



## Drumbeat: December 22, 2012

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 22, 2012 - 12:16pm

### [Wind Power Generation Beating Natural Gas in U.S. in 2012](#)

Wind-turbine installations are poised to exceed natural gas-fueled power plants in the U.S. for the first time this year as developers race to complete projects before a renewable energy tax credit expires.

New wind capacity reached 6,519 megawatts by Nov. 30, beating the 6,335 megawatts of gas additions and more than double those of coal, according to data from Ventyx Inc., which is owned by the Swiss power transmission equipment maker ABB Ltd. The company plans to release final tallies in January.

### [Lower gas prices greet holiday travelers](#)

People hitting the highways for the holidays will find a nice present when they pull up to the pumps to fill their tanks: lower gasoline prices.

Gasoline prices have been slowly declining in recent weeks, so much so that at some stations in the Iowa Quad-Cities, the price is sitting at \$2.99 a gallon.

### [Gulf Gasoline at 2-Week High on Motiva Port Arthur Outage](#)

Gasoline strengthened on the Gulf Coast, reaching the the highest level versus futures in more than two weeks, after a power failure shut units at Motiva Enterprises LLC's Port Arthur oil refinery in Texas.

Most process units at the refinery were shut yesterday as power and steam were lost during a storm, said Kimberly Windon, a Motiva spokeswoman in Houston. While power has been restored, "it is too early to tell when the units will be restarted, as this will be done only when it is safe to do so," Windon said in an e-mail.

### [Shell's Ormen Lange gas field halted due to glitch](#)

(Reuters) - Gas production at Royal Dutch Shell's giant Ormen Lange gas field in Norway has been disrupted and the Nyhamna processing plant has been shut down, the

Nordic power bourse and gas system operator Gassco said on Saturday.

### [Total Buys North Sea Forties Crude; Vitol Fails to Sell Urals](#)

Total SA bought a cargo of North Sea Forties crude for less than a deal yesterday. Vitol Group failed to sell two lots of Russian Urals grade.

PT Pertamina, Indonesia's state-owned oil company, is seeking to buy low-sulfur crude for delivery during March to its Balikpapan and Cilacap refineries, according to a document obtained by Bloomberg News.

### [U.S. Oil Rigs Decline by Most Since 1992 in Baker Hughes Count](#)

Oil drilling rigs in the U.S. dropped by the most in a single week in 20 years, oil-services company Baker Hughes Inc. (BHI) said.

Oil rigs dropped by 41 to 1,340, the lowest level since April. They dropped by 44 in the week of Dec. 18, 1992. It was the fifth straight decline.

### [Opec has to decide on new secretary general, Iraqi oil chief says](#)

The Opec has to agree on a new leader for the group by May and a committee will review the selection criteria in the next few months, the Iraqi oil minister said today.

"In the next few months there will be a debate over the new secretary general ... and we are supposed to pick a new leader by May when Opec meets," Abdul Kareem Luaiby said.

### [Saudi Will Stick to OPEC Ceiling But Will Meet all Demand Requests](#)

CAIRO--Top oil producer Saudi Arabia will adhere to the 30 million barrels-a-day production ceiling maintained earlier this month by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, but will meet any customer demand for additional crude, the country's Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said Friday.

"There are customers that will come to every producer and ask for a volume, today, we will honor their requests," Mr. Naimi told reporters in a briefing in Cairo.

### [Kuwait's Oil Min. underscores significance of OAPEC's recommendations](#)

CAIRO (KUNA) -- Kuwaiti Oil Minister Hani Hussein underscored here on Saturday importance of resolutions and recommendations issued by the Organization of Arab

Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), which would strengthen the Organization's role in various fields.

### [Pertamina will spend \\$6.77b to drive 2013 production](#)

Indonesia's state energy firm PT Pertamina has assigned US\$6.77 billion in investment next year to finance upstream and downstream projects and increase production, as well as strengthening the nation's energy infrastructure.

