



Drumbeat: May 13, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 13, 2011 - 10:27am

[Gulf states seek high-tech oil boost](#)

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (UPI) -- Persian Gulf oil producers are turning to advanced technology as fields become depleted and extracting the crude becomes more difficult while global demand grows.

Energy industry analysts see a major surge in demand for oil that, even if there are no serious disruptions in supply in the Middle East because of the current political upheavals sweeping the region, will challenge the current supply base to the limit.

[Subsidies give Saudis an appetite for oil](#)

In the desert outside Riyadh, young Saudis spend entire nights drag racing. There are few other options for entertainment in the kingdom and such car races are an economical way of letting off steam.

Thanks to government subsidies, petrol costs only 12 cents a litre in Saudi Arabia, making it cheaper than bottled water.

The same subsidy system also holds down the prices of drinking water and electricity consumption in a country where almost all buildings are air-conditioned.

[At least 1 dead as Syria regime changes tactics against protesters](#)

BEIRUT — Syrian security forces opened fire on thousands of protesters Friday, killing at least one person with a gunshot to the head as soldiers tried to blunt demonstrations by occupying mosques and blocking public squares, activists said.

The death in the central city of Homs marks the latest bloodshed in what has become a weekly rhythm during the two-month uprising, with protesters taking to the streets every Friday, only to be met with bullets, tear gas and batons.

[China suspends export of diesel fuel amid shortage](#)

China's economic planning agency says it is suspending exports of diesel fuel to help counter shortages likely to worsen during the peak summer months, as the country endures widespread power shortages.

[Heinberg: Will Natural Gas Fuel America in the 21st Century? - Foreword to new report](#)

A detailed new energy report argues that the natural gas industry has propagated **dangerously false** claims about natural gas production supply, cost and environmental impact. The report, "Will Natural Gas Fuel America in the 21st Century" is authored by leading geoscientist and Post Carbon Institute Fellow J. David Hughes.

[EPA Pressures Pa. to Tighten Wastewater Disposal Standards](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday stepped up pressure on Pennsylvania regulators to tighten wastewater disposal standards for natural gas drillers, a federal assertion of authority that rubbed the Marcellus Shale industry the wrong way.

The EPA directed the six biggest Marcellus Shale natural gas operators to disclose how and where they recycle or dispose of drilling wastewater in the region. Those companies have promised to abide by a call from Pennsylvania's top environmental regulator to stop sending their wastewater to 15 treatment plants by Thursday.

[Pensacola Beach recovering 1 year after spill](#)

PENSACOLA BEACH, Fla. — Pensacola Beach's famously white sands — coated in thick crude last year after the nation's worst offshore oil spill — are back to their original color, and tourist arrivals outnumber what they were before BP's blown-out well spewed 172 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

Hotels and restaurants that sat largely abandoned at the height of the spill are reporting a 50 percent increase this spring compared to the same time last year before the disaster.

[Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America](#)

Nearly 70 percent of large metropolitan residents live in neighborhoods with access to transit service of some kind. Transit coverage is highest in Western metro areas such as Honolulu and Los Angeles, and lowest in Southern metro areas such as Chattanooga and Greenville. Regardless of region, residents of cities and lower-income neighborhoods have better access to transit than residents of suburbs and middle/higher-income neighborhoods.

In neighborhoods covered by transit, morning rush hour service occurs about once every 10 minutes for the typical metropolitan commuter. In less

than one quarter of large metro areas (23), however, is this typical service frequency, or “headway,” under 10 minutes. These include very large metro areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, and Washington. Transit services city residents on average almost twice as frequently as suburban residents.

[Area carpool lots overflowing](#)

Since the energy crisis of the ‘70s, motorists have been seeking ways of cutting down on transportation costs. Early on, creative motorists parked alongside roads, on private property or in commercial parking lots, which created safety concerns. These circumstances are what prompted the establishment of organized carpool lots in 1974.

