



Drumbeat: April 11, 2012

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[Fuel to Burn: Now What?](#)

THE reversal of fortune in America's energy supplies in recent years holds the promise of abundant and cheaper fuel, and it could have profound effects on what people drive, domestic manufacturing and America's foreign policy.

Cheaper fuel produced domestically could reduce the cost of shipping and manufacturing, trim heating and cooling bills, improve the auto market and provide tens of thousands of new jobs.

It might also pose new environmental challenges, both predictable and unforeseen, by damping enthusiasm for clean forms of energy and derailing efforts to wean the nation from its wasteful energy habits.

But for Americans battered by rising gasoline prices, frustrated by the dependence on foreign oil, skeptical of the benefits or practicality of renewable fuels and afraid of nuclear power, the appeal of plentiful domestic oil and gas could far outweigh the costs.

[Price of natural gas falls below \\$2, a decade low](#)

U.S. natural gas futures broke below \$2 (U.S.) per million British thermal units on Wednesday for the first time in more than 10 years as extended mild weather forecasts plus worries about record-high supplies pressured prices.

It was the third straight day that the nearby contract struck a 10-year low, after one of the mildest winters on record sharply stunted demand for gas and sent prices spiraling lower.

[US Cash Products-Gulf Coast gasoline slips as refinery returns](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Gulf Coast gasoline and diesel differentials fell on Wednesday after Valero Energy Corp restarted production units at its Louisiana refinery.

Conventional M2 gasoline differentials fell 2.00 cents a gallon to 15.50 cents under May RBOB futures on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX), traders said.

[U.S. sees glut of natural gas, falling prices](#)

The soft demand for heating left the nation with more natural gas than in any March on record. Storage facilities are holding 60 percent more natural gas than usual, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The abundance has pushed prices down to just over \$2 per million British thermal units from \$14.32 in 2005. Gas closed down 7.6 cents at \$2.031 in Tuesday trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

That can mean lower utility bills for consumers. But it has sent natural gas producers scrambling to relieve their portfolios of the low-value commodity.

[Natural Gas Signals a 'Manufacturing Renaissance'](#)

AS horizontal drilling and the controversial extraction technique known as fracking have made domestically produced natural gas more available and sharply cheaper, that gas has been widely embraced by industry, electric utilities and trucking fleets.

The rapid development of shale gas technology has helped reduce energy imports and, in some cases, encouraged companies producing petrochemicals, steel, fertilizers and other products to return to the United States after relocating overseas. Natural gas exports are growing and terminals built to hold imported supplies are being repurposed for international sales.

[U.S. not 'prejudging' natural gas export plans](#)

WASHINGTON (MarketWatch) -- Low natural gas prices are helping U.S. manufacturers gain an edge over foreign competitors, but the Obama administration has to consider a lot of other factors when determining whether to approve proposals to export U.S. natural gas that are likely to raise the prices, a top Energy Department official said Wednesday.

[Energy costs raise concerns on growing economy](#)

The U.S. economy kept growing moderately in the late winter months but rising prices for gasoline and other energy products were beginning to worry producers and consumers across the country, the Federal Reserve said on Wednesday.

[Peak oil spells disaster](#)

GLOBAL oil shortages and rising fuel costs could spell disaster for Australia's agricultural industry.

That's the dire warning from Australian Association of the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (ASPO) convenor Bruce Robinson.

He said farmers needed to be more alert to so-called peak oil, estimated to occur within the next five years.

"We have a crazy situation where we operate under the assumption that fuel availability will remain the same as it is now," he said.

"Currently governments, economists, industry, investors and the community are all turning a blind eye to the probability of serious oil shortages and ongoing oil scarcity within a few years."

[Extending the Life of Oil Fields, Revitalizing Waterfloods Using Pulsed Injection](#)

Yet Deffeyes and all the other "peak oil" theorists who have emerged since Hubbert first published his claims in 1956 have failed to ponder one major influence on oil production: the advent of innovative technology. The fact is that continuing innovation in oil extraction, including the use of pulsed injection processes, offers fresh life for oil fields once believed to be depleted, making it difficult to identify a past or future "peak" in production.

