



Drumbeat: April 2, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 2, 2011 - 10:53am

[Yergin: Stepping on the Gas](#)

Today, in an age that craves innovation in energy, George Mitchell's breakthrough in the Barnett Shale has opened the door to a potentially profound change in the global energy equation.

What has become known as the "unconventional-natural-gas revolution" has turned a shortage into a large surplus and transformed the natural-gas business, which supplies almost a quarter of America's total energy. This revolution has arrived, moreover, at a moment when rising oil prices, sparked by turmoil in the Middle East, and the nuclear crisis in Japan have raised anxieties about energy security. Government and producers alike have turned their attention back to domestic resources.

[Mexico says OPEC, inventories can cover Libya oil](#)

(Reuters) - Mexican Energy Minister Jose Meade said on Friday oil shortages caused by the Libyan crisis, which have helped push crude to a 2-1/2 year peak, could be covered by production in other OPEC nations and existing inventories.

If conflict does not spread to other Middle Eastern nations, oil prices should fall back to levels seen before fighting erupted in major oil producer Libya, Meade told the Reuters Latin American Investment Summit.

[Saudi's New Super Light Crude Blend To Hit Market In April -Source](#)

LONDON (Dow Jones)--The newly produced blend of super light crude by Saudi Arabia won't become available until early April, despite speculation that the oil has already been purchased in the Mediterranean, someone familiar with the matter told Dow Jones Newswires on Thursday.

[Exposed: The US-Saudi Libya deal](#)

You invade Bahrain. We take out Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. This, in short, is the essence of a deal struck between the Barack Obama administration and the House of Saud. Two diplomatic sources at the United Nations independently confirmed that

Washington, via Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, gave the go-ahead for Saudi Arabia to invade Bahrain and crush the pro-democracy movement in their neighbor in exchange for a "yes" vote by the Arab League for a no-fly zone over Libya - the main rationale that led to United Nations Security Council resolution 1973.

[Noam Chomsky: On Libya and the Unfolding Crises](#)

While control over oil is not the sole factor in Middle East policy, it provides fairly good guidelines, right now as well. In an oil-rich country, a reliable dictator is granted virtual free rein. In recent weeks, for example, there was no reaction when the Saudi dictatorship used massive force to prevent any sign of protest. Same in Kuwait, when small demonstrations were instantly crushed. And in Bahrain, when Saudi-led forces intervened to protect the minority Sunni monarch from calls for reform on the part of the repressed Shiite population. Government forces not only smashed the tent city in Pearl Square – Bahrain’s Tahrir Square -- but even demolished the Pearl statue that was Bahrain’s symbol, and had been appropriated by the protestors. Bahrain is a particularly sensitive case because it hosts the US Fifth fleet, by far the most powerful military force in the region, and because eastern Saudi Arabia, right across the causeway, is also largely Shiite, and has most of the Kingdom’s oil reserves. By a curious accident of geography and history, the world’s largest hydrocarbon concentrations surround the northern Gulf, in mostly Shiite regions. The possibility of a tacit Shiite alliance has been a nightmare for planners for a long time.

[Are the Oil Barons Panicking? Saudi Arabia to Spend \\$100 Billion on Renewable Energy](#)

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, may not be panicking quite yet about its ever-declining oil supply--but the country is certainly concerned. Consider: in February, a Wikileaks document revealed that Saudi Arabia might be overstating its oil reserves by 300 billion barrels, and the country recently asked for a slice of the UN's \$100 billion climate change fund to help diversify to other energy sources (a galling request from such a wealthy country so dependent on other people not diversifying to other energy sources). And now the kingdom has announced that it plans to spend \$100 billion on solar, nuclear, and other renewable energy sources. They haven't announced over what time period they will spend it, but that's a lot of cash. Private investments in Chinese renewable energy projects equalled \$54.4 billion last year, which was the highest of any country.

[The real cost of not going nuclear](#)

Just because the nuclear backlash was inevitable doesn't make it right. Long-standing opponents have naturally seized on the Japanese emergency in a bid to reverse the industry's budding renaissance, and in Europe at least there is a chance they could succeed. Industry share prices have slumped as governments including Switzerland, Germany and Britain have applied the brakes. Since northern Europe is far less prone to earthquakes and new reactor designs are based on passive safety, the implications should be more political than technical. But the consequences of ditching nuclear now could be severe for both the climate and energy security.