[John Michael Greer: Hair Shirts, Hypocrisy, and Wilkins Micawber](#)

I field emails and comments a couple of times a week from people who are seriously troubled about the future. They see themselves as trapped in a system that’s already started to go to bits around them, and lacking the money and other resources that would be needed to make the preparations they’d have to make to weather the approaching crash. A good many of them are living in apartments with nowhere to garden and few options for energy retrofits, and they quite reasonably worry about what’s going to happen when access to energy becomes intermittent, food prices spike, and what now counts as a comfortable urban lifestyle begins the long downhill skid into the shantytown existence facing something like half of the American people within a few decades. They want to know what options I can suggest for them.

The core strategy for people in this position? Use much less, so that expenditures drop well below income, freeing up money to be used to get out of the current, unsustainable situation.

[Surviving the Apocalypse in the Suburbs](#)

What if you had three weeks to prepare for a life-changing disaster? A severe ice storm, earthquake, flood, or something similar? Wendy Brown says that preparing for disaster leaves us better equipped for the changes that are happening right now. Carl Etnier interviews Brown about her book, *Surviving the Apocalypse in the Suburbs: The thrivalist's guide to life without oil*.

[Saudi Arabia under siege](#)

We expats wonder, what in the world are we doing here? We fantasize that we’re promoting the transition from a medieval theocratic dictatorship into something that can work in a modern world. But that would amount to a revolution, and Saudis are way too sharp to upend things. Why derail a gravy train, especially when, as Saudis will explain, it was Allah who put this oil beneath these sands?

[As oil prices drop, Fed should get credit](#)

Since the financial Panic of 2008, the Federal Reserve's easy-money policy has been widely blamed for a global run-up in commodity prices — especially oil. Now that oil prices appear to have peaked and are coming back down, it's time to give the Fed some credit.

After flooding the financial system with cash for more than two years in an effort to stabilize financial markets and economy, the Fed is getting ready to turn off the taps. The anticipation is one reason oil prices are coming back down, according to oil market watchers like Peter Beutel, president of Cameron Hanover.

"The major factor in this market — through riots in the Middle East, floods along the Mississippi, the lack of new offshore drilling or a national energy plan, slow employment gains and a housing market in the dumps, through gains in gasoline stocks or declines in consumption — is the U.S. dollar," he said. "And that is determined by actions taken by the Fed."

[Mississippi-River Flooding Threatens Louisiana Oil, Natural-Gas Production](#)

The rising floodwaters of the Mississippi River, threatening towns and farms between Memphis and the Gulf of Mexico, may affect 10 percent of Louisiana's onshore crude oil production.

A total of 2,264 oil wells are responsible for about 19,000 barrels of crude a day, said Matt Ross, communications director for the Louisiana Oil and Gas Association. He said 150 companies are preparing for flooding in a four-parish area in the southern part of the state.

[Russia may boost oil export duty if gasoline shortages last](#)

Russia, the world's largest oil producer, may raise export duties on raw materials for gasoline production, if local fuel shortages persist, Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko said on Friday.

"It may be related to vacuum gas oil and straight run gasoline - the raw material used to produce high-grade petrol. It is exported a lot, and its export is profitable. We do not rule out raising export duties on this kind of raw material," Shmatko said.

[Petronas to Build \\$20 Billion Malaysia Oil, Chemical Hub Next to Singapore](#)

Petroleum Nasional Bhd., Malaysia's state oil and gas company, will build a \$20 billion refining complex bordering Singapore to benefit from increased global demand for petrochemicals and plastics.

[Power outage hits biggest Venezuelan refineries](#)

CARACAS, Venezuela - A power outage has interrupted operations at Venezuela's largest oil refinery complex.

The state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA says some units of the Cardon and Amuay refineries in western Venezuela were temporarily halted by the outage.

[Enbridge: Replacing 75 miles of Ind., Mich. pipe](#)

MARSHALL, Mich. - Enbridge Inc. plans to spend \$286 million to replace 75 miles of pipeline in Indiana and Michigan after a 2010 break that spilled at least 800,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River system, the Houston-based company announced Thursday.

[Total makes Poland shale gas move](#)

Supermajors Total and ExxonMobil have hatched an agreement to divide up a couple of shale gas plays in Poland but are keeping mum on key details.

[Fossil fuels: what's not to love!](#)

A controllable source of energy that has only two major downsides — finite supply and being the source of the CO₂ that's driving climate change — what's not to love all right!