[Why Buying A Refinery Could Be A Disaster For Delta Air Lines \(Even With JPMorgan's Help\)](#)

Delta Air Lines is eyeing ways to get a handle on rising jet fuel costs, and reportedly talking to ConocoPhillips about buying its refinery in Trainer, Penn.

CNBC's Kate Kelly reported Wednesday that JPMorgan Chase is now getting involved, and talking about coming on as a financing partner that would pay for the crude oil that would go into the refinery, then selling the refined products to Delta (at around cost) and to the broader market.

[Russia to increase oil exports from Ust-Luga in May](#)

(Reuters) - Russia plans to export up to 15 parcels of Urals URL-E crude blend from the new Baltic Sea port of Ust-Luga in May, a spokesman for state oil pipeline monopoly Transneft told Reuters on Wednesday, an increase on the previous month.

He said that in April Russia will ship ten cargoes from the port, up from previously planned nine.

[ONEOK Partners to build 1,300-mile pipeline from North Dakota to Cushing hub](#)

Tulsa-based natural gas transporter ONEOK Partners LP announced Monday that it plans to enter the crude oil business by building a 1,300-mile pipeline from the Northern Great Plains to the Cushing hub in central Oklahoma.

The Bakken Crude Express Pipeline project, scheduled for completion by 2015, will cost \$1.5 billion to \$1.8 billion, ONEOK said. The line will deliver light, sweet crude from the Willison Basin wells to Cushing, one of the nation's largest oil storage hubs.

[Pemex Sues ConocoPhillips, Shell in New Stolen Gas Lawsuit](#)

Pemex Exploracion Y Produccion filed a new lawsuit against six U.S. energy firms, including ConocoPhillips Co., after a judge refused to add the firms to a previous case seeking more than \$300 million for stolen Mexican natural gas condensate sold in the U.S.

[Kindergarten sues TEPCO for damages](#)

A kindergarten has sued Tokyo Electric Power Co. for 420 million yen in damages, claiming that the crisis at the utility's Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant forced the institution to halt its operations.

[Road trip! Electric vehicle-aficionados charged up to drive cross-country](#)

Organized by Men's Health magazine, the 2012 Electric Car Challenge (ECC) proposes to set a new record by making the roughly 3,000-mile trip without stopping at a single gas station.

[GM says battery blast at lab unrelated to Chevrolet Volt](#)

Two employees were injured Wednesday in a lithium battery explosion that forced the evacuation of about 80 other employees at a General Motors facility north of Detroit, the Associated Press reports.

[Real-Time Data to Reduce Electric Use](#)

WHEN Max Dunn walks through his kitchen in San Jose, Calif., he often glances at the home energy monitor that sits on the countertop. The monitor resembles a car's GPS device and connects wirelessly to the home's power meter.

The display tells him at any given moment how much electricity the house is using, and on a recent afternoon, the reading was higher than usual for that time of day. So he turned off a home computer that no one was using and the lights in an unoccupied room.

[Court: Detroit Edison shouldn't have hiked rates for smart meter program](#)

Detroit Edison never should have been allowed to hike rates by almost \$37 million to pay for its smart meter program, the Court of Appeals ruled Wednesday.

In his opinion, Judge Henry Saad wrote that evidence was lacking to show the meters were needed, or would provide a benefit to customers, and that the rate increase was "unreasonable because it was not supported by competent material and substantial evidence."

[ComEd to create outage command centers in suburbs](#)

Hoping to avoid a repeat of the chaos caused by widespread outages during last summer's storms, Commonwealth Edison announced Wednesday it will set up temporary operation centers in areas where 20 percent of customers go without power for three hours or more.

[Sidewalk Science](#)

Several decades earlier, Whyte, in his films of New York City street life, identified the street corner as an important factor in urban dynamics. Here was a zone of serendipity where people encountered one another beneath the blinking walk man, where they paused to chat before parting, where they formed small convivial islands just as pedestrian flow was surging most strongly. Even today, corners offer new uses; one often finds people talking there on their mobile devices, either held up by the signal or forgetting to move after the signal has changed. Either way, the corner is urban punctuation, a place to pause, essential to the whole civic grammar.

