



Drumbeat: September 30, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 30, 2011 - 9:32am

[North Sea gas production falls 25%](#)

North Sea gas production has slumped by 25% in the second quarter of the year, an alarming increase in the rate of decline that will cut tax revenues and could put more pressure on government to agree controversial shale gas developments.

Figures from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) also show a 36% rise in coal imports, but a leap from 6.3% to 9.6% for the amount of electricity generated by wind and other renewables.

[North Sea oil slump will cost UK Treasury millions in lost taxes](#)

Britain's oil production from the North Sea has fallen by 16pc since last year in a drastic drop that will cost the Treasury millions of pounds in lost taxes.

[Forget 'peak oil' - America has a glut of the black stuff](#)

I'VE NEVER believed in 'peak oil', the notion held with religious conviction by many on the left here that world production is topping out and will soon slide, plunging the world into economic chaos.

There's plenty of oil, with the constraints as always being the cost of recovery, as witness the vast new North Dakota oil shale fields. I regard oil "shortages" as contrivances by the oil companies and allied brokers and middlemen to run up the price. I fill my aging fleet of 50s and 60s era Chryslers with a light heart. The 59 Imperial ragtop and the 62 Belevedere wagon get around 18 mpg, which is still way ahead of the SUVs.

[Analysis: America's Gasoline Excise Tax](#)

With oil prices being volatile on the downside in recent weeks, the mainstream media coverage of high United States gasoline prices has faded noticeably. This is most certain to pick up again should the world shake off a global economic meltdown and once again face the prospect of oil prices in excess of the hundred dollar a barrel mark. As my regular readers well know, as a geoscientist, I am a firm believer in the concept of peak

oil (or at the very least peak cheap oil) and it is my belief that consumers in Canada and the United States will eventually be forced to deal with gasoline prices that are far higher than what we are seeing today, excluding the impact of increases in excise taxes.

[Crude Oil Heads for Its Biggest Quarterly Decline in New York Since 2008](#)

Oil headed for its biggest quarterly drop in New York since the 2008 financial crisis as signs of slowing growth in China and Germany heightened concerns that fuel demand will suffer.

West Texas Intermediate futures have fallen 15 percent this quarter, the biggest drop since the three months ended Dec. 31, 2008. Chinese manufacturing fell for a third month, data from HSBC Holdings Plc showed today, while Germany's Federal Statistics office said retail sales declined the most in more than four months in August. WTI's discount to Brent oil narrowed for a sixth day, the longest streak since March 2010.

[Singapore Shell Refinery Restart To Take At Least Month-Reuters](#)

Royal Dutch Shell PLC's (RDSB) fire-stricken Singapore refinery is expected to remain shut for at least a month, Reuters reported Friday, citing industry sources.

[Middle East Crude-Shell fire may cap Saudi OSPs](#)

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - The shutdown of Shell's Singapore refinery increasingly weighed on Middle East crude on Friday, as expectations grew that Saudi Arabia would increase November official selling prices (OSP) by less as demand recedes.

[Shell declares force majeure on distillates sales-trade](#)

(Reuters) - Royal Dutch Shell Plc (RDSa.L) has declared force majeure on its distillates deals following a fire that forced the shutdown of its 500,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) Singapore refinery, traders said on Friday.

[Shell CEO Tells Us Where Oil Prices Are Going - And It Isn't Lower](#)

I would like to emphasize one specific comment that Voser made because I think it is incredibly simple, yet completely ignored by the mainstream media:

*"Oil output from fields in production declines by 5 per cent a year as reserves are depleted, so the world needed to add the equivalent of four Saudi Arabias or 10 North Seas over the next 10 years just to keep supply level, **even before much of an increase in demand.**"*

[Commodities Head for Biggest Quarterly Drop Since 2008 on Growth Outlook](#)

Commodities declined, heading for the biggest quarterly drop since 2008, on concern global growth is slowing after reports on sales in Germany and manufacturing in China.