[Thar She Blows: Whale Age Teaches Us about Oil](#)

Ugo Bardi, an Italian chemist, says the history of the whaling industry really teaches us two things about peak oil or the end of cheap petroleum. As sperm whales got dearer, candle buyers experienced strong price oscillations and greater instability in the marketplace. Depletion happened without a reliable or cheaper technology on the shelf.

At the end of his rumination on *Moby Dick*, Wagner asks a rude question. It's one that Melville posed in a later novel: do we want to become "the graceless Anglo-Saxons, who, in the name of Trade, deflower the World's last sylvan glade?"

[How Lombard Odier is tackling the commodity slump](#)

Does this mean we are at peak oil? Not at all: it simply means that resources are harder to find and develop than they were, often in more technically challenging areas (such as the Brazilian deepwater) or in countries that are harder to do business with. There is

still plenty of oil out there, it is just more of a challenge to find and develop it, and that may effectively curb the ability of global oil production to grow. Hence those companies that can source new reservoirs of oil and gas stand to benefit greatly from this.

This provides a strong support for oil prices up to \$90-\$100 a barrel as this represents the marginal cost of replacing the most expensive barrels of global oil production. As a result we feel comfortable investing in those businesses that discount lower prices than this in their valuation.

[Two hard-asset letters still confident](#)

Despite his overall imminent-shortages-in-everything thesis, King writes: “We’re at a point where it’s safe to say that there may indeed be a few more Saudi Arabia-equivalents of oil out there, offshore.”

He adds: “It’s good news, although the fact of ‘more oil’ just changes the shape and timing of the eventual Peak Oil curve. The world still needs to evolve its energy systems towards efficiency, conservation and acceptable pricing, while understanding the significance of the tiny — truly tiny — amount of global energy supply that can or will soon come from alternative sources.”

[Many industries reap tax breaks. Is picking on Big Oil unfair?](#)

The oil industry, under fire from congressional Democrats for reaping big tax breaks even while amassing huge profits, responds with a simple argument: Don't pick on us.

[Why This Man and His Team Are the Greenest in Rochester](#)

For John Batdorf, this weekend's Green Living Festival all started with peak oil.

It was six years ago, and Batdorf was in his mid-40s, living in Grand Blanc and semiretired from his position as CEO of his own software and computer systems company.

He remembers reading an article in *Rolling Stone* magazine about the inevitability of a time when there isn't enough oil to go around.

[Taking bold energy steps](#)

Despite peak oil, it still remains the cheapest option to generate energy per kilowatt than any other source when all costs are factored in. One reason for this is that the technology has been around for more than a century and has been continually refined with a system of distribution perfected over this period of time, unlike any other source of energy.

But the fact remains that oil is a non renewable source and will eventually run out. The answer to the question “when?” is hotly debated but there is no denying that it is a finite source that is highly polluting and will continue to take a heavy toll on the world’s environment as it runs out.

[To Live or Not to Live](#)

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED how many excuses we all find to not act in defense of the planet? Sure, we all have errands to run and e-mails to answer and we all need down time and the problems are so big and [INSERT YOUR BEST EXCUSE HERE]. But lately I’ve been encountering a particularly frustrating excuse that a lot of people seem to be giving for not acting: they say it’s too late, that various tipping points have been reached in terms of runaway global warming, and that especially because of the lag time between carbon emissions and increased temperature, we’re already doomed, so what’s the point of fighting back?

[Future Babble](#)

Much of this book is based on the research of psychologist Philip Tetlock, who examined thousands of predictions from hundreds of experts (political scientists, economists, journalists) in order to determine their accuracy. Through his study, Gardner tells us, Tetlock discovered “the simple and disturbing truth is that the experts’ predictions were no more accurate than random guesses.” However, he did find what he believes to be a factor determining which experts were able to make more accurate predictions than others. Those experts that he termed “hedgehogs,” people who seem solely concerned with looking at things in terms of one big idea, were far more likely to make inaccurate predictions. On the other hand, “foxes” are more analytical and not as confident as hedgehogs, yet are more often able to make accurate predictions.

