SSDA News

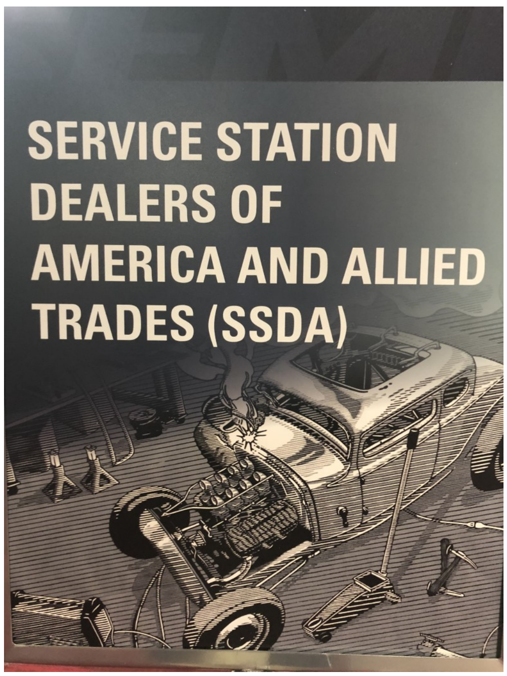
Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades

VOLUME 36, ISSUE 9 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2022

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SSDA-AT to Meet in Las Vegas for Annual Meeting

By Roy Littlefield



As a final reminder, SSDA-AT will host its annual meeting in Las Vegas in conjunction with the SEMA show on:

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Location: Las Vegas Convention Center Room S-116 (South Hall)

3150 Paradise Road

Las Vegas, NV 89109

9:30 AM- 12:00 PM

The SEMA show runs from Tuesday, November 1st to Friday, November 4th.

Please contact: Roy Littlefield IV at rlittlefield2@tireindustry.org or call 301-467-1995 for assistance with registration/hotel/questions.

We are working on an agenda and ask that you please send in all feedback for topics we will plan to discuss. We also plan to discuss the 2022 SSDA-AT Position Papers and plans for a lobby day in 2023.

We look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas! SSDA-AT Annual Meeting!

The Online Edge – What Your Business Needs to Thrive

By: Stephanie Santore, Net Driven

Does your business have an online presence? If so, are you doing all you can to ensure its virtual success? If not, what are you waiting for? Let's take a sneak peek at some statistical findings from the Pew Research Center. According to their most recent studies on the use of internet and technology it was found that:

Roughly three-quarters of Americans, or 77%, now own a smartphone, which nearly doubles the former findings since the Center began its research in 2011.

As of November 2016, nearly three-quarters, or 73% of Americans indicate that they have broadband service at home.

Nearly seven-in-ten Americans now use social media. When the Center started tracking social media adoption in 2005, just 5% of Americans said they used these platforms. Today, 69% of U.S. adults are social media users.

Half the public now owns a tablet computer. When the Center first began tracking tablet ownership in 2010, just 3% of Americans owned a tablet of some kind.

As you can see, now more than ever before, an online presence for your business is significant. And not just any online presence, but a quality one that provides a sense of credibility and legitimacy, turning its visitors into leads and sales, and contributing to the success of your business.

First impressions matter. If your business has a website, rest assured that internet users are navigating to it to formulate their opinion, to see what other people have to say about you, and to "screen" shop your services and products, which is much like window shopping, but with the ease of never having to actually visit your business's location.

Your business can now be accessible to the masses thanks to technology. Therefore, it's vital to have a way for potential clients to find you with the swipe of their fingertip and also to ensure you have a website that makes a good impression.

So, how do you go about trying to meet your customers' needs online?

Let's Talk Internet Marketing Best Practices

There are several factors that play into the creation of a well-made website that will help your business's online presence generate traffic and rank effectively:

Design & Layout

Visual presentation plays an important role in the functionality of a website. A high-performing website will provide a positive user experience. It helps to have a responsive web design. What makes a website responsive? Responsive design helps to generate leads and sales without any limitations based on user devices. So, customers can find your automotive service site on their tablet, smartphone, smart watch, etc., viewing your website efficiently from any screen size.

Content

Content is the reason why visitors come to a site. They are seeking information about your business and its services. The key is to provide relevant content that is easy for visitors to digest. Too much or too little and your visitors might go elsewhere to find what they're looking for. Check out what Moz has to say about content regarding search engine ranking. By

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NET DRIVEN

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providing unique content that moves beyond self- promotion and is easily digestible to the user, your website offers valuable information.