The investment value was included in Pertamina's 2013 budget and work plan following the general shareholders meeting in Jakarta on Thursday.

### [Mexico sets oil hedge at \\$86 per barrel for 2013](#)

MEXICO CITY: Mexican oil export revenue will be hedged at an average price of \$86 per barrel in 2013, the country's Finance Ministry announced in a statement late Friday.

### [UAE oil output in November falls marginally – IEA](#)

Abu Dhabi: The UAE, on average, produced 2.65 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in November, 0.75 per cent lower than its output in October, latest data from the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) showed.

### [Iraqi oil output hits 3.2m b/d, targets 4m for 2014](#)

CAIRO (Reuters) - Iraq's oil production has exceeded 3.2 million barrels a day (b/d) so far this month and it hopes to hit capacity of 4 million b/d in 2014, its Oil Minister Abdul Kareem Luaibi said on Saturday.

### [Iraq says to withhold payments for Kurdish oil](#)

(Reuters) - Iraq will not pay oil companies operating in Kurdistan because the autonomous region has failed to export the volume of crude it pledged, a spokesman for Hussain al-Shahristani, Iraq's deputy prime minister for energy, said on Friday.

The comments ramp up a standoff between Baghdad and the region, which have been locked in a long-running spat over land and petroleum rights.

### [Iran to invest \\$122 billion in oil industry](#)

Azerbaijan, Baku - Some 150 trillion rials (\$122 billion) will be invested in Iran's refineries by the end of the Fifth Five-Year Economic Development Plan (March 2016), deputy Iranian oil minister said on Friday.

The needed money will be financed by foreign and domestic investors, the Fars News Agency quoted Alireza Zeighami as saying.

### [Iran gets a fresh batch of sanctions](#)

The toughest EU measures yet, they include bans on financial transactions, sales to Iran of shipping equipment and steel, and imports of Iranian natural gas, adding to earlier bans, including on the OPEC producer's oil.

### [Egypt plans tender for gas imports, says minister](#)

CAIRO (Reuters) - Egypt plans to issue a tender to import gas in three to four weeks, and the shipments could start in the summer to help meet growing demand for the fuel, the oil minister said on Saturday.

Egypt, itself a gas producer and exporter, said in October it had agreed to import gas from Algeria and was in talks with Qatar for a similar deal.

### [Egyptians vote on divisive new constitution](#)

(CNN) -- Across the river from Cairo, in its twin city of Giza, voters stood in line for blocks Saturday in the second round of balloting on the country's controversial draft constitution.

At one women-only polling station, lines snaked for about a kilometer.

### [Omanis hope first local vote is stepping stone towards change](#)

MUSCAT (Reuters) - Hoping for jobs and democratic change, voters in Oman cast ballots in their first municipal election on Saturday, a sign of modest reform in response to protests inspired by the Arab Spring.

The small Gulf oil producer, ruled since 1970 by Sultan Qaboos, sits opposite Iran on the Strait of Hormuz, the conduit for nearly a fifth of globally traded petroleum.

### [Kidnappers free four South Koreans in Nigeria](#)

(Reuters) - Four South Koreans and a Nigerian who were abducted earlier this week in

the oil-producing Niger Delta have been released, police said on Saturday.

### [Assad Refuses to Quit, Won't Get Moscow Asylum, Russia Says](#)

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad refuses to step down and won't be offered asylum in Moscow to help persuade him, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

"Assad has no intention of quitting," Lavrov told reporters last night on his plane back to Moscow after taking part in a meeting between Russia and the European Union in Brussels. "He refuses these proposals, whatever we might like. Irrespective of who tells him, Russia, China or someone else."

### [Kuwait buys \\$308m China gas stake from BP](#)

Oil giant BP has announced that it has agreed the sale of its 34.3 percent interest in the Yacheng gas field in the South China Sea to Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) for \$308m.