[Q & A with Dylan Ratigan](#)

We have to start with the biggest coalition we can form and the simplest issue we can fight. While I think the end game is to be a fully renewable sustainable economy on the Earth, forget America, we have to find someplace to start. I think the easiest place to focus everyone's attention is on ending our dependency on Middle Eastern oil. How wonderful would it be to get other people who would not normally work together like the Sierra Club and Boone Pickens, who are working together, on something they agree to: getting off Mideast oil.

[The Collapse Of Globalization](#)

The uprisings in the Middle East, the unrest that is tearing apart nations such as the Ivory Coast, the bubbling discontent in Greece, Ireland and Britain and the labor disputes in states such as Wisconsin and Ohio presage the collapse of globalization. They presage a world where vital resources, including food and water, jobs and security, are becoming scarcer and harder to obtain. They presage growing misery for hundreds of millions of people who find themselves trapped in failed states, suffering escalating violence and crippling poverty. They presage increasingly draconian controls and force—take a look at what is being done to Pfc. Bradley Manning—used to protect the corporate elite who are orchestrating our demise.

[The Economic Cost of Losing Bats](#)

A new article in Science shows that bats have an important role to play in agriculture—one worth at least \$3.7 billion a year, if not far more. That's how much the extinction of bats throughout North America could cost the region's food system, according to an analysis by a group of researchers led by Justin Boyles of the University of Pretoria in South Africa. The logic is simple: bats eat bugs—tons and tons of bugs—and that includes crop and forests pests. (A single colony of 150 brown bats in Indianan has been estimated to eat nearly 1.3 million pest insects a year.) Remove the bats, and you remove one of nature's most effective biological pesticides—which would have to be replaced by actual pesticides, at an economic and environmental expense.

[Bill McKibben: Natural disasters?](#)

We're now moving into a new geological epoch, one scientists are calling the Anthropocene – a world remade by man, most obvious in his emissions of carbon dioxide. That CO₂ traps heat near the planet that would otherwise have radiated back to space – there is, simply, more energy in our atmosphere than there used to be. And that energy expresses itself in many ways: ice melts, water heats, clouds gather. 2010 was the warmest year on record, and according to insurers – the people we task with totting up disasters – it demonstrated the unprecedented mayhem this new heat causes. Global warming was "the only plausible explanation", the giant reinsurer Munich Re explained in December, of 2010's catastrophes, the drought, heatwave and fires across Russia, and the mega-floods in Pakistan, Australia, Brazil and elsewhere were at least plausibly connected to the general heating. They were, that is to say, not precisely

"natural disasters", but something more complex; the human thumb was on the scale.

[Preparing For a Warmer Planet](#)

How prepared are we for the next big storm? In his new book *Hot: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth*, journalist Mark Hertsgaard explains how some countries like the Netherlands are planning 200 years in advance for rising sea levels and alternating periods of drought and heavy rains.

[An employee's guide to catabolic collapse](#)

Before looking at what jobs are likely to be available, perhaps it is worth discussing the revival of part of the economy that only a couple of generations ago was integral to virtually everybody's life; the household economy. The backyard veggie patch, a few chickens, some fruit trees, home made preserves and clothes; these are some of the elements of the household economy that were a vital part of our ancestor's way of life, and no doubt will be part of ours in the not too distant future. For the doubters, the potential of the household economy is significant. As an example, during World War Two the Victory Gardens program saw some 40 per cent of vegetables consumed in the USA being grown in backyards and other small plots. Reducing your reliance on the formal economy is one way of reducing the impact of disruptions caused by job losses or other systemic failures that are likely to occur in the future. Indeed, as the formal economy contracts and fewer employees are required, both the number of people 'employed' in the household or informal economy and its productivity are likely to grow dramatically.

[Risk Externalization is Moral Hazard](#)

In recent years, several large man-made disasters have been witnessed with widely felt negative effects due to the externalization of risk by entities claiming limited liability. The concept of limited liability was engineered to protect businesses from losing more than all of their capital, but it is now being abused by corporations and governments who use it to externalize excessive risk. The net effect in a financial model is to convert a natural forward contract into a call option for the risk taker. The profits are kept by the risk takers. However, when risk is externalized, the losses are realized by innocent bystanders. This is the definition of moral hazard.