The author uses this framework of hedgehogs vs. foxes as he examines a myriad of examples of predictions from the recent past. As Gardner states, it is the hedgehogs that tend to dominate the media when it comes to discussing the future. Tune into any political talk show and you will very likely find some expert or another brashly predicting some cataclysmic change on the horizon based on a theory about one big idea (i.e. climate change, terrorism, overpopulation, peak oil, the list goes on and on). This is not necessarily a new phenomenon. Since the dawn of modern science, people have tried to use scientific methods to ascertain what the future holds. Yet history has proved time and again that people, not to mention the environments surrounding us, are full of surprises.

[One-third of global food production goes to waste: FAO](#)

The FAO found that about 1.3bn tonnes of food is wasted somewhere along the supply chain each year, with wealthier consumers in North America and Europe wasting nearly twice as much as those in poorer countries. Consumers in richer countries throw away about 222m tonnes of food each year, most of it fruit and vegetables, and nearly as

much as the entire net food production of sub-Saharan Africa, at 230m tonnes.

However, industrialized and developing countries tend to waste about the same amount of food on an absolute basis, the report found – 670m tonnes a year and 630m tonnes a year respectively. While most food wastage in richer nations occurs on a consumer level, in developing countries about 40 percent of wastage happens at the post-harvest or processing level due to poor infrastructure and lack of investment in food production systems – a problem the report terms ‘food loss’.

[Why Sustainability Reporting Is Revolutionary](#)

Five years ago, we worked with a number of key stakeholders to scenario plan for the volatile and resource constrained world we saw emerging. We identified key indicators of stress that would force change upon economies and businesses: Peak oil and rising gas prices. The number of weather disruptions that then led to droughts or floods impacting commodity prices. Growing inequity between rich and poor. Breakdowns in global governance mechanisms. Greater transparency and access to information as an accelerator of change.

Today all those indicators are flashing amber. And because of that, we collectively must create a new pace and scale of change. One that is measured against a ticking clock that counts in days, not decades.

[Challenges of a Colorado Local Food Initiative](#)

Building up Boulder County’s local food system – increasing the capacity for food to be grown, processed, distributed and sold within the county – is a goal of Boulder-based nonprofit organization Transition Colorado. The organization’s outlook is informed by the global Transition movement, a grassroots effort tied to the Transition Network in the United Kingdom and focused on strengthening communities dealing with what Michael Brownlee, cofounder of Transition Colorado, refers to as a “convergence of global crises.”

[NFU wants South Frontenac livestock bylaw revisited](#)

"Local 316 has been active over the past decade in building the local food system in Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Counties, in the City of Kingston and beyond," she said. "Given the likely circumstances of the future peak oil, climate change, uncertain global and political conditions and food shortages we believe that every community needs to protect the food security of its citizens by increasing the community's ability to grow and process its own food.

"Permitting the residents of South Frontenac Township to keep limited numbers of livestock, particularly small livestock, on properties under three acres in size, will increase the community's food production capacity, by building its knowledge, skill and experience."

[Coal Curriculum Called Unfit for 4th Graders](#)

Three advocacy groups have started a letter-writing campaign asking Scholastic Inc. to stop distributing the fourth-grade curriculum materials that the American Coal Foundation paid the company to develop.

The three groups — Rethinking Schools, the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood and Friends of the Earth — say that Scholastic's "United States of Energy" package gives children a one-sided view of coal, failing to mention its negative effects on the environment and human health.

[In a Green Town, Activists See Red Over Lockheed Martin](#)

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Car sharing is beloved in this laid-back college town, as are solar panels, rain gardens and most anything designed to fight global warming from the ground up. A bicycle service will pick up your kitchen scraps for composting, and farmers will deliver your vegetables in a biodiesel-fueled truck.

Pride in these homegrown efforts runs deep, and so some Burlingtonians were livid when Mayor Bob Kiss announced a partnership late last year with Lockheed Martin, the military contractor, to work on clean-energy projects.

[In a Changing Antarctica, Some Penguins Thrive as Others Suffer](#)

In the past three decades, the Adélie population on the peninsula, northeast of the Ross Sea, has fallen by almost 90 percent. The peninsula's only emperor colony is now extinct. The mean winter air temperature of the Western Antarctic Peninsula, one of the most rapidly warming areas on the planet, has risen 10.8 degrees Fahrenheit in the past half-century, delivering more snowfall that buries the rocks the Adélie penguins return to each spring to nest — and favoring penguins that can survive without ice and breed later, like gentoos, whose numbers have surged by 14,000 percent.

