



DrumBeat: January 4, 2007

Posted by [threadbot](#) on January 4, 2007 - 10:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Texas: Lawmakers vow help with gas, electricity costs](#)

"Last summer was very difficult for many Texans. The combination of record heat and record-high electricity prices pushed many families to the brink," said Tim Morstad, advocacy director for AARP-Texas. "We feel that this legislative session there will be increased opportunity to make some reforms to the deregulated electric markets."

"Every member I talk to is getting calls from their constituents," said House Regulated Industries Chairman Phil King, R-Weatherford. "We want to do something about it."

[Ukraine survives despite gas price hike](#). (Interesting how different this story is from the [British one](#) the other day. I guess businesses are doing fine, the people...not so much. ;-)

John Michael Greer: [Principles for sustainable tech](#)

Beyond its practical uses, however, the slide rule has more than a little to teach about what sustainable technology looks like. It is quite literally pre-industrial technology – the basic principle was worked out in 1622 by Rev. William Oughtred, though it took many years of evolution after that to produce the handy ten-inch device with multiple scales that played so important a role in 19th and 20th century science and engineering. Set a slide rule side by side with an electronic calculator and certain points stand out.

[Belarus slaps export duty on Russia oil](#)

MINSK: Belarus imposed export duty on Russian oil crossing its territory yesterday - with a potential impact on oil markets - as President Alexander Lukashenko hit back at Moscow in an energy row.

[Oil-Thirsty China Strives For Persian Petroleum](#)

Iran is endowed with abundant crude oil and natural gas reserves, and perhaps being equipped with nuclear weapons is only a tool to protect its most in-demand asset. Shall we trust Tehran?

Nigeria: [Agip's Plan to Help Hostages Escape Fails](#)

[Drilling for self-sufficiency](#)

Renewable energy -- wind power, biomass, solar cells, hydro generation and the like -- is the mantra of energy independence advocates. But such energy resources are projected to grow at just 1.5 percent per year through 2030, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

Demand for energy is expected to grow at the same rate. At best, renewable energy sources are a wash when it comes to becoming energy self-sufficient. Twenty-five years from now, the U.S. energy portfolio will look much like it does today, with fossil fuels providing 86 percent of our energy needs.

[An Energy Agenda For A Newly Energized Congress \(Part VI\): The Importance of Nuclear Energy to the Nation's Future - Lafayette, We Need You Again!](#)

Our consumption of oil, given the threats it poses to our national security, its impact on our economy and most importantly on our environment, evidences one of the sad shortcomings of our governance and public discourse. Not a single nuclear energy plant has been built in this country since the 1970's.

[Revenge of the Small](#)

While McMansion bans have been proposed in many cities—and have succeeded in a few—what Portland and Vancouver, and to some extent Seattle, are doing is more difficult and more interesting. They're inventing mechanisms that say yes to small instead of no to big.

Recently Portland and Vancouver established zoning and design guidelines to encourage the development of smaller houses, as long as they meet exacting design criteria. A new program in Vancouver that falls under the mayor's overall policy of "eco-density" encourages the reconfiguration of lots in certain single-family districts. In Portland a new set of ordinances and guidelines seeks to promote "skinny houses," intended to fit lots less than 36 feet wide.

[Poor harvests and biofuel demand trigger wheat shortages and fuel big Irish bread price rises](#)

Poor harvests in Australia, the Ukraine, Argentina and North America have dramatically increased the cost of wheat. Prices have surged to ten year highs as world wheat stockpiles have fallen to their lowest levels in 25 years and a drought in Australia

has threatened to cut its harvest in half.

[4 families 'Go Green'](#): *Here's how these homeowners got a little more eco-friendly.*

Australia: [Bike sales outstrip cars](#)

BICYCLE sales outpaced car and truck sales in 2006, as more Australians turned to pedal-power to cut petrol bills.

[California Cow Power: Poop Pays](#)

Cow power can make money for dairies and make them energy self-sufficient as well as provide electricity to the grid. But - there's always a but - the Byzantine regulatory structure that favors entrenched utilities is frustrating the widespread adoption of bovine biogas.

[Eco-friendly trains to connect north and south Taiwan](#)

TAICHUNG, Taiwan: The sleek, bulbous-nosed new bullet trains here look like they are designed to whisk passengers across wide-open spaces; but on this congested island, they represent the start of a 300-kilometer-per-hour commuter train system.

[Wal-Mart readies large-scale move into solar power](#)

...one person who saw the proposal said that if completed, it could amount to a significantly large installation--on the order of 100 megawatts of power over the next five years.

[Price drop hits ConocoPhillips](#)

Oil giant says refining and marketing margins were significantly lower, but production levels should hold steady.

[China's Coal Future](#)

To prevent massive pollution and slow its growing contribution to global warming, China will need to make advanced coal technology work on an unprecedented scale.

[2006 saw wave energy get hearing](#)

LINCOLN CITY — Move over solar and make way wind, because wave power is on the horizon and international energy companies along with local governments are lining up to cash in when the market crests.

[Ukraine: Possible Energy Solution In Coal Beds](#)

In the wake of Ukraine's announced plans to reduce its dependence on imported natural gas by using more coal for power generation, Ukraine's own enormous reserves of methane have been touted as a better alternative. The problem is finding a way to harness it.