[Subtly Selling 'Green' to the Flat-Screen Crowd](#)

If you stare longingly at the set, a sales associate may begin quizzing you about your brand preference, price point and the size of your TV room.

Is energy efficiency important to you? That kind of question might be more standard for potential buyers of the store's front-load washers and kitchen appliances. Even so, roughly a third of the television models on display bear a small orange label with a fast-forward button on it and a message that says, "Most efficient. Engineered to be the best of Energy Star."

[Out of Africa \(and Elsewhere\): More Fossil Fuels](#)

The quickening pace of exploration in East Africa is part of a wider shake-up in the global energy industry as it scrambles to adapt to a series of major changes. Those range from the nuclear disaster in Japan last year, to slashed subsidies for alternative energy amid Europe's economic crisis, to a boom in unconventional fossil fuels like shale gas that has spread across continents.

The changes have been particularly drastic in fast-growing China, now the world's largest energy user and emitter of carbon dioxide. Since opening its economy over three decades ago, the Asian giant has become an insatiable consumer of natural resources. The country still relies predominantly on dirty coal for its electricity, but has fast-tracked oil production, as well as newer technologies like shale gas, and hydroelectric and wind power, to maintain its high levels of domestic growth.

With demand from emerging economies continuing apace, the quest for new fossil fuels is opening up unexplored territories for production. That may help to offset the effect of rising oil prices, which have reached almost record highs.

"The demand from billions of people worldwide to consume energy isn't slowing down," said Adi Karev, the global head of the oil and gas practice at the consultancy Deloitte in Hong Kong. "Companies' ability to find new energy reserves, especially in remote locations, is altering the global market."

[Oil Rises From Eight-Week Low as China Car Sales Expand](#)

Oil rose from the lowest close in almost two months in New York after a European Central Bank official signaled the lender may act to stem the spread of the region's debt crisis.

Futures gained as much as 0.7 percent as the euro strengthened against the dollar after ECB Executive Board member Benoit Coeure suggested that the bank may restart bond purchases for Spain. Crude declined yesterday after an industry report showed U.S. stockpiles rose for a third week. The Energy Department will release its inventory report later today.

[UBS Raises Oil Forecast On Likelihood Of Lower Iranian Exports](#)

LONDON – UBS AG (UBS) raised its forecast for Brent crude oil prices in 2012 to \$112 a barrel, from \$105, citing recent price strength and the increasing likelihood that sanctions on Iran will curtail its oil exports, according to a note published Wednesday.

[Gas prices, now averaging \\$3.92 a gallon, may have peaked](#)

This year's surge in gasoline prices appears over, falling short of the record highs some had feared heading into peak summer driving season.

..."By the behavior of the market, things are just running out of steam," said Patrick DeHaan, senior analyst for price tracker gasbuddy.com. "Barring any major event – refinery problems, Iran – I think prices have peaked."

[Summer gas prices will climb 6%, Energy Department forecasts](#)

Although gas prices have been easing lately, the Energy Department has predicted that U.S. motorists will be shelling out an average of 24 cents a gallon more for gasoline during the peak summer driving season, defined as April through September.

Peak prices will average \$3.95 for a gallon of regular gasoline, up 6.3 percent, or 24 cents, from last year's April-September driving season, according to the agency's monthly Short-Term Energy Outlook. That represents an increase from last month's peak season prediction of a \$3.295 average.

[Oil Traders Defy Naimi Pledge, Betting on Higher Prices](#)

Oil traders are paying scant attention to assurances from Saudi Arabia that it can raise production enough to cap crude's advance, after the commodity climbed to the highest level for any quarter since 2008.

Futures have slipped less than 4 percent since March 20, when Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said Saudi Arabia could boost output by 25 percent immediately if needed. Brent for delivery in July, when the European Union's ban against Iran comes into force, is at about \$119 a barrel, almost 20 percent above al-Naimi's \$100 target. The six most widely held options are bets on rising prices, with the most popular being \$140 in June, data from London's ICE Futures Europe exchange show.