[Global resource consumption to triple by 2050: UN](#)

UNITED NATIONS — Global consumption of natural resources could almost triple to 140 billion tons a year by 2050 unless nations take drastic steps, the United Nations warned Thursday.

A UN environment panel said the world cannot sustain the tearaway rate of use of minerals, ores and fossil and plant fuels. It called on governments to "decouple" economic growth from natural resource consumption.

With the world population expected to hit 9.3 billion by 2050 and developing nations becoming more prosperous, the report warned "the prospect of much higher resource

consumption levels is far beyond what is likely sustainable."

[Ten Billion of us in 2100 - U.N. World Population Prospects](#)

A very lightly covered recent story was the release of the United Nations "World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision" report in early May. This fascinating study gives us some insight into how our world will look in the future and how population distribution will change over the next 90 years.

[Oil Rises a Second Day, Climbs Above \\$100, as European Growth Accelerates](#)

Crude oil rose for a second day in New York after stronger-than-forecast economic growth figures for the euro zone fanned speculation that fuel demand in Europe will increase.

Futures climbed as much as 1.7 percent to more than \$100 a barrel. Gross domestic product growth in the 17-nation euro region accelerated to 0.8 percent from 0.3 percent, the European Union's statistics office said, beating the 0.6 percent median forecast in a Bloomberg survey. The Bank of Korea unexpectedly kept interest rates unchanged after two increases this year.

[Wholesale prices rise due to pricier gas, food](#)

WASHINGTON — Companies paid more for raw materials and factory goods in April, mostly because energy prices jumped for the seventh straight month.

[There is plenty of life left in this Oil Age yet](#)

According to him, you must remember the number 3,000,000,000,000 barrels when you think about oil. "One trillion we have already consumed, one trillion we know about, and we hope there's a further one trillion to find," he says. He's clearly not a fan of the "peak oil" theory.

[Erdogan to Free Tankers With \\$12 Billion Canal](#)

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's plan to divert tankers from the Bosphorus to a new canal may unclog one of the worst chokepoints for energy carriers such as A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S of Denmark and Greece's Tsakos Energy Navigation Ltd.

[Norway curbs oil reliance in revised 2011 budget](#)

(Reuters) - Norway's government proposed a 2011 revised budget that reduces the structural deficit before oil revenues are considered to 112.9 billion Norwegian crowns (\$20.43 billion) from 128.1 billion crowns seen in October.

The government said it was aiming to avoid a situation in which Norwegian interest rates rise faster than those in the euro zone so that the crown currency does not strengthen further.

[Norway hits the oil jackpot](#)

Norway's state coffers are set for a Nkr311 billion (\$56.6 billion) boost from oil revenues this year but a further expected production drop is casting a shadow over the cash bonanza.

[Texas could lead way in gas drilling disclosure](#)

HOUSTON – Texas is poised to become the first state to require gas drillers to publicly disclose the chemicals they use to release natural gas from tight rock formations, a measure that could set the stage for other states and Congress to move ahead with their own initiatives to regulate hydraulic fracturing.

But environmentalists caution the bill, while a step in the right direction, remains too protective of industry.

[Clement will summon oil execs for gas price grilling](#)

Industry Minister Tony Clement says he will call oil refinery executives, gasoline retailers and distributors to Ottawa and demand answers as to the rationale behind fluctuating gas prices.

[Big Oil execs hit back on tax proposal](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Dragged before Congress as gas prices explode at the pump, oil executives mounted a vigorous defense of their business practices on Thursday -- pushing back against plans to eliminate tax breaks for the "big five" oil and gas companies.

All five executives acknowledged rising prices at the pump, but much of their testimony focused on the impact of a plan floated by Senate Democrats that would eliminate a raft of tax breaks.

[US House votes for offshore oil drilling expansion](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – The Republican-held US House of Representatives on Thursday voted to defy the White House and expand offshore oil drilling amid deep voter anger at soaring gasoline prices.