[Canada needs an oil change](#)

Energy subsidies cost American taxpayers about \$20 billion annually, more than the State Department's entire budget and enough to send half a million Americans to college each year with all expenses paid.

Fatih Birol, the chief economist at the International Energy Administration, has named fossil fuel subsidies as one of the biggest impediments to global economic recovery – “the appendicitis of the global energy system which needs to be removed for a healthy, sustainable development future.”

[Sustainability a possibility with help of state's ag industry](#)

With rising fuel prices and the age of peak oil already behind us, a sustainable solution that will have to be solved in the coming years is finding ways to replace that ubiquitous material, petroleum, that is found in so many of our everyday products and fuels, with more environmentally-friendly and bio-derived materials.

Such is one of the many goals of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's own Wisconsin Institute of Sustainable Technology (WIST), a multidisciplinary institute on campus which seeks to deliver sustainable solutions collaboratively with partners through research, education and laboratory services.

[An Open Letter to Our City Commissioners: We Need Visionary, Creative Solutions to Old Problems](#)

What we really need right now is a city commission that can see ways for Lawrence to become a vibrant ecological city as we transition into an era where climate change and peak oil are major realities. Our city commission has done some great things so far. Forming climate change and peak oil task forces were both a great start, and hiring a dedicated sustainability director was a great move. Now it's time we move from these foundation-building efforts to start implementing some really bold actions.

[Sustainability and the Third Crossing](#)

Despite the hard work done by the creators the Sustainable Kingston plan, Kingston is not a sustainable city. It may well be "the most sustainable city in Canada", but since, to my knowledge, no city in Canada is anywhere near sustainable, that isn't really saying much. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, and the same could be said of a community that engages in some minor reforms within a world that is filled with sprawling, consumptive and oil dependent cities.

[Building Adaptive Capacity: Towards a Design for Sustainability 3.0](#)

As social, economic and ecological conditions continue to worsen and with the increasing sophistication and connectivity of information technology and social media, design for sustainability is now moving towards a new qualitatively different area of exploration: **designing to build adaptive capacity**. It's been almost 10 years since McDonough and Braungart's ground-breaking book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things* set the standard for sustainable design: toxic-free closed loop material cycles, use of renewable energy in manufacturing, post-consumer separation of biological and technical materials and service and flow takeback programs by manufacturers.

[South Africa: Govt tweaks energy policy](#)

Government has finalised the new integrated resource plan (IRP) which maps out the provision of electricity for South Africa until 2030.

Although the contribution of renewable energy to the mix has been increased from a very low base and plans for nuclear power production remain expansive, the document outlines a number of risks that could have an impact on the implementation of the plan.

[Guelph candidates split on nuclear power](#)

GUELPH — Could a nuclear crisis similar to the one occurring at Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant happen in Canada?

Most federal election candidates in Guelph don't want to run the risk of finding out.

There are safer, greener alternatives to consider, several of them say.

[The 'sensible environmentalist'](#)

Patrick Moore, a Greenpeace founder, says the organisation is "anti-science, anti-business and downright anti-human".

"A lot of environmentalists are stuck in the 1970s and continue to promote a strain of leftish romanticism about idyllic rural village life powered by windmills and solar panels," Moore says. He is a vehement critic of wind and solar power – the main energy sources Greenpeace supports – saying both are "ridiculously expensive and unreliable".

[As E-Waste Law Kicks In, the Ideal Option Varies](#)

As a new state law making electronics manufacturers responsible for offering free recycling programs takes effect, many residents of New York City are likely to continue relying on so-called collection events to get rid of their e-waste.

[Alaska Governor Asks Govt to Expedite Offshore Drilling Projects](#)

Alaska's governor asked federal regulators to move ahead in allowing new oil development in the Arctic Ocean, as the state looks for ways to shore up declining production.

In a letter sent Thursday to U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Gov. Sean Parnell wrote that "Alaska is the United States' most important and abundant domestic source of future oil and gas." He cited a 2008 U.S. Geological Survey report that estimated more than 10 billion barrels of oil and more than 100 trillion cubic feet of natural gas lay

beneath the surface of Alaska's Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. Parnell seized on current concerns in the U.S. about the stability of foreign sources of oil, amid turmoil in the Middle East and rising oil prices.

[Wriggle room on offshore tax](#)

Is there an escape route for George Osborne since his tax raid on oil and gas producers backfired?

