



Drumbeat: September 29, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 29, 2012 - 9:45am

[U.S. Pumps Most Oil Since 1997 as Energy Independence Grows](#)

U.S. oil production surged last week to the highest level since January 1997, reducing the country's dependence on imported fuels as new technology unlocks crude trapped in shale formations.

Crude output rose by 3.7 percent to 6.509 million barrels a day in the week ended Sept. 21, the Energy Department reported today. America met 83 percent of its energy needs in the first six months of the year, department data show. If the trend continues through 2012, it will be the highest level of self-sufficiency since 1991. Imports have declined 3.2 percent from the same period a year earlier.

[Oil Caps Biggest Quartely Gain This Year](#)

Oil capped the biggest quarterly increase this year on concern that escalating Middle East tension will disrupt supplies and as gasoline surged to a five-month high.

Crude gained 0.4 percent as the White House said President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are in "full agreement" on preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. Gasoline rose on worries supplies are tightening. Prices rebounded after falling more than \$10 to \$89.98 on Sept. 26 from an intraday high above \$100 on Sept. 14.

[Natural Gas Pipelines to Expand U.S. Supply Glut: Energy Markets](#)

Natural gas pipelines coming into service by year end may boost deliveries from the Marcellus shale deposit in the U.S. Northeast by 30 percent, extending a supply glut that helped send prices to decade lows.

As much as 2 billion cubic feet of gas a day are set to flow from the lines in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, bound for markets along the Eastern Seaboard, based on government and pipeline-company projections. About 1,000 Marcellus shale wells sit uncompleted, mainly because of a lack of pipeline infrastructure, according to the Energy Department.

[China mulls spur shale gas exploitation](#)

BEIJING -- China's natural resource watchdog is considering preferential fiscal and tax policies to spur the country's shale gas exploitation as part of efforts to optimize the country's energy consumption structure.

[Petrobras oil output falls to 22-month low in August](#)

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters) - Petrobras' oil and natural gas output fell to its lowest level in 22 months in August, slipping 0.3 percent from July to an average 2.54 million barrels a day from fields in Brazil and abroad, the company said in a statement on Friday.

Crude oil output in Brazil, the company's principal source of production, fell to an average of 2.07 million barrels a day in the month, its lowest in three and a half years.

[CFTC Rule Restraining Speculation Rejected by U.S. Judge](#)

The U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission rule restraining speculation was rejected by a federal judge, handing a victory to two Wall Street groups that challenged the constraints.

U.S. District Judge Robert Wilkins in Washington today ruled that the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act is unclear as to whether the agency was ordered by Congress to cap the number of contracts a trader can have in oil, natural gas and other commodities without first assessing whether the rule was necessary and appropriate.

[Hackers infiltrate Calgary-based technology firm](#)

A leading international expert on computer hacking says cyber-attacks are increasingly targeting the heart of Canada's infrastructure, including oil pipelines and major public utilities.

CBC News has confirmed a recent cyber-attack successfully breached a Calgary-based supplier of control systems for electrical power grids, municipal water systems, public transit operations, and most of Canada's major oil and gas pipelines.

[Nigeria to Increase Share of Offshore Oil Profits, Minister Says](#)

Nigeria, Africa's top oil producer, plans to increase its share of offshore oil profits because of "prevailing realities" in the industry, Petroleum Minister Diezani Alison-Madueke said.

The Petroleum Industry Bill, which was sent to Parliament in July, proposes to boost

the government's share to 73 percent from 61 percent, Alison-Madueke said today in an e-mailed statement from the capital, Abuja.

[Iran to export gas to Iraq by mid-2013, official says](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iran expects to begin exporting natural gas to neighbouring Iraq by the summer of 2013, an Iranian official was quoted as saying on Saturday.

Iran has completed more than 25 percent of a pipeline to Iraq that could carry up to 25 million cubic metres per day of its natural gas to Iraq, Javad Owji, managing director of the National Iranian Gas Co., was quoted as saying by the Mehr news agency.

[China delivers first of new VLCCs to Iran](#)

A Chinese shipyard has delivered the first of 12 supertankers to Iran, giving Tehran extra capacity to transport its oil to Asia, but it is unclear if the ship has the permits necessary to call at global ports, Business Recorder reported.

[Venezuela signs new oil deals with Russia](#)

Caracas (IANS/EFE) Venezuela and Russia have signed a new round of energy-cooperation deals, including an agreement to create a new joint venture between Venezuelan state oil firm PDVSA and Russia's Rosneft.

[Total to bid for more Uganda exploration blocks](#)

KAMPALA (Reuters) - French oil firm Total SA will be bidding for more exploration blocks in Uganda when the country conducts a new licensing round, a company executive said on Friday.

[US to Iran: Stop shipping arms to Syria](#)

(CNN) -- The United States warned Iran to stop providing arms to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad even as it announced millions of dollars in non-lethal support for the opposition attempting to oust the government.

[U.S. Intelligence Finds Organized Terrorist Attack in Libya](#)

The intelligence community has shifted from its initial judgment that the attack that killed U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans began as a spontaneous reaction during protests against an anti-Islam film made in the U.S.,

according to a statement issued yesterday. Republicans have criticized President Barack Obama's administration for providing that assessment in the days after the Sept. 11 attack.

"As we learned more about the attack, we revised our initial assessment to reflect new information indicating that it was a deliberate and organized terrorist attack carried out by extremists," Shawn Turner, director of public affairs for the Director of National Intelligence, said in an e-mailed statement.