Lawmakers backed the bill by a 243-179 margin, but it was unlikely to clear the Senate, where majority Democrats have called such efforts giveaways to oil companies a year after the massive spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

[Colorado Republicans push Obama on domestic oil production](#)

WASHINGTON — Inspired by an onslaught of constituent frets about soaring gasoline prices, three Republican congressmen from Colorado are pushing the Obama administration to boost domestic oil production as a way to give consumers relief at the pump.

[Nigerian Troops Attack Militant Camps in Oil-Producing Niger Delta Region](#)

Nigerian troops launched attacks on suspected militant camps in the country's southern oil-producing Niger River delta after a military patrol was fired upon in the area, an army spokesman said.

[Pakistan Taliban Threatens U.S. as Bombs Kill 80](#)

Twin bombings at a paramilitary police academy in northwest Pakistan killed 80 people in what the Pakistan Taliban said was in part revenge for the killing of Osama bin Laden and a precursor to attacks against the U.S.

[Hundreds of Iraqi protesters demand better services, jobs, reforms by June 7 deadline](#)

BAGHDAD — More than 500 Iraqi protesters have gathered in downtown Baghdad, demanding better government services and more jobs.

The demonstration Friday at Baghdad's central Tahrir Square was one of the largest in Iraq in recent weeks.

[Yemen's Saleh defies crowds demanding his exit](#)

(Reuters) - Huge crowds in Sanaa and other Yemeni cities demanded on Friday that President Ali Abdullah Saleh leave after months of popular tumult that has brought the Arab world's poorest country close to economic meltdown.

But in a defiant speech to thousands of flag-waving supporters, Saleh declared: "We will confront a challenge with a challenge."

[Pressure mounts on Gadhafi within Libya's capital](#)

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Pressure is mounting on Moammar Gadhafi from within his stronghold in the Libyan capital, with increasing NATO airstrikes and worsening shortages of fuel and goods. An activist said Friday that there has also been a wave of anti-government protests in several Tripoli neighborhoods this week — dissent that in the past has been met with zero tolerance and brutal force.

[Qatar cancels plans to build power plants in Syria](#)

In view of the continuing unrest in Syria, Qatar Electricity & Water Co (QEWC) has cancelled plans to build two power plants in the country.

[Rosneft Still Weighing Arctic, Swap Deal Before May 16 Deadline on BP Deal](#)

OAO Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer, is still weighing a proposal to replace BP Plc with the U.K. company's local venture in an Arctic exploration deal as a May 16 deadline on a related share swap looms.

[Ukraine, Russia start talks on gas pricing - Azarov](#)

(Reuters) - Ukraine has begun formal negotiations with Russia to secure a new price formula for imports of Russian gas replacing that agreed in January 2009, Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov said on Friday.

"Negotiations have just begun ... but I do not doubt that we will arrive at a formula which is acceptable to us," Azarov said in an interview with Reuters.

[Japan to Help Tepco Pay Nuclear Claims; Banks May Have to Write Off Debt](#)

Japan's government will provide financial aid for Tokyo Electric Power Co. to protect the utility from bankruptcy as it pays compensation to those affected by the worst nuclear disaster in 25 years.

[Japan Credit Rating cuts Tepco's debt ratings by 2 notches](#)

(Reuters) - Japan Credit Rating Agency has slashed debt ratings of troubled Tokyo Electric Power by two notches although they remained three notches above the triple-B (BBB) grade that could help trigger liquidation by bond holders.

[Lloyd's of London Predicts \\$1.95 Billion in Claims From Japan Earthquake](#)

Lloyd's of London, the world's oldest insurance market, said losses from this year's natural disasters in Japan, New Zealand and Australia will cost about \$3.8 billion, making it the costliest first quarter on record.

The Japanese earthquake and tsunami in March will cost Lloyd's about \$1.95 billion in claims, less than a tenth of the total estimated \$30 billion total loss for the industry, the market said today in a statement. Claims from the New Zealand earthquake may total \$1.2 billion, and flooding in Australia may cost \$650 million, Lloyd's said today.

[Disaster Plan Problems Found at U.S. Nuclear Plants](#)

ROCKVILLE, Md. — Despite repeated assurances that American nuclear plants are better equipped to deal with natural disasters than their counterparts in Japan, regulators said Thursday that recent inspections had found serious problems with some emergency equipment that would have made it unusable in an accident.