Calls to Action

Calls to action within a site's content and design come in the form of clickable links or custom buttons. It entices a visitor to take action beyond the page they are on, an action like submitting a form, requesting a quote, purchasing a product, or even just clicking a link that leads to another page with relevant information. Through a CTA, a user moves to take a specific action that will benefit your business. And action is what it's all about.

Credibility

A business with an online footprint is a business that can be found, recognized, and confided in. From building a solid and consistent brand across all channels, to maintaining an active social media presence, gaining positive reviews, managing your online reputation with products like Net Driven's Reputation Management.

Mobile Viewability

More and more people are looking at your site from a mobile phone or web enabled device. It seems like anything with a screen and a microchip in it is capable of getting on the internet these days. Make sure your site is viewable on a mobile internet enabled device.

Search Engine Optimization

At Net Driven, we drive the traffic that drives your business! It begins with a website that keeps local search in mind. A strong SEO foundation puts proven strategies to work and improves your ability to get found.

From understanding searcher behavior to using tested best practices, the SEO team at Net Driven works hard to ensure that your site has all of the key ingredients for SEO success. Look to us for:

Keyword research performed for your business and target geographic

Optimized meta tags for click through success

Relevant industry content

Local directory management

SEO-friendly site architecture

and more!

Don't have a website yet? What are you waiting for?! Talk to a representative from Net Driven today and ask about how we can help you create a website that not only generates traffic, but turns your traffic into leads and sales! Net Driven should be your choice for all your automotive internet marketing needs. Contact us today!

Sources:

http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/12/evolution-of-technology/

http://www.webs.com/blog/2012/02/28/6-key-elements-to-a-good-website/

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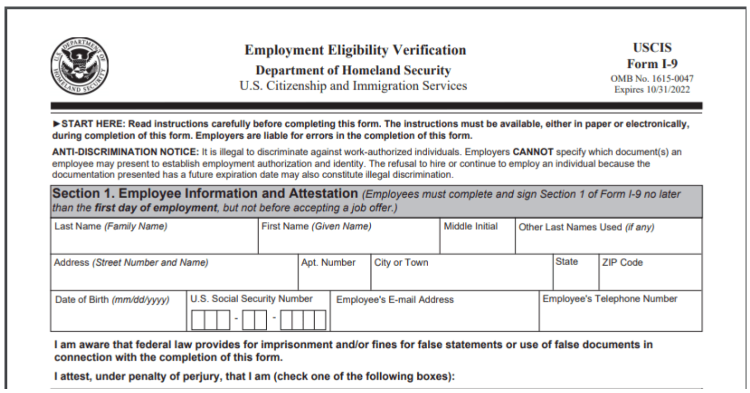
Proposed I-9 Rule Opens Door for Virtual Inspection

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its first proposed rule on the Optional Alternatives to the Physical Document Examination Associated with Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9).

The proposed rule does not include a detailed plan for virtual inspection of Form I-9. Instead, the proposed rule would "formalize the authority for the Secretary to extend flexibilities, provide alternative options or conduct a pilot program to further evaluate an alternative procedure."

This is significant as it signals the administration's openness to formalize COVID-19-era flexibilities and permit permanent remote inspection of employee identification and employment authorization documentation.



Employment Eligibility Verification
Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form I-9
OMB No. 1615-0047
Expires 10/31/2022

►START HERE: Read instructions carefully before completing this form. The instructions must be available, either in paper or electronically, during completion of this form. Employers are liable for errors in the completion of this form.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: It is illegal to discriminate against work-authorized individuals. Employers **CANNOT** specify which document(s) an employee may present to establish employment authorization and identity. The refusal to hire or continue to employ an individual because the documentation presented has a future expiration date may also constitute illegal discrimination.

