



## **Are You Ready For Life Without Oil?**

Are you ready for life without oil? This question was asked in a New York Times article last Monday titled "Imagining Life Without Oil, and Being Ready" –

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/06/us/06peak.html?hp=&pagewanted=print>

Contrary to the title, however, we won't be living without oil, just more elusive and expensive oil. But hey, the article's title, like the title of this article, grabbed your attention, didn't it? I suppose it's the old "Sensationalism Sells" thing. Unfortunately this sort of sensationalism also has a way of polarizing folks at a time when we are going to, according to mainstream authorities, have resource constraints at some point in the near future. And the sooner the world economy gets back on track the sooner it will happen.

My thought after reading the Times article was "Yikes, that's pretty freakin' irresponsible"! They make it sound like people concerned about "peak oil" are a bunch of survivalist nut cases! That's unfortunate because peak oil isn't just a concern about something that might happen (like Y2K was) it's about something that is going to happen. It's a bonafide reality of decreasing supply being unable to keep up with increasing demand (except for the last several years, thanks to "flat demand" caused by the worldwide recession). This is no joking matter. Oil is the stuff that has made the level of economic growth we've experienced in our lifetimes possible! The problem is that this sort of consumption – & the economic growth it fuels - isn't sustainable. It's not something to spin for readership and, by making it sound like only survivalist nut cases believe in Peak Oil, people are inclined to decide if they want to be labeled as nuts or not. So should we choose what "side" we want to be on? Are you a "nut case" or not? Before you answer it might be helpful to know that our military - and governmental organizations in every country on the planet - are concerned. They're developing, or have already developed, contingency plans to deal with it (which, incidentally, doesn't comfort me much given how well we humans have dealt with big emergencies in the past).

So while the New York Times failed to serve its readers "Information You Can Use", The Union's Going Green column won't let that happen. The best part is you don't even need to be a nut case to take my advice! Better yet, I don't care whether you call yourself "green" or not! All you need is to be fiscally responsible and adhere to the motto of the Boy Scouts of America (that's "Be prepared" for those of you who weren't Scouts)! This column has been going for a couple of years now. I keep reminding readers (a dedicated lot from what I've learned) that past articles are posted here – <http://www.theenergyguy.com/Articles.html>. There's a wealth of useful information waiting for you there!

I also mention periodically that I'd love to have folks suggest topics they'd like to see covered. And I always add that emailing me is best – it's dangerous for me to try to answer the phone while balancing on a steep roof with a solar panel over my head! I've had great feedback on the Do-It-Yourself topics I've covered in the past and plan to write more in the future. But the most valuable concept I've tried

to impart in this column is the fact that energy efficiency and solar can provide returns on your investment of tens to hundreds of percent. It's just a matter of choosing the right mix of efficiency and solar given your particular situation. That was the "fiscally responsible" part of the message.

Now if you're the sort of person – OK, if you're like most people – why should you do anything today if you can put it off until tomorrow (usually works for me!). This is where that Boy Scout motto comes in. You should do it today because oil is what fuels our economy, literally and figuratively. It fuels civilization as we know it! When it starts getting horrendously more and more expensive, the funds to transition your household to a more sustainable economic position won't be available.

Unfortunately I can't cover Peak Oil in one article. In fact, it would be pretty tough to do it justice in just 30 minutes, but that's what your local group "APPLE" will do on June 21<sup>st</sup>, starting at 7pm at the Grass Valley Unitarian Chapel at 246 S. Church Street (suggested donation of \$3 to \$5). The presentation will explain what it is, why we should care, where we are at now, and what we can do about it. I sat in on a preliminary run of this presentation and was very impressed! After the presentation they'll cover the spill in the Gulf we've all been reading about. There will also be a panel of knowledgeable experts to answer your questions. I don't plan to miss it and neither should you!

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