It seems the government may be looking for one - if only a bit of wriggle room, because the big picture shows that extra £2bn is needed each year to make the Treasury's sums add up.

[Transocean Workers Refuse to Testify on Deepwater Horizon](#)

Employees of Transocean, the company that owned the Deepwater Horizon rig that exploded last April, are refusing to testify before federal officials investigating the causes of the explosion and subsequent oil spill.

[Why I Don't Include McDonald's in My Retirement Portfolio](#)

What concerns me *most* are the headwinds McDonald's faces over the next few years from macroeconomic trends, mainly peak oil and accelerating expansion of the money supply.

[Sonangol funding woes cripple \\$8bn refinery construction](#)

In southern Angola, construction of a 200 000 barrel-a-day refinery at a cost of \$8 billion (R54bn) has slowed because of funding constraints experienced by the state-owned Sonangol.

The Lobito refinery had been due to come on stream this year, but it may be another three years at least before it is commissioned, extending Angola's reliance on imported fuel products even as it produces crude oil at levels near its daily capacity of 1.93 million barrels.

[Oil boom transforming small Manitoba town](#)

While concerns are being raised over the delicate future of the world's oil supply — and also by a resulting spike in gas prices at the pumps — there's little appearance of that being felt in a small Manitoba community.

The farm village of Waskada, located 300 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg near the Saskatchewan border, is at the heart of a veritable home-grown oil boom.

[Tapping Shale Gas is Called Benefit to Economy, Consumers](#)

Low natural gas prices, and ample supplies that are likely to keep prices down far into the future, are the rewards that could come from tapping into the vast supplies of shale gas trapped deep below the United States, said an energy industry analyst.

[Could Shale Gas Power the World?](#)

Natural gas is up now — way up — and it's changing how we think about energy throughout the world. If its boosters are to be believed, gas will change geopolitics, trimming the power of states in the troubled Middle East by reducing the demand for their oil; save the lives of thousands of people who would otherwise die from mining coal or breathing its filthy residue; and make it a little easier to handle the challenges of climate change — all thanks to vast new onshore deposits of what is called shale gas. Using new drilling methods pioneered by a Texas wildcatter, companies have been able to tap enormous quantities of gas from shale, leading to rock-bottom prices for natural gas even as oil soars. In a single year, the usually sober U.S. Energy Information Administration more than doubled its estimates of recoverable domestic shale-gas resources to 827 trillion cu. ft. (23 trillion cu m), more than 34 times the amount of gas the U.S. uses in a year. Together with supplies from conventional gas sources, the U.S. may now have enough gas to last a century at current consumption rates. (By comparison, the U.S. has less than nine years of oil reserves.)

Nor is the U.S. alone. Britain, India, China and countries in Eastern Europe have potential shale plays as well, while Australia, having invested in huge infrastructure projects, has started sending fleets of ships with liquefied natural gas around the world.

Over all this loom three factors: booming demand for energy as nations such as China and India industrialize; the accident at the Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan, which has dimmed prospects for a renaissance of nuclear power; and the turmoil in the oil-rich Middle East. Taken together, they have opened space for gas as a relatively clean, relatively cheap fuel that can help fill the world's needs during the transition to a truly green economy.

[Work starts on \\$10bn energy project](#)

The partners in the Shah gas development are shifting mountains of sand to keep the strategic project on schedule after finalising their joint-venture agreement yesterday.

One of the early challenges of developing the gasfield is to establish a base amid a sea of shifting desert dunes from which deep deposits of sour gas can be safely exploited.

[DEP top-down directive draws criticism](#)

HARRISBURG - A new top-down directive from the Department of Environmental Protection on handling Marcellus Shale drilling enforcement actions and violations is drawing sharp criticism from some lawmakers in Northeast Pennsylvania and calls for more explanation from others.

...The DEP directive requires regional office directors and the director of the bureau of oil and gas management to seek approval for actions involving Marcellus violations from two top agency deputies with final clearance from DEP Secretary-designate Michael Krancer.

[Crude Climbs to 30-Month High on Gain in U.S. Employment, Libya Conflict](#)

Crude oil climbed to a 30-month high in New York as the U.S. added more jobs than forecast, signaling increased demand, and as fighting intensified in Libya.

Oil rose 1.1 percent after the Labor Department said payrolls advanced by 216,000 workers in March. Economists projected a 190,000 gain, according to a Bloomberg News survey. Libyan rebels have been in retreat for three days as Muammar Qaddafi's troops regained the initiative after almost two weeks of allied airstrikes.