Section 1. Employee Information and Attestation *(Employees must complete and sign Section 1 of Form I-9 no later than the **first day of employment**, but not before accepting a job offer.)*

Last Name *(Family Name)*	First Name *(Given Name)*	Middle Initial	Other Last Names Used *(if any)*		
Address *(Street Number and Name)*	Apt. Number	City or Town	State	ZIP Code	
Date of Birth *(mm/dd/yyyy)*	U.S. Social Security Number	Employee's E-mail Address	Employee's Telephone Number		

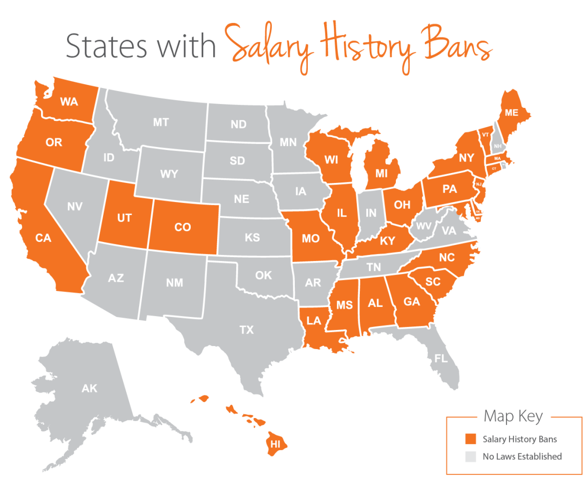
I am aware that federal law provides for imprisonment and/or fines for false statements or use of false documents in connection with the completion of this form.

I attest, under penalty of perjury, that I am (check one of the following boxes):

Ensuring Your Employment Application Is Lawful

The days of the "one size fits all" employment application have come to an end. As federal, state, and local governments increasingly heighten employer hiring process requirements, national employers must be diligent to avoid getting tripped up by the varying rules across different locations.

Specifically, two areas, based on state law, may expose employers to liability if asked about on employment applications: "ban the box" laws and salary/compensation history bans.



U.S. Crude Oil Exports Add $161 Bn To GDP Since Ban Lift, Rig Zone

The American Petroleum Institute (API) and the American Exploration and Production Council (AXPC) have released a new analysis demonstrating the significant and growing economic benefits of America's abundant crude oil resources for both domestic use and global export.

The study, conducted by ICF, analyzed the six-year period since a bipartisan Congressional majority lifted a ban on exporting U.S. crude oil in December 2015. The study found that enabling open markets increased oil and natural gas development in America, which, over the six-year period, reduced global oil prices by an average of $1.93 per barrel, added $161 billion to U.S. GDP, and increased jobs in the U.S. by nearly 50,000, on average.

"American energy leadership doesn't just deliver significant benefits to Americans – fueling the U.S. economy and American jobs, delivering reliable energy, and helping put downward pressure on prices, but it also strengthens global security and supports our allies," said API President and CEO Mike Sommers.

"U.S. energy exports provide critical stability to the global market, support our allies across the world who depend on American energy to meet their needs and strengthen American energy security here at home. If the U.S. is not exporting energy, it leaves the door open for unstable nations or those with less stringent environmental standards to fill the void and reap the benefits," he added.

The new study analyzes the changes that have occurred in U.S. oil and natural gas markets since Congress enabled crude oil exports compared to a hypothetical scenario where the ban on U.S. oil exports remained in place.

"As this analysis shows, lifting the ban on crude exports in 2015 saved Americans money at the pump, supported thousands of good-paying American jobs, and reduced our country's dependence on foreign oil. At a time when Americans are hurting from the price at the pump, it's clear that increasing the global supply of crude oil is critical to lower energy prices here at home and greater energy security around the globe," said AXPC CEO Anne Bradbury.

The benefits include decreased U.S. consumer expenditures on refined products and natural gas by $92 billion. Higher U.S. oil production expanded the global oil supply, reducing global crude oil and refined product prices. Because there is free trade in petroleum products, U.S. fuel consumers have benefited from these lower product prices.

The API said that the benefits of lower fuel costs for U.S. consumers and higher revenues for U.S. oil producers outweighed margin losses for U.S. refiners, resulting in a net benefit of $161 billion in U.S. GDP. The export of crude also improved the U.S. Trade Balance by $178 billion.

Lifting the crude export ban has increased U.S. employment, including direct jobs in the Upstream oil & gas sector, such as petroleum engineers and geologists, industrial machinery installation and maintenance, derrick operators, rotary drill operators, roustabouts, and service unit operators. The policy change has also created indirect and induced jobs. In total, U.S. employment rose by an average of 48,000 jobs.