[Record Saudi state spending likely as oil revenues surge](#)

Record oil revenues coupled with higher than expected output will boost Saudi government income to an all-time high of 1.15 trillion riyals (Dh1.12tn) this year, says Jadwa Investment.

The country's current account surplus will reach US\$154 billion (Dh565.6bn), equivalent to 25 per cent of GDP, the bank said. As a result, GDP would swell by 5.1 per cent this year, rather than the 3.1 per cent the bank had projected in December. Growth was still down from the 6.8 per cent the bank forecast for last year.

The extra revenues should help to support a raft of projects under way across the country.

[Emirates NBD raises break-even price of oil](#)

Higher spending has pushed the UAE's break-even price for oil - the price per barrel needed to balance government books - to US\$107, the highest in the GCC, according to Emirates NBD.

Only five years ago, the break-even price was assumed to be about \$30 a barrel, but spending has ballooned because of the financial crisis, rising social outlays and heavy investments in infrastructure.

[Rising oil prices cost importing countries \\$5.5 billion a day](#)

If oil this year averages \$120 per barrel (Brent crude is currently around \$122 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate is just under \$103 per barrel), the world's oil-importing countries will spend a record high of *\$5.5 billion per day* on net imports. That's \$2 trillion over the course of a year.

"The current price levels are on average higher than the awful year of 2008, and as such have the capacity to tip the global economy back into recession," Birol said.

China alone has seen its spending on oil and gas imports more than double between 2009 and 2011.

[Russia's May crude export fee seen falling](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's duty on crude oil exports for May will likely decline to between \$448.3 and \$451.6 per tonne from \$460.7 in April after oil prices weakened, calculations by the finance ministry and Reuters showed on Wednesday.

[Baghdad works hard to lift oil output](#)

Iraq's ambitious oil production targets of 12 million barrels per day (bpd) are quietly being revised, but the country is nevertheless working hard to ensure a more modest amount makes it out of the country.

In February, Nouri Al Maliki, the country's prime minister, inaugurated the first of five planned single-point mooring terminals, located on the shores of Basra.

[Japan's Cosmo Oil buys Saudi crude from Okinawa storage -sources](#)

(Reuters) - Japanese refiner Cosmo Oil has bought 200,000 kilolitres (1.26 million barrels) of Saudi Arabian crude from storage in Japan to fill its spot requirements, industry sources familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

The May-loading crude will be shipped from Saudi Aramco's leased storage in the southwestern Japanese island of Okinawa, the sources said, adding that this marks the first time that a Japanese refiner has bought a spot Saudi crude cargo from Okinawa.

[Billionaire's India Strategy Dims as Oil Deal Deadlocked](#)

Evtushenkov, with a \$7.7 billion fortune according to Forbes, wants a bigger energy company and more phone clients among India's 1.2 billion people. He pitched the

Bashneft deal as the first step in creating a venture with India's largest oil explorer to help double annual output to 60 million metric tons.

[LNG ships in big demand - for now](#)

There is a bubble in global shipbuilding - and not only is it growing every day, it is keeping the entire industry afloat.

The bubble is demand for the ships that carry the world's fastest growing energy source, liquefied natural gas, or LNG.

However, when the bubble bursts - and many analysts believe they already know the date, some three years hence - there will be many expensive ships lying idle. It is, they say, like watching an accident in slow motion.

[UK gas market undersupplied despite low demand](#)

(Reuters) - British prompt gas prices were little changed on Wednesday as Total's gas leak in the North Sea kept supplies tight, offsetting the impact of milder weather, and analysts said they expected the sideways trend to continue.

[Welcome back, old friend](#)

Good news, Ohio. Our old friend, cheap natural gas, is back. And shale formation development promises a long-term, stable supply of natural gas for the foreseeable future.

[Gas Producers' Credit Lines Shrink With Price: Corporate Canada](#)

Perpetual Energy Inc. (PMT), which owns almost a decade worth of natural gas reserves in Canada, has lost half its market value in five months as the price of the fuel has plummeted. Now it's lost part of its credit line too.