[Speculation leads to gas hikes](#)

Oil, like cotton and wheat, is sold on the market as a future. Effectively a future is a contract between buyer and seller, where the buyer agrees to purchase the good at a fixed price at some predetermined point in the future. The concept of futures was created so farmers and producers could determine what their unharvested commodities would be worth well in advance. It also allowed manufacturers and consumers to purchase raw materials at a reasonable rate — a relatively simple system controlled by the financial law of supply and demand. This worked well for a while, but then things changed.

[Unipet May Halt Diesel Exports This Month to Build Supplies Within China](#)

China International United Petroleum & Chemical Corp., the nation's biggest oil trader, may halt diesel exports this month to build inventories, said two company officials with knowledge of the plan.

Unipet, as China International is known, has been cutting exports to meet domestic demand, said the officials, who declined to be identified because of company rules. The trading company reduced diesel exports to 70,000 tons in March from 80,000 tons in February.

[World coal prices rise to record high](#)

Coal prices hit an all-time high yesterday, with Xstrata persuading Chugoku Electric of Japan to pay almost \$130 (£80) a tonne for coal sourced from the miner over the next 12 months – 30 per cent more than the contract was worth last year.

[OPEC Output Down as Libyan Loss Tops Saudi Gain, Survey Shows](#)

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' crude output dropped in March as increases from Saudi Arabia failed to make up for a decline in Libyan production to a 49-year low, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

[Petrol sales plummet as prices climb](#)

Sales of petrol at the pumps have dipped sharply over recent years, according to Government figures highlighted today by the AA.

In terms of weight, petrol sales fell 13.95% between 2007 and 2010.

[Obama: Oil drilling alone won't cut gas prices](#)

Discussing the Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future he unveiled this week, the president said he supports more drilling for domestic oil, but that alone "is not a real strategy to replace our dependence on foreign oil."

[What President Obama Should Have Said Regarding Energy Policy](#)

I am afraid we have not been entirely open and honest about the situation in the past, but I want to make a change, and talk about the real energy situation, and start making plans for a lower-energy world. In the not too distant future—probably within the next 20 to 50 years, but perhaps as soon as the next 10 years, we will need to go back to using just the energy resources that we receive each day to sustain this world. This will require a very different type of society than we have today.

[Peak oil and rising gas prices](#)

One aspect of Obama's plan is increased domestic oil production, though he admits that with 2% of the world's oil reserves, the US can't drill itself into energy independence. Why not? That two-word question may have a two-word answer: Peak oil.

[Learsy: Obama Echoes The American Petroleum Institute Mantra](#)

Yes, as President Obama explained when more oil is consumed the price goes up. But not to this extent and not to the extent of the explosion in oil prices over the past ten years whereby it has increased by a factor of more than seven. Clearly something else is afoot.

What is afoot is the manipulation of supply and prices by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). When the president says oil can not be pumped fast enough to keep up with demand and that is why so many American families are suffering when paying for high gas prices, no mention is made that the OPEC cartel producers are willfully holding back some 6 million barrels of production a day, of which Saudi Arabia alone has shut in 4.5 million barrels.

[Energy Expert Annotates Obama's Energy Speech](#)

President Barack Obama's speech to Georgetown University on energy policy, delivered yesterday, forges a new direction on energy policy after big failures in his first two years to cut U.S. emissions on greenhouse gases with a cap-and-trade system, wean the U.S. off foreign oil, or cut U.S. energy prices. It's a centrist approach to a contentious subject, and it has drawn praise and criticism from all sides.

The full text of Obama's remarks as delivered follows, with expert commentary on various sections from David Keith, physicist and energy expert at University of Calgary, and Eli Kintisch of ScienceInsider. Mouse over the highlighted sections to read the commentary.

[Quit Repeating Nonsensical Oil Statistics!](#)

"I give out this statistic all the time, and forgive me for repeating it again: America holds about 2 percent of the world's proven oil reserves." – President Barack Obama, March 30, 2011

It would be easier to forgive the President's repetition if it the way he used it made any sense at all.

[Oil and Gas Partnership Reveals Connection Between Peak Oil Awareness and the Price of Oil](#)

As awareness about peak oil increases, OilandGasPartnerships.net believes the growing awareness about the limits on supply will act as a catalyst to increase the price of oil even before the peak is reached.