Production of U.S. crude oil production also rose, and it allowed U.S. domestic oil prices to converge with international benchmarks, spurred more drilling activity leading to higher crude oil production, as well as higher production of associated natural gas and NGLs that come from oil wells. U.S. crude oil production, post export ban, rose by 1.8 billion barrels.

Biden's New Climate Act Is About to Meet a Fierce Foe, Bloomberg

"It is not true that we need to gut our environmental protections in order to scale up green energy," said Mahyar Sorour, deputy legislative director for Beyond Dirty Fuels at the Sierra Club. And thus goes the next chapter in the political war over whether and how the United States will join the battle against climate change.

Unlike America's longstanding partisan stalemate – not a single Republican voted for the Inflation Reduction Act that President Biden signed into law – the new conflict over climate policy will pit many environmental groups that have pushed hardest for the US to decarbonize against the administration's efforts to do so.

The new tussle will inevitably trip up the strategy to overhaul the nation's energy infrastructure, as environmental organizations stand in the way of the most straightforward paths to take carbon out of the American economy over the next 30 years.

"Maybe it was the best they could get, but let's not be disingenuous about the tradeoffs," Brett Hartl, the government affairs director for the Center for Biological Diversity – an environmental advocacy group – told me.

At the moment, what sticks in the craw of green activists are the demands by Senator Joe Manchin in exchange for his vote for the IRA: to clear the path for the completion of a natural gas pipeline across West Virginia, plus a slew of reforms to relax other regulatory hurdles facing energy infrastructure projects, including environmental reviews.

"There is no reason to give Senator Manchin any more concessions than he already got," Sorour told me. "The IRA is going to be transformative," she acknowledged. "Congress approved a massive investment to scale up renewable energy." But as far as Sorour is concerned, giving West Virginia's natural gas a pass is way over the line.

She has a point. Conscripting Congress to approve a favored pipeline is a little unseemly. One hopes America won't go about overhauling its energy infrastructure one pipeline bill at a time. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to demand that pipelines abide by standards to protect the ecosystems and communities they traverse.

But let's face it: Natural gas, which produces just half the carbon emissions of coal, will continue to play a critical role in the decarbonization of the energy grid. "Gas is not a bridge fuel to the clean energy future that we need," Sorour insisted. In fact, it has been the main fuel to replace coal. And it will continue to for some time. Pipelines will be needed to move it around.

Consider North Carolina, one of 16 states that have imposed a schedule of carbon mitigation, committing to slash CO_2 emissions by 70% from 2005 to 2030. An analysis by the Brattle Group for the Clean Power Suppliers Association concluded that the cheapest path to the goal included adding 2,000–3,500 megawatts of natural gas-powered generation by then.

Natural gas features in national decarbonization strategies too. The modeling in Princeton's Repeat Project, which calculates the IRA could cut the nation's carbon emissions 42% by 2030, compared to 2005, assumes multibillion dollar investments in additional generation capacity powered by natural gas. The Rhodium Group, which assesses that the legislation could cut emissions from 32% to 42%, also acknowledges that gas-fueled generation will grow.

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Biden's New Climate Act Is About to Meet a Fierce Foe, Bloomberg

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Getting in the way of natural gas generation, at this stage, will probably just mean burning more coal. "At some point we will approach the end of the 'coal-to-gas' bridge," said Alex Trembath, deputy director of the Breakthrough Institute, which promotes the deployment of technology to confront environmental problems. "But we're not there yet."

The environmental movement's disquiet about the administration's climate strategy is not just due to the carbon emissions from fossil fuels. Hartl points out that the Deepwater Horizon oil rig emitted little CO2 but still managed to do a lot of damage by spilling millions of barrels of oil into the sea.

Indeed, many of America's most powerful green organizations have a broader beef with the impact that any energy infrastructure can have on the natural environment. And that's a problem for the administration's strategy to combat climate change. Every tool in the IRA is likely to run afoul of one environmental goal or another.

The Sierra Club and other groups opposed a now-blocked project to bring hydropower from Canada to the Northeast on the grounds that the needed transmission lines would cut through long swathes of forest, while hydropower takes up substantial acreage and is not renewable anyway.

Projects to capture carbon from the air and store it have also drawn environmentalists' ire. And some environmental groups are apoplectic at the renewed interest in nuclear energy as part of the clean energy mix.