With natural gas reaching its lowest price in more than a decade this spring, Calgary-based Perpetual's credit lines were cut by 10 percent or C\$20 million (\$20 million) on March 1 by banks including the Bank of Montreal, reflecting the drop in value of the company's reserves.

[Insight - China's coalbeds spur unconventional gas supply boom](#)

(Reuters) - After more than a century ripping out its insides to supply coal to the rest of the country, the heavily mined and polluted province of Shanxi in northern China is in the midst of a gas boom.

[Wheat Seen Declining as Stockpiles Expand to Record: Commodities](#)

Wheat prices are falling for a second year as a glut of supply expands global stockpiles to an all-time high and farmers prepare to reap the third-biggest harvest on record.

[Why Rising Oil Will Support Slumping Silver Prices](#)

Solar energy becomes ever more affordable compared to oil over time due to the increase in oil costs and cost-saving advancements in solar technology. The use of silver in solar cells should help industrial demand over the next few years. About two-thirds of a troy ounce of silver are used in a typical thick film solar panel.

[Milton Friedman Proved Wrong by Aluminum Market](#)

Commodity prices have fluctuated substantially over the past few years. The controversial question is, are financial speculators to blame?

[The President, Gas Prices and the Pipeline](#)

The economic impact of rising energy prices in itself is considerable, but the psychological toll on voters is just as significant, as tens of millions of motorists are reminded by large signs on almost every street corner of the financial pain of filling their gas tanks. Obama and his political lieutenants are acutely aware that this growing frustration has the potential to complicate an election year that otherwise seems to be shifting in the incumbent's favor.

[Iran-fueled oil price spike biggest threat to economy](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- An oil price spike caused by a confrontation with Iran is now seen as the biggest threat to the U.S. economy.

That's according to nine out of 18 economists surveyed in a recent CNNMoney poll, who say rising oil prices now outweigh the risks posed by the European debt crisis, ongoing gridlock over the budget in Washington and fears of a slowdown in China.

[Iran imposes oil "counter-sanctions" on EU: TV](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iran has cut oil exports to Spain and may halt sales to Germany and Italy, Iran's English-language state television reported on Tuesday, in an apparent move to strengthen its position ahead of crucial talks with world powers later this week.

But, in an indication that Tehran's "counter-sanctions" were of little impact, Spain's

biggest refiner said it had already replaced Iranian crude with Saudi Arabian oil months ago.

[US-India ties hit rough patch over Iran](#)

Less than a year ago, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited India and declared that the relationship between the world's two largest democracies would shape the 21st century.

India and the United States are now navigating some of the rockiest waters since they began to build closer ties in the late 1990s, with Washington weighing sanctions unless New Delhi significantly cuts oil imports from Iran.

[Turkish PM says Syria violated border; Turkey assessing possible response](#)

ANKARA, Turkey - Turkey's prime minister has accused Syria of infringing its border and says his country is considering what steps to take in response, including measures "we don't want to think about."

[Envoy seeks Iran's help in Syria crisis](#)

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) – Special envoy Kofi Annan said Wednesday in Tehran that Iran could help solve the crisis in Syria, where activists reported fresh violence a day before an international cease-fire is supposed to take effect.

[Russia Under Pressure to Get Tougher on Its Ally Syria](#)

Pressure mounted on Russia to back stronger action against its ally Syria after President Bashar al-Assad failed to meet a United Nations cease-fire deadline.

"The Russians have continuously said they want to avoid civil war, they want to avoid a regional conflict," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said yesterday at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. "But their refusal to join with us in some sort of constructive action is keeping Assad in power, well armed, able to ignore the demands of his own people, of his region and the world."

[Russian Gazprom Neft increases oil pledge to Czechs](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Gazprom Neft has nearly tripled its planned volume of crude destined for the Czech Republic this month, but the total in confirmed shipments from Russian oil companies still falls short of ensuring the country gets sufficient supplies.

The increase in promised barrels came after reports that Russia had slashed oil deliveries to the former Soviet satellite as it seeks to divert pipeline supplies to its own ports.