[U.S. Consumers Have Big Banks To Blame For High Gasoline Prices](#)

There is a bit of irony here in that the very same banks that taxpayers bailed out, and

saved from going completely belly up, are now making you pay once again in the form of higher Oil prices, and the resultant higher gasoline prices at the pump (Fig. 1). Don't be fooled by the rhetoric generated in the media by the Big Banks regarding the Middle East.

[Morons Who Hate Oil](#)

It may seem harsh to call people who actively spread lies about oil "morons", but that assumes they do so out of ignorance as opposed to those who do so for some crazed "environmental" reason that is so out of touch with reality it invites scorn.

A case in point is a new book by Steve Hallett with John Wright, "Life Without Oil: Why We Must Shift to a New Energy Future" (\$25.00, Prometheus Books).

[The Hard Realities of the Need for More Oil](#)

The world isn't about to run out of oil any time in the foreseeable future. But Martin Sieff warns that oil prices are going to stay high and climb higher for many other serious reasons — and the American public, liberals and conservatives alike, had better get used to it.

[The Math of the New Drilling Boom](#)

We dare not harm the environment of the yellow speckled squirrel. We humans may all be swallowed up in an economic collapse, but as for biting the dust, better us than the squirrel. This seems to be our energy policy in America, so it's understandable when you hear the chorus "Drill, baby,drill." But this does not address the energy crisis we are flying into.

I usually agree with Kudlow and Steve Forbes as well, but when they assume that the free capital markets will solve the oil problem, as Forbes predicted in 2006 with a call for a longterm return to \$35 pricing, they are just flat wrong. The energy crisis we are flying into has little to do with higher technology or more drilling; it has everything to do with net energy and the laws of diminishing returns.

[Libya rebels say hit by coalition air strike](#)

BREGA, Libya (Reuters) - At least 10 rebels were killed by a coalition air strike on Friday, fighters at the scene said on Saturday, in an increasingly chaotic battle with Muammar Gaddafi's forces over the oil town of Brega.

With the more experienced and better organised rebel army locked in combat with Gaddafi's forces, hundreds of young, inexperienced volunteers could be seen fleeing east towards Ajdabiyah, after coming under heavy mortar and machine gun fire.

[In Middle East, familiar echoes about limits of U.S. power](#)

The rebels are outnumbered 10-1, they said, and barely 1,000 rebel fighters have military training. NATO airstrikes, despite degrading the Libyan military by 25%, are not coordinated with the disorganized rebel offensives. There's no predicting how long toppling Gadhafi might take, nor is that outcome guaranteed.

So now, according to various reports, the CIA has put operatives into Libya, and NATO is considering arming the rebels despite the disquieting history of Afghanistan, where the U.S. armed fighters against a Soviet invasion only to see them turn into today's enemy, the Taliban.

This all lends an uncomfortably familiar feeling of half-baked commitment, incremental escalation and dubious outcomes.

[Ecuador's Amazon culture under renewed threat](#)

Following the Chevron-Texaco US oil company's \$9bn fine for environmental damage in Ecuador's Amazon region, the indigenous Huaorani people there worry about surviving in the rainforest because of the possibility of more oil exploitation in the area.

[Statoil Makes Norway's 'Most Important' Find for 10 Years in Barents Sea](#)

Statoil ASA (STL) and Eni SpA (ENI) struck oil and gas at the Skrugard prospect in the Barents Sea, making what may prove Norway's biggest discovery in 10 years.

The discovery holds as much as 250 million barrels of recoverable reserves, Statoil said in a statement today. That may eclipse Eni's nearby Goliat find, currently the largest off Norway since 2000 with 240 million barrels of oil equivalent, according to the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate. Statoil shares rose to a three-and-a-half-year high.

[Nigeria's National Assembly poll postponed after polling problems seen in oil-rich nation](#)

IBADAN, Nigeria — Nigeria postponed its National Assembly elections Saturday as ballots and tally sheets remained missing from polling places throughout the nation, a worrying sign as the oil-rich nation faces a month of crucial polls.

[Tracking Oil And Gas Rigs In The U.S. \(Yes, There's An App\)](#)

If you want to keep an eye on how the drilling's going — whether you're for it or against it — there's an app for that. The Baker Hughes Rig Count app lets you track the location and number of rigs on your iPhone or iPad.

