



Drumbeat: September 3, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 3, 2011 - 9:32am

[Before Release, a Hydraulic Fracturing Study for the State Draws Skepticism](#)

New York State environmental officials commissioned a study of impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing from a consulting firm that counts oil and gas companies among its clients and that could gain business from increased drilling in the state.

The \$223,000 study of the effects of “hydrofracking” on the economy and the quality of life was conducted by Ecology and Environment Inc., a global environmental and engineering services company based in Lancaster, N.Y.

The study has yet to be released, but some community, environmental and government watchdog groups say the company’s ties to the drilling industry undermine its credibility — no matter what the report concludes.

[Crude Oil Declines as Stagnant U.S. Employment Signals Weak Fuel Demand](#)

Crude oil fell the most in two weeks, trimming a second weekly gain, after employment in the U.S. unexpectedly stagnated in August, bolstering concern that fuel demand will drop.

Futures dropped 2.8 percent after Labor Department data showed payrolls were unchanged last month, the weakest reading since September 2010. The median forecast in a Bloomberg News survey called for a gain of 65,000. Tropical Storm Lee formed today in the Gulf of Mexico, prompting companies to shut 48 percent of the area’s crude output.

[Crude Oil May Fall on Economy as Storm Passes, Survey of Analysts Shows](#)

Oil may fall next week after a storm threatening Gulf of Mexico energy installations dissipates and on concern that the global economic recovery is slowing, a Bloomberg News survey showed.

Fifteen of 30 analysts, or 50 percent, forecast oil will decline through Sept. 9. Ten respondents, or 33 percent, predicted prices will increase and five estimated there will be little change during the period. Last week 50 percent of surveyed analysts projected a drop.

[Tropical Storm Lee Strengthens in Gulf as It Heads Toward Louisiana Coast](#)

Tropical Storm Lee strengthened in the Gulf of Mexico as it moved north toward Louisiana's coast, shutting as much as half the oil production in the Gulf of Mexico and a third of natural gas output.

[Ukraine "not considering" Gazprom merger for gas deal](#)

(Reuters) - Ukraine is not considering the merger of its state oil and gas firm Naftogaz with Russia's Gazprom to get a better deal on deliveries of Russian natural gas, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich said on Saturday.

[Russia to discuss with Libya fate of its oil deals](#)

(Reuters) - Russia has invited members of Libya's interim government to Moscow to discuss the future of Russian energy contracts in the country, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Saturday.

[Russia condemns Syria oil embargo](#)

Russia has made known its opposition to a European Union oil embargo imposed on Syria at the same time fresh anti-regime protests reportedly led to more deaths in the strife-torn Arab country.

Security forces killed two people in north-west Syria one day after protests which activists said cost 21 lives.

[First Solar Receives \\$455.7 Million Ex-Im Bank Loan Guarantee](#)

First Solar Inc. (FSLR), the world's largest maker of thin-film solar modules, received \$455.7 million of loan guarantees from the U.S. Export-Import Bank to build power projects in Canada.

[Shifting modal picture calls for new corporate skills](#)

Several trends are forcing transportation companies, and those who use their services, to develop new skills in order to compete successfully. Consider these examples:

Oil Depletion: Many experts predict "peak oil production" in 2015, after which global production will decline. This means a push for more energy-efficient solutions.

[Dr Richard Pike \(1950-2011\) and Peak Oil](#)

Dr Richard Pike, the CEO of the Royal Society of Chemistry has died of cancer. He was a forceful ambassador for British Science and represented the subject of chemistry and its importance in providing a means for the fabrication of new materials and solving environmental problems, especially providing clean water across the globe. He and I disagreed about the nature of "Peak Oil": in his opinion, as a former oil-man working for B.P., the estimates of proven oil reserves were low by a factor of 2 according to whether a P90 or P50 analysis was used, while my contention is that no matter how much oil may lie under the Earth's surface, if it cannot be extracted fast enough to meet current (and relentlessly growing) use, there will be a gap in supply and demand for it, with catastrophic consequences for a global civilization based on crude oil to provide for transportation, chemical and pharmaceutical manufacture and food-production.

[Danger Ahead: Prioritising Risk Avoidance In Political And Economic Decision-Making](#)

This situation echoes the ideas of Joseph Tainter: that societies collapse not because of stress surges per se, but because, when stress surges occur, circumstances have become so complex that the authorities are overwhelmed by all the complications to the point of being unable to provide a response and see it through. This dynamic defines the larger and longer term challenge. We are threatened with a future of breakdowns, extreme weather events and epidemics, all observed by an increasingly paralysed state and an elite that masks the collective self-deception using the machines of the PR industry and the mass media. The race will be on to develop a coherent ecological package to forestall the growth of extremist parties. These parties will focus on people's mass anger and despair and on simplistic messages of hatred — blaming and persecuting scapegoats like ethnic minorities, immigrants, the rich or the growing numbers of environmental refugees.

[The Pacific Northwest can lead a post-carbon economy](#)

We are all feeling a bit gloomy given the current economic situation facing the U.S. and of course the stalemate in Washington is not helping. I believe the next arms race is already shaping up and the country or region that makes the investment now will be in a position to lead as we come out of the recession. What Hunter Lovins and I demonstrated in our recent book, *Climate Capitalism*, is that communities, cities, countries and companies that are making the transition to the low-carbon economy now are already reaping the rewards in terms of economy and jobs. So contrary to what some in Washington (D.C. that is) will tell you, taking action on climate change does not have to be a drain on the economy.

[Social media connect farmers with local customers](#)

While it's a misnomer that farmers aren't technologically savvy (they've been using GPS on their tractors for decades), it can be hard to picture them stopping to type with their thumbs while standing between rows of cornstalks. But that's what many agriculturists have been doing lately to connect with consumers. Last week, the AgChat Foundation

held a conference in downtown Nashville for farmers across the country — and spanning many farm types and sizes — to learn about improving social media skills. It's the second conference held by the organization, and attendance doubled in size this year.

[Obama Administration Abandons Stricter Air-Quality Rules](#)

WASHINGTON — President Obama abandoned a contentious new air pollution rule on Friday, buoying business interests that had lobbied heavily against it, angering environmentalists who called the move a betrayal and unnerving his own top environmental regulators.

[How to Know When the River is Rising](#)

Consistent with the predictions of climate science, we seem to have entered an era of erratic weather and rising weather extremes. We are only halfway through 2011 and it's already been a crazy weather year — the third such year in a row. The science offers us no reason to believe this situation is going to get better, so it is time to start thinking about ways to cope.



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