The Standard & Poor's GSCI index of 24 raw materials fell 0.7 percent to 602.55 by 1:18 p.m. in London, led by sugar and nickel. The gauge is headed for a 9 percent decline this quarter, the worst since a 44 percent plunge in the three months ended Dec. 31, 2008. It gained as much as 0.6 percent earlier. Nickel fell as much as 2.3 percent and crude oil declined as much as 1.2 percent.

[Copper Rout Outpaces Analysts Focused on Production Shortages: Commodities](#)

The biggest rout in copper since the global recession drove analysts to cut their price forecasts by 16 percent in a week as mounting concern about growth eroded expectations for supply shortages.

[Shell seeks shippers for new Westward Ho crude](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Shell Pipeline LP said on Friday it was beginning the solicitation period for shippers to book firm capacity on its Westward Ho pipeline, a new pipeline project which could carry as much as 900,000 barrels per day crude oil from St. James, Louisiana to Houston.

[Iran resumes gas exports to Turkey - report](#)

(Reuters) - Iran resumed natural gas exports to Turkey on Friday after an eight-day halt requested by Turkey over technical reasons, the Iranian semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

"After Turkey announced its readiness, Iran resumed the flow of natural gas on Friday afternoon," Mehr said.

[Ankara wants better prices from Gazprom](#)

ANKARA, Turkey (UPI) -- Ankara might not renew its contract with Russian gas company Gazprom if demands for lower prices aren't meant, the Turkish energy minister said.

[Norway oil, gas find may be its third biggest](#)

The Avaldsnes/Aldous Major South oil and gas discovery in the North Sea could be the

third-biggest find made off Norway, after Sweden's Lundin Petroleum more than quadrupled its resource estimates for Avaldsnes on Friday.

The find, which could already be the biggest discovery made so far this year worldwide, may hold between 1.2 and 2.6 billion barrels of oil equivalent (boe), Lundin said.

[BP's \\$7.1B Argentina Sale to Cnooc May Collapse](#)

BP Plc (BP/)'s \$7.1 billion deal to sell Argentine crude producer Pan American Energy LLC is at risk of collapse, jeopardizing China's biggest energy acquisition this year, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

[Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and China: The Axis of Pain](#)

Pakistan and India can't get along, have fought several wars, have disputed territory, and are both in possession of nuclear weapons.

China and India are in the same boat.

Pakistan also has close ties to Saudi Arabia. The Saudis promised them 50,000 barrels of free oil a day after their nuclear bomb test in order to cope with sanctions; Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were the only two countries to recognize the Taliban as legitimate rulers of Afghanistan...

[Syrians protest against Assad, fighting erupts again](#)

AMMAN (Reuters) - Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets across Syria on Friday demanding the removal of President Bashar al-Assad as fighting continued between loyalist forces and insurgents in the center of the country, activists said.

[Iran to Syria: Save regime and preserve alliance](#)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Two weeks after Egypt's uprising swept aside Hosni Mubarak, the presidents of Iran and Syria stood side by side in Damascus in a blunt message to the Arab Spring: The Syrian regime can count on its allies in Tehran.

Seven months later — and after at least 2,700 deaths in Syria — Iran is tweaking its big brother role for Syrian President Bashar Assad. The Iranian leaders are now urging him to consider talks with protesters or risk heading down a path with few escape routes.

[Gov.: Wyoming should issue energy policy next year](#)

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said Tuesday that he expects his administration to release a state energy policy by early next year that will spell out not only what energy resources are in the state but where it wants to see future development of energy transmission corridors and other infrastructure.

[What's the future of the oil economy?](#)

According to Pulitzer-winner Daniel Yergin, the fossil-fuel tipping point is a myth. He explains what that means.

[New technologies won't erase fossil fuels, energy expert says](#)

With all the excitement over renewable energy, it might be reasonable to assume that fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas will go the way of the steam engine in the next 20 years.

Not so fast, says Daniel Yergin, author and one of the most influential voices in the world of energy.

[Energy expert Yergin: Shale gas here to stay](#)

Daniel Yergin, one of the most influential voices in the world of energy, says shale gas is here to stay.