### [Norway's Statoil buys US shale gas land](#)

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Norwegian energy company Statoil ASA says it has bought 70,000 acres of land rich in gas and liquid gas in West Virginia and Ohio.

The \$590 million deal expands the company's assets in the Marcellus Shale gas deposits in the Appalachian region.

### [Gazprom breathes new life into Shtokman LNG](#)

MOSCOW (UPI) -- Russian energy company Gazprom announced that engineering surveys are under way for development of LNG facilities at the Shtokman field in northern Russia.

Gazprom announced that engineering surveys for parts of the Shtokman project are in the final stage. Preparation for front-end engineering and design document should be released for a national review by next year, the company stated.

### [UK Dash for Shale Natural Gas - A Faustian Bargain](#)

The UK is set to embark on its second dash for gas. The first, beginning in the early 1990s, occurred when gas was first permitted to be used for power generation. Prior to that it had been considered a premium fuel too valuable to be used in this way. The regulatory change initiated a substantial building programme for combined cycle gas

plants, fuelled by North Sea gas. Very quickly gas generation became a major component of baseload in the UK, despite warnings that North Sea gas was a temporary bonus and its depletion would leave a structural dependency on Russian gas.

### [BP Gulf Oil Spill Judge Approves \\$7.8 Billion Settlement](#)

BP Plc and the lead lawyers representing victims of the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill won approval of the economic and environmental loss portion of a proposed \$7.8 billion partial settlement of claims.

### [Tanker Carrying Bakken Oil to Canadian Refinery Runs Aground](#)

An oil tanker carrying Bakken crude to Irving Oil Corp.'s refinery in Canada from Albany, New York, ran aground yesterday in the Hudson River, delaying the first of what is expected to be many voyages on the route.

### [A Progress Report on Fracking and Water Safety](#)

The federal Environmental Protection Agency released a progress report on Friday about its national study of the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water supplies. In nearly 200 pages, the agency lays out data, case studies and a summary of research into issues like spills and the treatment and disposal of wastewater.

### [Energy in 2013 \(part 2\)](#) (video)

With a population of seven billion, we need more energy but we're letting off too much steam. As the polar ice caps melt and until renewable energies become truly viable, François Picard's panel argues over whether shale gas will save or sink the planet.

### [What's behind the natural gas boom in the US?](#)

The natural gas industry is growing rapidly in the US. But behind the boom is a global tangle of interests in which, for example, Germany's move to abandon nuclear power has effects on rural Americans.

### [Construction of World's First Demonstration High-Temperature Nuclear Reactor Begins in China](#)

Last week, China's National Nuclear Safety Administration granted a permit for the Shandong province modular nuclear power plant project to proceed to construction. This will be the world's first commercial demonstration plant for a high-temperature gas-cooled reactor (HTGR) using pebble bed technology, which technology was developed in Germany. The German 300-MW demo plant at the Juelich nuclear research center

operated from 1985-1988, and a similar U.S. HTGR project at Fort St. Vrain in Colorado was built. Both were discontinued during the heyday of anti-nuclear political sabotage in the 1980s. South Africa, the only other nation to work on pebble bed technology, cancelled its program in 2010.

### [Test Drive: Jetta hybrid is a ripsnorting blast](#)

Diesel-devoted Volkswagen is rolling into the market with a gasoline-electric hybrid — and makes a fine job of it.

### [Outside the Box: Eight No-Wrap Gift Ideas](#)

A growing number of companies are making it easier to give the gift of local experiences rather than things.

### [A Biodiversity Map, Version 2.0](#)

Tigers and pandas live in Asia, kangaroos and koalas in Australia and polar bears and snowy owls in the Arctic. The world can be divided into regions based upon the unique types of animals that live there. Or so the thinking went when Alfred Russel Wallace published the scientific world's first global biodiversity map in 1876.