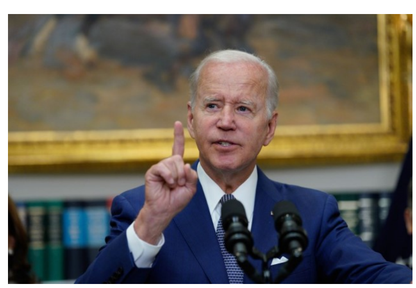
The sun and the wind, for now, seem to be relatively unopposed sources of clean energy. But the Sierra Club has already opposed at least one solar plant in Nevada. Scaling up wind power, which requires 370 times as much land as natural gas-based generation, is definitely going to butt against demands to preserve the natural environment.

The environmental movement's objection to natural gas and other stuff has been of relatively little significance, as the question over what to do about CO2 has been controlled by Republicans' response to it: nothing. But with the GOP's veto over climate policy lifted, greens' opposition to all sorts of things may become the main roadblock to a solution.

The so-called "permitting compromise" between Manchin and Senator Chuck Schumer, which reportedly has the approval of both President Biden and Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the House, will provide the first battleground for this new conflict. Schumer promised Manchin the bill would pass before the close of this fiscal year , which ends on September 30.

But this is hardly the end of the new war over the nation's environmental priorities.

I talked to Phillip K. Howard, the lawyer and good government advocate who wrote "Two Years, Not Ten Years" about how government reviews and regulations have gummed up the deployment of urgently needed infrastructure. I asked whether, ironically, the environmental movement would become a significant obstacle to the nation's efforts toward carbon mitigation. His answer: "clearly, yes."



U.S. Manufacturing Slows Modestly; Excess Inventories a Major Concern, Reuters

U.S. manufacturing activity slowed less than expected in July and there were signs that supply constraints are easing, with a measure of prices paid for inputs by factories falling to a two-year low, suggesting inflation has probably peaked.

While the Institute for Supply Management survey showed a measure of factor employment contracting for a third straight month, Timothy Fiore, chair of the ISM Manufacturing Business Survey Committee, noted that "companies continue to hire at strong rates, with few indications of layoffs, hiring freezes or headcount reduction through attrition."

The better-than-expected ISM reading suggested that the economy was not in recession despite a decline in gross domestic product in the first half of the year. Businesses, however, are sitting on excess inventories after ordering too many goods because of worries about shortages, depressing new orders.

"The post-pandemic inventory restocking cycle is winding down amid softening consumer goods demand," said Pooja Sriram, an economist at Barclays in New York.

"This intensifies risks of a harder landing in the manufacturing sector later this year. That said, the overall PMI would still need to decline a fair bit to reach readings consistent with outright economic recession."

The ISM's index of national factory activity dipped to 52.8 last month, the lowest reading since June 2020, when the sector was pulling out of a pandemic-induced slump. The PMI was at 53.0 in June. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in manufacturing, which accounts for 11.9% of the U.S. economy.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index would fall to 52.0. A reading above 48.7 over a period of time generally indicates an expansion of the overall economy.

Four of the six biggest manufacturing industries - petroleum and coal products as well as computer and electronic products, transportation equipment and machinery - reported moderate-to-strong growth in the last few months.

High inflation remained a complaint among businesses even though overall price increases for inputs have started slowing considerably. Makers of chemical products said inflation is "slowing down business," and also noted an "overstock of raw materials due to prior supply chain issues and slowing orders."

Manufacturers of food products reported that "many customers appear to be pulling back on orders in an effort to reduce inventories." Textile mill operators said "continuing delivery and staffing issues have eaten away the bottom line."

The ISM survey's forward-looking new orders sub-index dropped to 48.0 from a reading of 49.2 in June. It was the second straight

U.S. Manufacturing Slows Modestly; Excess Inventories a Major Concern, Reuters

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monthly contraction. Combined with a steady reduction in order backlogs, that suggests a further slowdown in manufacturing in the months ahead.

Many retailers, including Walmart (WMT.N), have reported carrying excess inventory as soaring inflation forces consumers to spend more on low-margin food products instead of apparel and other general merchandise.

Stocks on Wall Street were trading modestly lower. The dollar fell against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices were mostly higher.

SUPPLY BOTTLENECKS EASING

The ISM's measure of factory inventories increased to a 38-year high in July. According to the ISM's Fiore, companies were showing the most concern about their inventory levels since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago when a slowdown in manufacturing activity was anticipated.