[New oil sands drilling system unveiled: Small and fast unit ideal for oil sands exploration](#)

[Second Annual Indiana Energy Conference](#)

The purpose of the Indiana Energy Conference is to bring people together to raise awareness and discuss our culture's systemic dependence on oil, and how the forthcoming reduction in global oil extraction will affect our community. This is the most critical discussion of our time.

[A Country Less Dependent on Oil Is Free to Make Other New Year's Resolutions](#)

Well, another New Year's Day has come and gone. A string of holiday meals and sitting on the couch have, no doubt, started another wave of resolutions to get some exercise and go on a diet. But after seeing gas prices pass \$3 a gallon last year, hearing all the talk about global warming and having a bad feeling about all the bluster coming from the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a great many folks wish the economy would go on a diet, too, and stop using so much energy.

[Intelligent Growth: A Vision for a New Low-Energy Economy](#)

I think that we need to distinguish between two fundamentally distinct kinds of growth. There is the suicidal growth that our mainstream culture is so hell-bent on pursuing, predicated on the limitless extraction of our Earth's wild resources and the continual disabling of her ability to absorb pollution, stabilize soils, regulate the world's climate and operate a whole gamut of "ecosystem services." The alternative is "intelligent growth," which recognizes that we must move towards a global steady-state economy in which the living standards in the south would grow while those of the north decline until both converge on a steady and equitable per capita share of whatever benefits the Earth can spare us.

Tom Whipple - [The Peak Oil Crisis: 2006 in Review](#)

The most notable event affecting the advent of peak oil during 2006 was, most likely, the great summer price spike. Oil started the year around \$62 a barrel, steadily increased to just below \$80 and then fell to close out the year about where it started. Now there are a number of observations that can be made about this spike.

[Australia warming faster than world](#)

The seriousness of Australia's environmental problems was underlined Wednesday with the release of data showing that the country appears to be experiencing the effects of global warming more deeply than other parts of the world.

[Gas from Norway Could Reduce Dependency on Russia](#)

Western Europe's dependence on Russia's natural gas reserves has been a constant source of worry. A new facility being built in Norway to liquify the precious energy source could provide some relief from Russian dependency.

[Fuelling a Food Crisis: The impact of peak oil on food security](#)

DWINDLING oil stocks and EU trade and energy policies threaten food price hikes – and could cause the UK to be vulnerable to food shortages for the first time since the Second World War, according to a new report by Green Party Euro-MP Caroline Lucas.

[Save the Humans!](#)

It is no exaggeration to say that we are facing the largest human crisis since at least the nuclear arms race. Of course, instead of building up nuclear warheads, we are building up carbon dioxide.

...But the global warming crisis is linked with another that will influence solutions: resource depletion on a small planet. How we react to such crises will determine whether the Earth will be able to support large numbers of our species.

[Sisters of Providence collecting old Christmas trees to use as alternate fuel source for St. Mary-of-the-Woods College](#)

College officials began looking into alternative fuel sources when oil and natural gas prices started to rise. Also, concern about a “peak oil situation where oil isn't going to

last much longer” factored into the decision to invest in the new boiler, Augustin said.

[He's still following the sun](#)

Once the domain of hippies, whose off-the-grid escape doubled as an anti-establishment rebuke, renewable energy is now a pillar of California politics. In recent months alone, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed the California Solar Initiative, which aims to help bring solar power to a million rooftops, as well as a landmark greenhouse-gas reduction law.

[Himalaya's receding glaciers suffer neglect](#)

NEW DELHI – Billions of people in China and the Indian subcontinent rely on South Asia's Himalayan glaciers - the world's largest store of fresh water outside the polar ice caps. The massive ice floes feed seven of the world's greatest Asian rivers in one of the world's most densely populated regions.

Yet as global climate change slowly melts glaciers from Africa to the Andes, scientists say the glaciers in the Himalayas are retreating at a rate of about 33 to 49 feet each year - faster than in any other part of the world.

..."The power grid in Uttarkashi is constantly breaking down and that's because of the rise in sediment in the water being used at the hydro-power projects," says Joseph Thsetan Gergan from the WADIA Institute of Himalayan Glaciology, a part of the Indian Department of Science and Technology. "When the power breaks down, the people blame the Geological Survey of India or the Central Water Commission for not doing its work properly, but that's like thinking of digging a well when your house is already on fire."

[Gazprom's Growing Tentacles](#)

Natural resources juggernaut Gazprom has scored yet another victory in its gas pricing war, gaining 50 percent of the Belarusian pipeline network. The deal demonstrates Gazprom's ruthlessness in securing power over neighboring former Soviet satellite states and raises questions about how reliable the Russian company is as an energy supplier to western Europe.

[Québec Sees the Energy Tide Turn](#)

Canada is America, but it is not the United States. Many of my countrymen take the attitude that there is but one voice in English-speaking North America, and that we somehow have a right to the adjoining boreal territory and its resources.

This raises the question, then: What of French-speaking Canada?

[Spinoff Spectra's shares debut higher](#)

HOUSTON - Spectra Energy, a spinoff of power producer Duke Energy, was making a successful debut Wednesday on the New York Stock Exchange as one of the three largest natural gas transmission companies in North America.

[Climate 'benefits' for UK farming](#)

A project that highlights the economic opportunities, as well as the environmental threats, from climate change has been launched for farmers.

[Scientists say 2007 may be warmest yet](#)

LONDON - A resurgent El Nino and persistently high levels of greenhouse gases are likely to make 2007 the world's hottest year ever recorded, British climate scientists said Thursday.



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