More than a century has come and gone since Wallace released this groundbreaking work, yet his map largely still serves as a cornerstone for understanding modern distributions of biodiversity. An updated version was due, a group of researchers decided.

### [The green buildings of the next apocalypse](#)

Some designers have responded with a bunker mentality, building homes that are partially underground, as was documented masterfully by TreeHugger. Others went the survivalist route, such as the Midwest-based Vivos, offering shelters that are a throwback to the atomic days of "Dr. Strangelove."

Recent studies, however, suggest that many passive green building strategies—in addition to reducing energy costs and slowing the drain on natural resources—can also soften the impact of natural disasters and make life more healthy and bearable for survivors during the recovery period.

### [Industry Wins Delay of Costly Clean-Air Rules on Boilers](#)

In one of the costliest rules in its history, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established the first nationwide caps on mercury and other pollutants from industrial

boilers while bowing to industry demands to give companies more time to comply.

### [The Latest Turns Along the Colorado River](#)

Dams and other controls have changed the Colorado's ecosystem in the cavernous reaches of the Grand Canyon and have helped to dry up its delta in Mexico; misreadings of flow data have routinely ensured that pledges for its contents have been overstated. And all the while, more than 33 million people in the two countries have been drawing on its water supplies as states jostle for greater shares of it.

But Mr. Salazar and his deputy, David Hayes, have recently taken a series of actions that environmental groups believe show an understanding of the ecosystem's past, and its future.

### [Engineered Fish Moves a Step Closer to Approval](#)

Government regulators moved a big step closer on Friday to allowing the first genetically engineered animal — a fast-growing salmon — to enter the nation's food supply.

### [Kerry to face climate test at State Dept but not Keystone](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. Senator John Kerry's commitment to tackling global warming will face several tests if he takes over as secretary of state but stopping an issue that has become a top environmental focus - the Keystone XL pipeline - will likely not be among them.

### [China to lead capital toward emissions cuts](#)

BEIJING - China will direct more private capital to better finance the country's programs to fight climate change, China's chief climate negotiator said Friday.

### [Ice-dwelling seals to get U.S. Endangered Species Act listings](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (Reuters) - Two species of far-north seals, victims of disappearing sea ice and dwindling snowpack in their Arctic habitat, will be granted protections under the Endangered Species Act, federal officials announced on Friday.

### [2012 review: The year in environment](#)

For anyone living on planet Earth, 2012 was a rough year. The US sweltered in a devastating drought, only to then bear the brunt of superstorm Sandy. Meanwhile



Arctic sea ice shrank to its lowest extent on record, months after evidence emerged that it might have passed the point of no return.

### [Your 2012 climate change scorecard](#)

Given that this particular year is nearing its end, we decided to figure out how the math for 2012 stacked up. Did we, on balance, change our ways so that our net greenhouse gas emissions declined, or did we yet again increase how much we're polluting? Are we running in the positive or the negative or what?

Well: Scorecard! Getcher scorecard!

### [Kiribati's' desperate plea for action](#)

TARAWA - The Commonwealth Secretary-General has appealed to governments of developed countries to travel to Kiribati to witness the country's vulnerability to climate change impacts.

### [Climate change: Confessions of a Peak Oiler](#)

So, step by step, I went full circle. If, at the beginning, I was more worried about depletion than about climate, now it is the reverse. Not that I stopped worrying about peak oil, I know very well that we are in deep trouble with the availability not just of oil, but of all mineral resources. But the recent events; the melting of the polar ice cap, hurricanes, droughts, wildfires and all the rest clearly show that the climate problem is taking a speed and a size that was totally unexpected just a few years ago.

Climate change is a gigantic problem: it dwarfs peak oil in all respects. We know that humans have lived for thousands of years without using fossil fuels, but they never lived in a world where the atmosphere contained more than 400 parts per million of CO<sub>2</sub> - as we are going to have to. We don't even know if it will be possible for humans to survive in such a world.



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