The moderation in manufacturing also reflects a shift in spending back to services from goods and the impact of rising interest rates as the Federal Reserve tackles inflation. The U.S. central bank last week raised its policy rate by another three-quarters of a percentage point. It has now hiked that rate by 225 basis points since March.

The economy contracted 1.3% in the first half of the year. Wild swings in inventories and the trade deficit tied to snarled global supply chains have been largely to blame, though overall momentum has cooled.

Supply bottlenecks are loosening up, which is helping to curb inflation at the factory gate. The ISM's measure of supplier deliveries dropped to 55.2 from 57.3 in June. A reading above 50% indicates slower deliveries to factories.

The survey's gauge of prices paid by manufacturers plunged to 60.0, the lowest level since August 2020, from 78.5 in June.

"This should please the Fed and provides further evidence that rate hikes won't need to continue through 2023," said James Knightley, chief international economist at ING in New York.

But the road to low inflation will be long. While the survey's measure of factory employment rose to 49.9, it remained in contraction territory for a third straight month, with manufacturers continuing to express difficulty finding workers.

High turnover related to quits and retirements was also frustrating efforts to adequately staff factories. There were 11.3 million unfilled jobs across the economy at the end of May, with nearly two job openings for every unemployed worker.

"This report is consistent with the Fed's desire to give the supply side a chance to catch up with demand, but there is a long way to go as the manufacturing sector appears to continue to struggle with shortages," said Conrad DeQuadros, senior economic advisor at Brean Capital in New York.

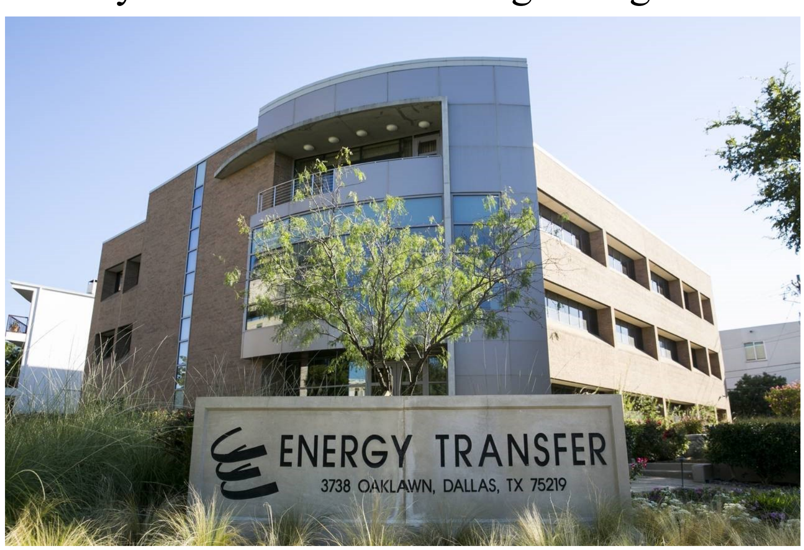
Energy Transfer signs 20-year LNG supply deal with Shell, Reuters

U.S. pipeline operator Energy Transfer LP said it agreed to supply 2.1 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per year to Shell Plc for 20 years.

The deal for supplies from its proposed Lake Charles, Louisiana, facility comes as demand and prices for LNG are soaring over Russia's February invasion of Ukraine. LNG prices at the Dutch hub in Europe this week hit $83 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), more than twice that of early March.

Shell was an original backer of the facility, which received U.S. permits in 2015 to produce 16.4 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of the superchilled fuel. But the British oil giant quit the project two years ago as energy markets tumbled during the coronavirus pandemic.

Energy Transfer more recently has signed a string of agreements with potential buyers to supply about 8 MPTA. The Shell agreement anticipates first LNG deliveries under the contract as early as 2026. U.S. permits for the project were issued in 2015, but Energy Transfer has not yet reached a financial greenlight.



US Set to Ship Record Crude Into 2023 as Energy Crisis Deepens, Bloomberg

US crude sales overseas are set to hit fresh records through next year as American oil increasingly takes market share in Europe.

Earlier last month, weekly government figures showed an unprecedented 5 million barrels a day of US crude being exported. Shipments are poised to average over 4 million barrels a day over the next few months and into next year, according to the most optimistic in the oil industry.