[Uranium May Rise to \\$75 a Pound in 2012 After Fukushima, Uranium One Says](#)

Uranium prices may trade from \$70 to \$75 a pound next year after problems at Japan's Fukushima Dai- Ichi nuclear power plant are resolved, Fletcher Newton, a vice president at Uranium One Inc. (UUU), said in Beijing.

[Panel on Nuclear Waste Disposal to Propose Above-Ground Storage](#)

WASHINGTON — A commission created to help resolve the impasse over the disposal of the nation's nuclear waste will propose establishing one or more sites where used reactor fuel could be stored in steel and concrete structures on the earth's surface for decades, members of the commission said this week.

[Gas prices push commuters to the train](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Rising gas prices are helping drive big growth in ridership at several public transit systems across the country.

In Miami, passenger counts on the regional rail service connecting the city to the northern suburbs were up more than 12% in April from a year earlier, according to the American Public Transit Association.

In New Mexico, the "Rail Runner," a commuter train that runs from south of Albuquerque to Santa Fe, attracted 14% more riders last month.

And in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area of North Carolina, ridership on the express bus service connecting the three cities is up 18%.

The spike is being attributed to people going back to work after the recession, and a steady rise in gas prices that's taxing the budgets of many motorists.

[13 ways to save on gas this summer](#)

Don't tell the kids it's going to be another staycation summer just yet. While the price of gas in the United States is still more than a dollar higher than the same time last year, analysts say gas prices may have hit their peak and are expected to drop, offering drivers some relief. In the meantime, there are plenty of ways to keep your fuel bill in check, from choosing the right destination to downloading the right app. Below, 13 tips for cutting the cost of that summer road trip.

[Thieves drain \\$2,000 worth of gas from Pasadena, Calif. station](#)

The suspects used some type of card or mechanism to trigger the pumps to release the gas. Officials say the suspects hauled it away using flatbed trucks, reports CBS station KCBS.

According to police the four men made off with 528 gallons to be exact, totaling about \$2,246, reports the station.

[The truth about airline fuel surcharges](#)

The truth is that the only figure that matters is the total price—base fare plus fuel surcharge—and looking at either separately is rank idiocy.

[Answer to cheap power is blowing in offshore wind](#)

During the last ice age, glaciers a mile high pushed several dozen cubic miles of rock, sand and debris into the ocean off North America's mid-Atlantic coast, creating a broad shelf that extends up to 40 miles offshore. This long, flat stretch of seabed and the shallow, windy waters that cover it make the ideal spot for dozens of offshore wind farms — and if all goes well, the network that would link those turbines together and back to the coast will soon be in place.

[Smog-eating aluminum panels launch for buildings](#)

Buildings that eat smog? Alcoa, a maker of aluminum products, introduced an architectural panel Thursday that it says not only cleans itself but also the air around it.

[Resilience planning for wild weather and climate change](#)

Queensland, the state of floods and cyclones that devastated property, has become Australia's laboratory for sustainable building, for creating resilient homes, offices and structures in the face of climatic volatility.

In a radical scheme, Grantham residents who had confronted a deadly mountain of water in the floods, have been invited to apply for land swaps to higher ground after the small southeast town was declared the first designated reconstruction area under the new Queensland Reconstruction Authority's powers. The local council is working with reconstruction authority to create the land swaps.

[Oil slick threatens Arctic bay](#)

MURMANSK, Russia (UPI) -- Russian scientists said it is "hard to assess" the effect an oil spill into the Barents Sea is having on marine life.

The spill occurred Saturday as water from melting ice carried underground oil into Kandalaksha Bay near Murmansk, RIA Novosti, reported. By Thursday morning, a slick that was one-fifth of an inch thick in places had spread across almost 52 acres, just under one-10th of a square mile.

[Coastal nations urged to preserve Arctic waters](#)

Two hundred miles above Canada's most northern shore lies a body of international water that has been covered in ice for more than 800,000 years – a sea the size of the Mediterranean kept beyond reach of commercial fishing interests by a vast frozen dome of white.