"Shale gas has come on really fast," Yergin, an author and energy analyst, said in an interview Monday. "But people don't realize it's 30 percent of our gas production. It's not a question of whether to do it or not. It's happened."

[EPA holds hearing in Texas on natural gas drilling](#)

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Environmentalists and advocates for drilling companies faced off Thursday at a public hearing in Arlington on the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rules aimed at limiting pollution at oil and gas wells.

[DEC releases hydrofracking regulations, sets public hearings](#)

ALBANY -- The state Department of Environmental Conservation on Wednesday released a set of proposed regulations for hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale, a move that would bolster the agency's regulatory authority but has left conservation groups angered.

[A Rancher Stands Up for His Scrub Trees](#)

An eastern Montanan warns that the Keystone XL pipeline project could deprive his erosion-prone ranch of what little wind protection it has.

[A Pipeline Divides Along Old Lines: Jobs Versus the Environment](#)

GLENDIVE, Mont. — The final days of rancorous public debate over a \$7 billion oil pipeline that would snake from Canada through the midsection of the United States have taken on an unexpected urgency this week, as the economic and environmental stakes of the massive project snap into focus at a time of festering anxiety about the nation's future.

[The Peak Oil Crisis: Adaptive Technology](#)

Significant technological advances rarely make eye-catching headlines as they come from many small advances involving numerous scientific disciplines. However, every now and again it becomes clear that progress is being made.

[In praise of ... 55mph](#)

Invoking Richard Nixon as a hero of enlightened progressivism is a sign of desperate times. Yet it was none other than the 37th president who proposed a national maximum speed, and later signed the modest figure of 55mph into law. The federal edict has crumbled in the decades since. But in the face of the first oil shock – and in an age where shared wartime sacrifices for the common good were recalled more vividly than today – by banning gas-guzzling speeds, Washington put the security of supply to the collective ahead of individuals' desire to push the pedal to the metal.

[Peak driving? National study shows Seattle traffic leveling off](#)

With driving behavior pretty static -- some would say the road system around here is actually saturated -- a historical change may be underway, after tremendous growth in traffic during the latter 20th Century.

[Hybrid car sales: Lots of options, few takers](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- For all the excitement generated by every new hybrid car introduction, there is one little problem. In case you haven't noticed, hardly anyone is buying them.

The market share for hybrid cars peaked in 2009 at 2.8% of all new vehicles sold. The year after that, it fell to 2.4% and it's on track to be a little less than that this year, according to data from Edmunds.com.

[Electric Car Fantasy And The Real World](#)

Using the magic of Internet, it is possible to find swaths of vintage frothy sales talk used by promoters of Hydrogen Cars, around the years 2000-2002. Who talks about hydrogen cars, today ?

But checking the hydrogen car snakeoil talk of 10 years ago, we will find rich pickings. In fact using cut-and-paste, and inserting "electric car" for "hydrogen car", you can produce leading edge journalism on electric cars and their fabulous role in beating energy and environment (now called climate) challenges with almost no effort at all. Making things easy for promoter of electric cars today.

[Pedicabs and exercise: That's how we roll](#)

I was running on the Mall one beautiful evening a few weeks ago, when I was nearly stopped in my tracks by a big yellow sign: "We're Hiring."

In this economy, the sheer novelty of a private-sector job offer can stun you to a standstill. But when I realized that the prospective employment came from National Pedicabs, one of three companies whose drivers traverse parts of the city, I had a true epiphany.

These guys would pay me to ride a bike all day? Could this get any better?

[Utilities Give Away Power as Sun Floods Grid](#)

The 15 mile-per-hour winds that buffeted northern Germany on July 24 caused the nation's 21,600 windmills to generate so much power that utilities such as EON AG and RWE AG had to pay consumers to take it off the grid.

Rather than an anomaly, the event marked the 31st hour this year when power companies lost money on their electricity in the intraday market because of a torrent of supply from wind and solar parks. The phenomenon was unheard of five years ago.