[WikiLeaks: China looks elsewhere for energy](#)

New York, NY - Though the so-called "cable gate" scandal has largely vanished from public view, revelations from classified US State Department correspondence continue to illuminate present day geopolitical dilemmas. Take, for example, mounting tensions in the Middle East and, specifically, the Persian Gulf. China, whose energy needs have grown by leaps and bounds, relies extensively on Iranian oil and views unfolding friction between the Islamic Republic and its enemies with increasing concern. In an effort to diversify its energy portfolio and avoid the pitfalls of the Gulf, China has sought out alternative sources of oil.

According to secret cables published by whistle-blowing outfit WikiLeaks, China is pursuing a "strategy of securing direct oil contracts around the world to reduce [its] reliance on oil shipped from and through hotspots such as the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Malacca".

Though China's big push into Africa and specifically Sudan has received a decent amount of media scrutiny, the Asian Tiger's presence in South America has been largely overlooked.

[China reaffirms position on oil, gas exploitation](#)

China on Tuesday reiterated its position opposing any other country that exploits oil and gas resources in Chinese maritime areas without permission of the Chinese government.

"China has always opposed the exploration and exploitation of ocean oil and gas resources in Chinese sea territories without our permission. We have made representations and taken measures to stop these illegal activities," Deng Zhonghua, director general of the department of boundary and ocean affairs with the Foreign Ministry, said in a Web chat hosted by the website of People's Daily.

[Eni, Cnooc Ink New South China Sea Exploration, Production Pact](#)

BEIJING – Cnooc Ltd. said Wednesday that its parent company, China National Offshore Oil Corp., has signed a production sharing contract with Italian company Eni China B.V., a unit of Eni SpA, for deepwater Block 30/27 in the South China Sea.

[EDF Requests Extraordinary Edison Board Meeting- Sources](#)

PARIS/ROME -(Dow Jones)- French power group Electricite de France SA has

requested an extraordinary meeting of Edison SpA's board for Monday, to discuss the Italian utility's financing needs and a potential capital increase, people familiar with the situation said.

[The Economic Implications Of Peak Oil](#)

Something happened from 2004 and onward. These two charts below, one of the food price index and the other of regular gasoline price, speak volumes as to the implications of this peak of world liquid fuel production.

[Peak oil, economic growth and the big lie](#)

The 'Big Lie' of our economic system is that anyone can get rich. Most of the world's population will not see wealth in their lifetimes, either because of the circumstances of their birth, or because they chose the wrong career path, did not work or study hard enough or did not think it so important to pursue personal monetary gain.

However we all take comfort from the idea that it might be possible to improve our lot or even that, if we make the right choices, we could become rich. Most of us believe that anyone can become wealthy if they truly work hard enough for it. But in a world where finite resources are passing their peak extraction rates this is no longer true: if it ever was.

[The Return of The Limits to Growth](#)

Recently, the web has been abuzz over an MIT study predicting 'global economic collapse' by 2030. Ugo Bardi, who recently published the book *The Limits to Growth Revisited*, shares his views on this study and its implications.

[Pemex Can't Add ConocoPhillips, Shell to Lawsuit Over Stolen Gas](#)

Pemex Exploracion Y Produccion can't sue six U.S. energy firms including ConocoPhillips Co. as part of a lawsuit seeking more than \$300 million for Mexican natural gas condensate allegedly stolen by bandits and sold in the U.S., a federal judge ruled.

[For Job Seekers, a Fracking Fair](#)

Undeterred by New York State's delays in deciding whether to allow fracking for natural gas, Broome County Community College, a business group and a coalition of landowners are holding a "career and education expo" on Wednesday for residents interested in learning about jobs in the gas industry.

[Nuclear Power's Death Somewhat Exaggerated](#)

NUCLEAR energy is going through an odd patch. It refuses to die, but it does not prosper.

This is how modest the nuclear industry's prospects now look: Senator Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican who has called for building 100 reactors in the next few years, told a conference of industry specialists in late March that the long-ballyhooed "nuclear renaissance" did not really exist anymore. Now, he said, it is an "awakening to the awareness of nuclear."