But the ice shield is melting and no agreements are in place to prevent boats from China, Japan and other fishing nations from entering the High Arctic to reap an undersea bounty that could become accessible in just a few years.

[Battle for Arctic oil intensifies as US sends Clinton to polar summit](#)

The US government has signalled a new determination to assert its role in Arctic oil and gas exploration by sending secretary of state Hillary Clinton and other ministers to a summit of the region's powers for the first time.

Clinton and the US secretary of the interior, Ken Salazar, were both at the biennial meeting in the Greenland capital of Nuuk amid fears by environmentalists of a "carve up" of Arctic resources that could savage a pristine environment.

[Iceland Views Arctic Oil Rush With 'Apprehension,' Minister Says](#)

Iceland, the island that suffered Europe's biggest banking meltdown during the financial crisis, is viewing the rush to develop oil in the Arctic region with "apprehension," Foreign Minister Ossur Skarphedinsson said.

"There's quite a lot of excitement about it in Iceland, but also apprehension because we literally are in the affluent of the Arctic Ocean so a spillage could have some serious consequences for countries like ours, as well as the Faeroes and Greenland," Skarphedinsson said in an interview in Nuuk. "That is why it is important that the Arctic Council takes the initiative that only the safest practices will be used."

[Harper's Arctic ice show: political stagecraft masks cold reality](#)

The point of the exercise was to remind Canadians that the Conservative government is determined to defend this country's sovereignty in the Far North.

"The first responsibility of government is to take care of our security," Mr. Harper told several hundred Canadian Forces troops, mostly aboriginal Arctic Rangers and others who are part of the thousand-odd Canadians involved in this summer's annual Operation Nanook military exercises. "Nothing comes before that."

[As Clinton works against global warming in Greenland, some there don't mind it](#)

NUUK, Greenland — Few places on Earth have seen starker changes in weather than this icebound island straddling the Arctic Circle. With that in mind, America's top diplomat arrived here this week intent on calling attention to the perils of climate change.

The problem was that Greenlanders aren't exactly complaining.

[How peak oil solves the climate change problem](#)

Peak oilists warn that fossil fuel depletion will cause an economic collapse.

Climatologists say carbon emissions will cause an environmental crisis.

To a certain extent, only one of these doomsday scenarios can happen.

[Gingrich Feels the Heat for Appearing in Global Warming Ad With Pelosi](#)

Every presidential candidate is going to come into the 2012 race with baggage. But Newt Gingrich has what, for primary voters, could be a doozy in his closet -- three years ago, he cut an ad with Nancy Pelosi for Al Gore's climate change group.

[Sierra Club wants landmark climate law altered](#)

California's quest to create the world's first clean energy economy was again under fire this week when the Sierra Club urged Gov. Jerry Brown to drastically alter key elements of the much criticized climate protection law.

The state's largest environmental group urged the governor in a May 9 letter to re-evaluate and revise proposed "cap-and-trade" business incentives, particularly the rules that would allow companies to offset their pollution by purchasing credits from clean businesses outside the state and country.

[Scientist: Leave coal in the ground](#)

The "father of climate change" has a stark message for those proposing to mine fossil fuels in New Zealand: "Leave the coal in the ground."

James Hansen, the first scientist to bring global warming to the world's attention in testimony to the United States Congress, is in the country for a series of public talks.

[Research Panel Says Climate Change Doubts Slow Urgent Action](#)

Public misconceptions of climate change have thwarted urgently needed U.S. efforts to reduce emissions blamed for global warming, according to a report from the National Research Council of the National Academies.

The media sometimes present aspects of climate change that are well-established as if they were "matters of serious debate," according to the report released today in Washington. Groups opposed to policies limiting carbon-dioxide emissions are influencing some reporting, according to the study, which was requested by Congress in 2008 when Democrats were in the majority. It was prepared by a committee of scientists, engineers and economists.

[2,300-year climate record suggests severe tropical droughts as northern temperatures rise](#)

A 2,300-year climate record University of Pittsburgh researchers recovered from an Andes Mountains lake reveals that as temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere rise, the planet's densely populated tropical regions will most likely experience severe water shortages as the crucial summer monsoons become drier. The Pitt team found that equatorial regions of South America already are receiving less rainfall than at any point in the past millennium.



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