..."You're looking at a future where on a sunny day in Germany, you'll have negative prices," Bloomberg New Energy Finance chief solar analyst Jenny Chase said about power rates in wholesale trading. "And a lot of the other markets are heading the same way."

[FBI Probing Solyndra for Possible Accounting Fraud](#)

Solyndra LLC, the solar-panel maker that filed for bankruptcy protection two months after executives extolled its prospects, is being investigated by the FBI for accounting fraud, an agency official said.

[Obama admin approves 2 solar loans worth \\$1B](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Energy Department on Wednesday approved two loan guarantees worth more than \$1 billion for solar energy projects in Nevada and Arizona, two days before the expiration date of a program that has become a rallying cry for Republican critics of the Obama administration's green energy program.

[Sunny outlook for emirates in drive for more solar energy](#)

Solar panels are spread across Abu Dhabi rooftops and Dubai officials promise to announce a "big" solar plan. Cheaper solar technology is helping to drive their progress.

[Japan lifts some nuclear evacuation advisories](#)

TOKYO (AP) — Japan lifted some evacuation advisories around the tsunami-devastated Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant Friday to reassure tens of thousands of residents who fled the worst atomic crisis since Chernobyl that it is safe to return home.

A 12-mile (20-kilometer) no-go zone remains in place around the plant, which was badly damaged by the March 11 tsunami that left nearly 20,000 people dead or missing across Japan's northeast coast.

[Tepco Faces 'Zombie' Future as Fukushima Claims Set to Surpass \\$59 Billion](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co., which faces damages of at least 4.5 trillion yen (\$59 billion) for the Fukushima nuclear disaster, may be consigned to a future as a "zombie company" requiring constant government funding.

[Argentina inaugurates third nuclear power plant](#)

President Cristina Kirchner inaugurated Argentina's third nuclear power plant in a move she says helps diversify her country's energy sources.

[Swiss plan to phase out nuclear power accelerates](#)

BERN, Switzerland (AP) — A government plan to phase out nuclear power in Switzerland has moved a lot closer to becoming reality.

Switzerland's upper house, the Council of States, approved a measure Wednesday as expected to gradually shut down the country's five nuclear reactors by 2034.

[Fate of the World: Tipping Point Launches for Windows and Mac](#)

LONDON (BUSINESS WIRE) -- The global economy is headed toward collapse, revolutions are breaking out across the Middle East, famine is ravaging Africa and the world is approaching a peak oil crisis. No, these are not headlines ripped from the news; these are the challenges facing Windows and Mac gamers in Fate of the World: Tipping Point from Red Redemption.

This next entry into Red Redemption's Fate of the World series is a hardcore strategy game that puts players in hypothetical situations within a realistic world, with threatening scenarios based on the latest science and modeling technologies covering the next two centuries. Players must balance economic, political and environmental needs in order to save the world (or destroy it).

[These are the good old days](#)

The good news is that much of the bad news is wrong, Andres Oppenheimer writes in the column linked to alongside this editorial.

“But wait, there’s more,” as the TV pitchmen say.

Here are two other problems that once may have seemed intractable but now are looking pretty “tractable” after all.

[Invest the 'Surplus' In Human Capital](#)

So, at the risk of irritating those who might be saying, "What does this have to do with Falls Church?," we think that lifting one's gaze beyond the daily grind may provide some unusual enlightenment. We would translate the Peak Oil crisis this way: remain frugal, remain flexible, and, in particular, look for ways to limit dependency on oil and gas in the operations of our lives.

[Jeremy Rifkin on San Antonio, the European Union, and the lessons learned in our push for a planetary-scale power shift](#)

In some ways the quest to transition off fossil fuels is a race for the future. A race that the United States is losing. (It wasn't the fallout of Cali's Solyndra so much as China's \$30 billion injection of domestic solar subsidies that has rattled U.S. renewables.) Yet in other ways it's a dance. To make solar and wind work as a baseload power source that can replace coal, we need some way of storing and using that power over long periods of time. To make electric cars feasible, we need to be able to plug in at work, at the grocery store, at the soccer field (and charge in a flash, not overnight). In other words, it takes advancing what visionary author, teacher, and clean-tech consultant to numerous heads of state Jeremy Rifkin calls the “Five Pillars.”