But it is an awakening with a price of \$30 billion or more.

[U.S. fuel economy tops 24 mpg for first time](#)

The fuel economy of the average new vehicle sold in the United States has topped 24 miles per gallon for the first time ever, according to researchers at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.

[Hybrid owners unlikely to buy another one, study shows](#)

Despite previous sales surges tied to past petroleum price hikes the U.S. hybrid vehicle market hasn't been able to maintain its momentum and the Polk study apparently explains why. After living with the high-mileage technology, nearly two of three hybrid owners wind up returning to a more conventional vehicle when it's time to trade in.

[EDF Study Draws Wrong Conclusions about Natural Gas Vehicles, According to NGV America](#)

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Yesterday, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) released a study titled "Greater Focus Needed on Methane Leakage from Natural Gas Infrastructure." One of the study's conclusions is that "a shift to compressed natural gas vehicles from gasoline or diesel vehicles leads to greater radiative forcing of the climate for 80 or 280 yr, respectively, before beginning to produce benefits." Because of significant uncertainty in the data on which the study is based and significant uncertainty in the assumptions about climate relationships in the study's model, there is no reason to believe that EDF's conclusion is accurate. As a result, policy makers would be mistaken to withhold their support for natural gas vehicles based on EDF's conclusions, according to NGV America.

[The surprising reason for record new car prices](#)

Buyers are paying record average prices for new cars. But it's not gouging by automakers. Rather, more customers are ordering all the frills.

[The Crisis in American Walking](#)

Simply by going out for a walk, I had become a strange being, studied by engineers, inhabiting environments whose physical features are determined by a rulebook-enshrined average 3 foot-per-second walking speed, my rights codified by signs. (Why not just write: “Stop for People”?) On those same signs in Savannah were often attached *additional* signs, advising drivers not to give to panhandlers (and to call 911 if physically intimidated), subtly equating walking with being exposed to an urban menace — or perhaps *being* the menace. Having taken all this information in, we would gingerly step into the marked crosswalk, that declaration of rights in paint, and try to gauge whether approaching vehicles would yield. They typically did not. Even in one of America’s most “pedestrian-friendly” cities — a seemingly innocent phrase that itself suddenly seemed strange to me — one was always in danger of being relegated to a footnote.

Which is what walking in America has become: An act dwelling in the margins, an almost hidden narrative running beneath the main vehicular text. Indeed, the semantics of the term *pedestrian* would be a mere curiosity, but for one fact: America is a country that has forgotten how to walk. Witness, for example, the existence of “Everybody Walk!,” the “Campaign to Get America Walking” (one of a number of such initiatives). While its aims are entirely legitimate, its motives no doubt earnest, the idea that that we, this species that first hoisted itself into the world of bipedalism nearly 4 million years ago—for reasons that are still debated—should now need “walking tips,” have to make “walking plans” or use a “mobile app” to “discover” walking trails near us or build our “walking histories,” strikes me as a world-historical tragedy.

[America's greenest cities](#)

To determine the greenest cities, we tallied the results from three survey categories: cleanliness, pedestrian-friendliness and public transit, and great public parks, which offset that urban asphalt and improve air quality. The high-ranking cities support other green initiatives that benefit travelers as well as locals: in Denver, the Brown Palace Hotel uses water from its own artesian well. Minneapolis offers cheap, easy-access bike rentals.

[Lush Walls Rise to Fight a Blanket of Pollution](#)

MEXICO CITY — “We must cultivate our garden,” Voltaire famously wrote at the end of “Candide,” but even he could not have imagined this: a towering arch of 50,000 plants rising over a traffic-clogged avenue in a metropolis once called “Mexsicko City” because of its pollution.

The vertical garden aims to scrub away both the filth and the image. One of three eco-sculptures installed across the city by a nonprofit called VerdMX, the arch is both art and oxygenator. It catches the eye. And it also helps clean the air.