[Gas Drilling Jitters Unsettle Catskills Sales](#)

Coveted for its pristine water, pastoral landscapes and relative proximity to New York City, the Catskills region has long been second-home territory for urbanites. But brokers say many listings are languishing — and not just because of the lag in the nation's economic recovery. The prospect that New York State will open the region to hydraulic fracturing, a controversial gas drilling process known informally as fracking, has spooked potential buyers.

[Chevron Pays Fine Over Brazil Oil Spill](#)

SAO PAULO—Chevron Corp. has paid a multimillion-dollar fine for several "irregularities" in connection with last year's oil spill off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's National Petroleum Agency said.

[Brazil's Petrobras wants ban on oil driller Transocean lifted](#)

Brazil's Petrobras on Friday asked courts to lift a ban on operations of rig owner Transocean in connection with a major ocean oil spill last year.

[Environmentalists oppose PG&E plans for undersea air blasts](#)

PG&E plans to use underwater 'air cannons' emitting 250-decibel blasts every 15 seconds for 12 straight days to map earthquake fault zones near Diablo Canyon nuclear plant.

[Oil industry calls for environmental groups to be disbanded](#)

Canada's energy industry is calling for government to disband two organizations involved in monitoring and mitigating the environmental impact of the oil sands.

But, in a surprising twist, a leading environmental group is largely backing the call for change by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, which laid out its proposal in a Sept. 7 letter to federal environment minister Peter Kent and Alberta environment and sustainable resource development minister Diana McQueen.

[Gas-tax equivalent coming for electric cars?](#)

Pennsylvania, which faces a crucial shortage in road- and bridge-repair revenue, has a mechanism in place to collect a gas-tax equivalent from those driving Leafs and Volts, but as yet no definitive means of collecting it. Owners recharge the vehicles using either a standard household outlet, or by having a dedicated higher-voltage line installed that can slash charging times by two-thirds. The problem is, there's no way to segregate the juice used to "fill up" the car from that used to heat the house and run the refrigerator. A separate electrical meter could be installed, but there's no requirement for owners to do that.

[California Issues 10,000th Rebate for Zero-Emissions Incentive Program](#)

Start undressing California's Clean Vehicle Rebate Project, a program intended to spur the sales and leases of zero-emission vehicles, and front-page topics come into view — reduction of greenhouse gases and job creation chief among them. So when the program recorded its 10,000th rebate earlier this month, it merited some pomp.

[Georgia Finally Getting Some Solar Energy](#)

Just days after an aspiring utility filed plans to develop 2 gigawatts (GW) of solar in the state, Georgia Power is proposing to triple its use of solar electricity.

The utility, which has thus far shown little if any interest in renewable energy, usually pushes for coal and nuclear. Georgia is regularly ranked among the top 10 states for solar resources (such as available sunlight).

[Some drivers not sitting idly by](#)

This summer the village installed 160 idle-free signs at District 25, District 21 and two District 214 schools, as well as at area parks, village facilities and in front of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library and in its drive-through, according to village manager Bill Dixon. The program intends to reduce automobile carbon emissions and improve air quality, though Dixon said the village was not an official member of the national Cool Cities movement, whose slogan is "solving global warming one city at a time."

"What do you do in the winter when you have a 2-year-old in the car, freeze?" asks Gilda Orta, who has second- and fourth-graders at Dryden Elementary School in Arlington Heights and sometimes waits in line up to 20 minutes before the 3:35 p.m. bell just to get a good spot outside the school. "We've been turning (the car off) and rolling down the windows, and in the winter I guess we'll put our coats on."

[Japan: Oil, coal, natural gas subject to green tax from Oct. 1](#)

The government will introduce an environmental tax in October, a move likely to trigger broad-based price hikes on products such as electricity and plastic.

The tax, to be imposed on oil, coal, natural gas and other fossil fuels, is designed to help curb emissions of carbon dioxide, a key heat-trapping gas that causes global warming.

[Green deal: insulate your home from rising energy bills](#)

If you are fed-up with living in a cold house or paying huge heating bills, and can't afford expensive home improvements, could the government's long-awaited green deal help? Unveiled in 2010, and promoted with the promise that "every British home will be able to install energy-saving technologies such as insulation at no upfront cost", this much talked-about scheme finally kicks off on Monday.

[Paper or Plastic? Some Communities Say Neither](#)

Bill Hoffman, owner of Aptos Jewelers in Aptos, Calif., sells bracelets, rings and pendants for thousands of dollars each. He balks at the notion of charging customers an extra 10 cents for a shopping bag, but Mr. Hoffman has no choice. It is the law.

Not just in Santa Cruz County, where Aptos is, but similar rules apply in more than two dozen California cities. Grocery stores, pharmacies and sometimes other retailers are no longer allowed to use plastic shopping bags and must charge customers for paper ones. Fees typically are 5 or 10 cents, and are aimed at nudging people to carry reusable bags when they shop.

[Asian carp DNA found in Lake Erie, raising concerns](#)

Officials with Michigan and Ohio natural resources departments announced Tuesday that Asian carp DNA had been found in three water samples collected from Lake Erie's Maumee Bay near Toledo, Ohio.

The results raise concerns whether the Asian carp may have invaded Lake Erie.

[Not So Hot](#)

The new climate-change study getting all the headlines is deliberately misleading. Too bad so many in the media got fooled.

[Clinton Urged to Support 'Robin Hood' Tax to Fund Climate](#)

Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace joined 61 other charities, unions and campaign groups to urge U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to support a financial transaction tax to help fund the fight against climate change.

A transaction levy, or “Robin Hood Tax,” could help fund \$100 billion of climate change aid that developed countries have pledged by 2020, and extend to health care and education as well, the 63 groups said in a letter yesterday to Clinton that was e-mailed today by Friends of the Earth.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).