing and lands disappearing. The time to act is now.

[New York Considering Erecting Storm Barriers For Future Flooding](#)

MANHATTAN -- The city is seriously considering a proposal to erect huge storm surge barriers as part of a comprehensive waterfront plan meant to protect New York from rising sea levels, officials told DNAinfo.

[Glaciers shrink despite more snow falling](#)

More snow fell on the top of key South Island glaciers than melted last summer, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research's (Niwa) annual end-of-summer survey showed. P> But, there was still a general shrinking of some of the South Island's largest glaciers, snow and ice scientist Jordy Hendrikx said.

[Surviving climate change](#)

It was believed that whoever feeds on seed opens doors to poverty,’ says Abraham Okatsio, a 72-year-old farmer from western Kenya. ‘It was a shame for one to beg, or even to buy common seed from the neighbourhood. However, farmers could borrow particular seed types, or varieties that they wished to introduce for the first time on their farms.’

He has witnessed traditions change over the years, to the point where some African farmers now depend entirely on hybrid seeds, which he refers to as ‘barren seeds’.

But, as hybrid seeds take centre stage on large-scale farms, most smallholders still embrace the indigenous knowledge of seed banking, which has seen crop varieties survive for centuries, despite changing environmental conditions.



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