[ENERGY ARMAGEDDON - Oil Starvation in the 21st Century by Robert C. Hackney, Exposes the Next Major Global Event That Will Change our Lives Like None Before](#)

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. /PRNewswire/ -- The Great Recession and The Great Contraction are just the beginning of global economic problems that will mark the end of the oil era. Coming soon, Energy Armageddon – Oil Starvation in the 21st Century, lays out our future.

[The Microeconomics of Green Jobs](#)

In order to avoid the rather pointless debate about the definition of a “green job” I will re-frame the question to one that I believe both sides would agree is more important (at least if they were able to put aside partisan bickering):

Does a particular green policy create more jobs than it destroys?

If a policy is both green (which I define as lowering our use of resources and/or environmental impact) and is a net creator of jobs, all parties should agree that it is a good policy. Green policies which destroy jobs, on the other hand will require further analysis as to whether the environmental and health benefits outweigh the economic losses, a question which requires putting relative value on various benefits, and cannot be resolved purely by economic reasoning.

[Gassing Up: Why America's Future Job Growth Lies In Traditional Energy Industries](#)

Not surprisingly “recession-proof” fields such as health care and education expanded some 11% over the past five years. More inexplicably, given its role in detonating the Great Recession, the financial sector expanded some 10%.

But the biggest growth by far has taken place in the mining, oil and natural gas industries, where jobs expanded by 60%, creating a total of 500,000 new jobs. While that number is not as large as those generated by health care or education, the *quality* of these jobs are far higher. The average job in conventional energy pays about \$100,000 annually — about \$20,000 more than finance or professional services pay. The wages are more than twice as high as those in either health or education.

[The 7th Billion Human On Earth—Examples Of Our Future Abound](#)

Right now, Earth’s carrying capacity is thought to be somewhere in the range of 1.5 billion to 2.0 billion people with a Western standard of living. We sport 6.72 billion today and grow by 240,000 every 24 hours as we add 77 million annually. Visit [www.populationmedia.org\[31\]](http://www.populationmedia.org[31]) to see the population meter.

You might be curious about the above paragraph. In other words, we’re already out on a hazardous limb as we have overshot the world’s carrying capacity in a short 100 years.

Michael Brownlee of www.transitionus.ning.com , said, "We face a perfect storm with 'Peak Oil', 'Climate Change' and 'Economic Instability'. China and India want what we have but they won't be able to obtain it. We want to keep what we have but it won't be possible with oil's decline."

[From Dump to Paragon of Ecology: A First Peek](#)

The 2,200-acre site, which the Department of Parks and Recreation calls a "reminder of wastefulness, excess and environmental neglect," will, as it evolves into a park over the next 25 years, feature every environmentally correct practice known to landscape architecture.

There will be composting toilets and "rain gardens" to capture water for use in irrigation. Hundreds of acres of meadows will be sown with native grass and wildflower seeds. Goats will graze on invasive plant species like phragmites. And educational and cultural programs will emphasize sustainability. Four enormous waste mounds, built up over 53 years, will be transformed.

[Canada faces huge global warming costs](#)

The economic impact of climate change on Canada could climb to billions of dollars per year, according to a study published Thursday by a policy group that advises the Canadian government.

The report "Paying the Price: The Economic Impacts of Climate Change for Canada" by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy estimates that warming-related costs may rise to \$5 billion per year by 2020, and between \$21 and \$43 billion per year by 2050.

[Climate change compounds global security threat, British admiral says](#)

Stresses from global climate change are increasing the threat of wars around the world, a British admiral said Wednesday.

Royal Navy Rear Adm. Neil Morisetti told students and faculty at Georgia Institute of Technology that global climate change threats to food, water, land and energy will present substantive security challenges in regions of the world where there are already stresses.



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