[Explosion and fire damage Indonesia's largest oil refinery; no injuries](#)

CILACAP, Indonesia — Police say a massive fire has destroyed two storage tanks at Indonesia's largest oil refinery.

[BP says it's finished with coastal Ala. cleanup](#)

GULF SHORES, Ala. - Petroleum giant BP says it has finished with the bulk of its oil spill cleanup work on Alabama's coast.

BP PLC said Friday it has removed workers and machinery from its deep-cleaning operation on the state's tourist beaches.

[Transocean Execs Get Bonuses for 'Best Year in Safety,' Despite Gulf Disaster](#)

Transocean Ltd., owner of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, awarded millions of dollars in bonuses to its executives after "the best year in safety performance in our company's history," according to an annual report and proxy statement released yesterday.

[Sales of fuel-efficient autos stall despite high gas prices](#)

With regular gasoline now averaging \$3.60 a gallon nationally — up from a 2010 average of \$2.84 — car buyers are thinking more about fuel economy than they were last year. But replacing a large vehicle with a much smaller one is further than many buyers are going.

Hybrid sales actually shrank from 2.9% of new vehicle sales in 2009 to 2.4% last year. Sales of light trucks — pickups, SUVs, crossovers, minivans — rose to 51% from 48% in the same period.

"For consumers to really change their buying habits, they must believe higher gas prices are a long-term change, and by long-term, they mean five years or more," said Gloria Bergquist, vice president of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers.

[Free ride: Rising oil prices boost electric cars' affordability](#)

Rising gasoline prices -- now topping \$4 a gallon in the San Francisco Bay Area -- may finally drive the message home that electric cars, despite the expense of the first generation mass production models, are a hedge against an uncertain fuel future. (Not to mention environmental catastrophe.)

[Manitoba left in dust of electric vehicle times](#)

Canada may be on the verge of an electric vehicle revolution, but Manitobans may have to wait a little longer.

Nissan Canada says it will delay its rollout of the much awaited fully-electric Leaf-branded car in Manitoba because it does not have an agreement with the province on plug-in charging stations.

[Radioactive water leaks from Japan nuclear plant](#)

RIKUZENTAKATA, Japan (AP) — Japan's prime minister surveyed the damage in a town gutted by a massive tsunami, as officials said Saturday that highly radioactive water was leaking into the sea from the nuclear plant stricken by the disaster.

[Damage to reactor called severe](#)

WASHINGTON — Energy Secretary Steven Chu said yesterday that roughly 70 percent of the core of one reactor at the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan had sustained severe damage.

His assessment of the damage to Reactor No. 1 was the most specific yet from a US official on how close the plant came to a full meltdown after it was hit by a severe earthquake and massive tsunami March 11.

[Nuclear watchdog seeks Japan lessons](#)

The UAE's nuclear regulator has asked the company charged with building the country's first nuclear power plants to explain how it will learn from the crisis in Japan.

[South Africa nuclear plants will cost 40% more](#)

THE Department of Energy raised its estimate of the costs of nuclear technology by 40% in its final integrated resource plan released yesterday, and restated its determination to build new nuclear plants.

"A commitment to construction of the nuclear fleet is made based on government policy and reduced risk exposure to future fuel and renewable costs," the plan reads.

[Offshore Wind Backbone Begins to Take Shape](#)

The Atlantic Wind Connection was originally supposed to run from Virginia to northern New Jersey and pick up about 6,000 megawatts of wind energy along the way from

wind farms far enough from the shore to avoid complaints from neighbors and pick up strong ocean breezes.

But when the company applied to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management on Tuesday, the proposal had grown to 7,000 megawatts and an option to connect with Manhattan or Brooklyn.

[The world of 'what if](#)

Homefront's game-opening cut-scene combines real-life news clips (Hi, Hillary!) with plausible but fictional scenarios, showing the dominos that would have to fall to bring the United States under the occupation of a United Korea, beginning with a war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and America's post-peak oil economic collapse.

[How the Pueblos kept warm](#)

When all else failed, the Indians used for emergency fuel the dried cornstalks left in their fields from the previous harvest. The first Spanish explorers, unaware of that, would turn their horses into those fields to graze on the stalks, causing much resentment among their hosts.