[Coaxing American Chestnuts Back to Appalachia](#)

Old swaths of Appalachian forest land left barren by decades of coal mining may find their past is their future, if efforts to restore the American chestnut tree in reclaimed coal fields are successful.

[Businesses are missing out on easy ways to save on energy bills](#)

Nearly half (47%) of all businesses are overlooking simple opportunities to save thousands on their energy bills, despite more than two-thirds (68%) prioritising operational efficiencies in 2012, according to new research by British Gas.

The businesses that are focusing on driving efficiencies from their energy spend are seeing savings of up to 20% on their bills through simple efficiency steps such as installing a smart meter, according to the study.

[£540m insulation scheme targets fuel poor households](#)

Deputy prime minister Nick Clegg has today announced a series of measures designed to help alleviate fuel poverty and drive demand for insulation and other energy efficiency improvements.

[Freeing Kilowatt-Hours From a Jail](#)

Constellation Energy keeps a list of buildings that would benefit from energy efficiency improvements, and it has identified an unusual candidate near the top: prisons.

Their lights, heat and air-conditioning run 24 hours a day.

[Rousseff Roils Amazon as Brazil Hydropower Makes People Homeless](#)

“This dam has made it impossible to live a normal life,” he says. The dam -- called Belo Monte, which means Beautiful Hill in Portuguese -- will divert the Xingu, depriving the tribe of the waterway it needs to survive, Arara says. “So much sacrifice,” he says. “And for what?”

Dilma Rousseff, a Workers’ Party member who won Brazil’s presidency in 2010, says that the country needs more electricity and that the best way to get it is by damming rivers in the Amazon. Brazil’s gross domestic product grew 51 percent from 2002 to 2011.

[Dong Energy to Spend \\$794 Million Turning Fossil Plants to Wood](#)

Dong Energy A/S, Denmark's state- controlled utility, plans to invest about 500 million pounds (\$795 million) to convert three of its coal- and gas-fired power stations to generate heat and electricity from wood pellets.

[Wind Power Seen Surging as Custom Barges Cut Set-up Costs](#)

Offshore wind-power producers from Dong Energy A/S to RWE AG are building custom ships at record rates to reduce the cost of the technology that's three times as pricey as electricity from coal plants.

As many as 20 vessels, some with movable legs that reach the seafloor, will come onto the market in the next few years, reducing chartering costs of as much as 200,000 euros (\$261,000) a day, said Marc Seidel, an offshore engineer at Suzlon Energy Ltd., which supplies turbines to Germany's RWE.

[China Sets Waste-to-Power Price Double That of Coal-Fired Plants](#)

China, the biggest carbon emitter, set a price for electricity generated from waste-to-energy plants that's double that paid to coal-fired projects to encourage renewable-energy development.

[Spot Polysilicon Drops 4.1% to \\$24.70, PV Insights Says](#)

The spot price of solar-grade polysilicon, the main raw material for photovoltaic panels, tumbled for a sixth straight week, according to a survey by PV Insights.

Polysilicon dropped 4.1 percent to \$24.70 a kilogram from the previous week, accelerating from a 2.1 percent decline over the previous seven days, the research company said on its website. Solar panels fell 1.7 percent to 87 U.S. cents a watt.

[Drilling fees pay for new national forest lands](#)

Offshore drilling fees are financing the purchase of \$41.6 million worth of new national forest lands in 15 states.

[Doomsday shelters line Kansas missile silo](#)

SALINA, Kansas — Tucked deep beneath the Kansas prairie, luxury condos are being built into the shaft of an abandoned missile silo to service anxious -- and wealthy -- people preparing for doomsday.

So far, four buyers have plopped down a total of about \$7 million for havens to flee to when disaster happens or the end is nigh. And developer Larry Hall has options to

retro-fit three more Cold War-era silos when this one fills up.

[Climate change won't boost plant performance](#)

Plants may thrive in the initial stages of global warming - but not for long. A study from Northern Arizona University shows that any improvements in growth caused by climate change disappear within ten years.

"We were really surprised by the pattern, where the initial boost in growth just went away," says doctoral student Zhuoting Wu. "As the ecosystems adjust, the responses changed."



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