[Locally grown? It all depends on how you define it](#)

The popularity of locally grown food — which many assume means the food is fresher, made with fewer chemicals and grown by smaller, less corporate farms — has led to an explosion in the use of the word "local" in food marketing. It's the latest big thing after the surge in food marketed as "organic," another subject of continuing labeling controversy.

But what does local mean? Lacking common agreement, sellers capitalizing on the trend occasionally try to fudge the largely unregulated term. Some grocery stores may define local as within a large group of states, while consumers might think it means right in their hometown.

[Notre Dame Professor Leads Effort to Keep Asian Carp Out of Great Lakes](#)

Mr. Lodge's findings of "environmental DNA," or eDNA, from Asian carp in and near Lake Michigan in 2009 and 2010 led to a legal battle involving the Supreme Court, federal legislation, calls to close Chicago-area waterways or reverse their flow, a dispute with the Army Corps of Engineers, and even the appointment of a White House "Asian carp czar."

Industry groups that depend on rivers and canals in the Chicago area to transport chemicals, coal, cement and other commodities have sharply criticized Mr. Lodge and his science. They argue that he has begun approaching the carp issue as an advocate, not as

a dispassionate scientist, and they vigorously dispute his recommendation that policy makers should consider ecologically separating the Mississippi River system from the Great Lakes.

[Is a Pesticide Harming All Those Bees?](#)

The pesticides, based on the chemistry of nicotine, are generically called neonicotinoids. They are applied to seeds of crops like corn and soybeans. When the plants grow, the pesticides, which have been marketed under the names Clothianidin and Imidacloprid, permeate all of the plants' systems.

Mr. Theobald discovered, and later reported, that the pesticides had been banned in Italy and in Germany, the home country of their manufacturer, Bayer, which reaps hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue annually from their sale. Yet the Environmental Protection Agency gave the pesticides provisional approval several years ago based on a peer-reviewed field study.

[Coal industry disputes EPA water quality findings](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency measure that relies on mayflies to determine water quality in headwater streams in Central Appalachia's coalfields should be re-evaluated based on the results of a new industry study, the National Mining Association said Friday.

The group said its study on a dozen headwater streams in southern West Virginia shows that such streams are not unique environments and resources as characterized by EPA and do not warrant special protections from mining.

[Lights out: Canadians power down for Earth Hour](#)

Pamela Rezansoff and her family will pull on extra sweaters and scarves tonight, maybe even hats and gloves, at their home outside Grande Prairie, Alta.

"When I get up in the morning, I'll turn off the furnace unless there's danger the pipes will freeze," Rezansoff says. "I'll turn off all appliances except the fridge, and we'll eat fruit, vegetables and sandwiches. In the evening, we'll play board games by candlelight."

[Tucking Carbon Into the Ground](#)

IF carbon is going to be kept out of the atmosphere, a lot of it is probably going to have to be injected back into the ground from which it was mined as coal or extracted as oil or gas.

Not even the most ardent optimist about alternative energy would suggest that fossil fuels are going away soon. So carbon capture and sequestration — C.C.S. in environmental shorthand — is essential to a national energy policy. But almost all the discussion has been on the C.C. and not much on the S.

[Denmark's carbon bomb](#)

A new study from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) indicates that Denmark's carbon dioxide emissions are double the previous calculation and have likely been so for years.

Accordingly, Denmark is exceeding its carbon dioxide goals under the Kyoto Protocol.

Widespread municipal garbage incineration — the same waste-to-energy system that has been touted internationally as a model for clean energy resourcefulness — is the main culprit.

[Can 'peak oil' help slow climate change?](#)

If those concerned about peak oil are proved correct, and a fall in oil production triggered a major economic down-swing, this would likely reduce the global rate of carbon emissions for a period, just as other recessions have done. But even a very severe global recession wouldn't reduce emissions sufficiently to "solve" climate change — and indeed the longer-term impact of the oil peak could be to accelerate rather than decelerate global warming.

[Prepare for long-term climate change impacts on food production: FAO](#)

“Potentially catastrophic” impacts on food production from slow-onset climate changes are expected to increasingly hit the developing world in the future, and action is required now to prepare for those impacts, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned on Thursday in a report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Food production systems and the ecosystems they depended on were highly sensitive to climate variability and change. Changes in temperature, precipitation and related outbreaks of pest and diseases could reduce production. Poor people in countries that depended on food imports were particularly vulnerable to such effects, the FAO said.



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