In a world grappling with one of the worst energy crises in history, the US is steadily becoming the go-to supplier of incremental barrels. It's likely to remain in that position as OPEC+ spare capacity is limited and the EU looks to wind down most Russian crude purchases in December. Fuel prices soared after Russia's invasion of Ukraine upended flows, while "extreme" volatility in the oil futures market as a result of low liquidity has prompted Saudi Arabia's oil minister to consider further supply cuts despite shortages in consuming nations.

US suppliers that have captured market share across Europe will likely hold onto it over the next two years as other producers, including those in the North Sea and West Africa, have not been growing their output as steadily, said Conor McFadden, head of oil for Europe at Trafigura, among the biggest exporters of US crude.

While the end of American reserve oil releases this fall might slow exports briefly, it's unlikely to dent these mammoth outflows long term, according to a poll of industry analysts. US drillers have been growing production, even if at moderate rates, and the country's refining capacity is not expected to expand, leaving more oil for export. In fact, weekly exports have exceeded 4 million barrels a day for consecutive weeks for the first time since the export ban was lifted at the end of 2015, according to the latest Energy Information Administration data released.

Annual US crude shipments abroad are expected to average from 3.3 million barrels a day to as high as 3.6 million barrels a day this year, from nearly 3 million in 2021, according to oil analysts at ESAI Energy, Rapidan Energy Group and Kpler. Outflows are likely to average as much as 4.3 million next year, according to ESAI oil analyst Elisabeth Murphy.

US volumes are nipping into West Africa's market share in Europe as well as helping offset disrupted crude flows from Libya due to politically-driven production outages, said Hunter Kornfeind, an oil market analyst at Rapidan.

European refiners have become more comfortable using American oil that is shipped reliably and stably, Trafigura's McFadden said. "When the world's energy supply chains got so stressed, this was the crude that filled the hole. When Europe didn't know who they were gonna buy from they went to Midland because they know it will arrive," he said.

Looking ahead, purchases from Asia are also key in keeping US crude exports elevated. Over the past two months, Asian countries have scooped up large volumes of American oil, as competition with Middle Eastern supplies heats up. Even so, greater volumes of Russian oil are still headed to China and India since the invasion of Ukraine.

"The long-term trend in a world that needs more oil is that the US is going to be exporting more," McFadden said.

Limited Frack Supply Could Hamper U.S. Crude Oil Output, Reuters

Demand for hydraulic fracturing equipment is quickly outpacing supply, executives said this week, setting the stage for a new obstacle to U.S. oil and gas production growth. Oil companies have been under pressure from the Biden administration to lift production to curb high energy prices. Some companies, particularly private firms, also want to boost output to capitalize on oil's surge to $100 a barrel. However, in order to boost output, equipment and crews are needed.

"Availability of frac fleets is one of main bottlenecks impeding oil and natural as production growth for the next 18 months," Robert Drummond, chief executive officer of fracking firm NexTier Oilfield Solutions said (NEX.N).

U.S. crude production is expected to average 11.9 million barrels per day in 2022, below the pre-pandemic record of 12.3 million bpd in 2019, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Drummond warned that capital constraints and supply chain snarls will make it difficult to add equipment and said it could take several years to correct the imbalance in the market.

NexTier will not deploy any additional fracking capacity this year, he added.

"We definitely see frac crew bottlenecks as a significant headwind for U.S. producers headed into 2023," said Matt Hagerty, a senior analyst at BTU Analytics, a Factset Company, citing a "perfect storm" of frac sand and labor shortages, inflation, and limited inventory of fleets that can be reactivated after going idle in 2020.

Rivals Halliburton (HAL.N) and Liberty Oilfield Services (LBRT.N) have warned that the market was near full utilization. Liberty estimated that roughly 250 fleets are running, with about 25 to be added this year. Consultancy Primary Vision Network puts the number higher, at 290 currently operating.

Liberty said pricing in the market had recovered enough to support re-activating some fleets it acquired from Schlumberger (SLB.N), as well as adding two electric fleets in the first quarter of next year.

However Halliburton last week warned that "supply chain bottlenecks, even for diesel fleets, make it almost impossible to add incremental capacity this year" and that experienced crews are in high demand.

Boston Seeks to Ban Fossil Fuels in New Buildings, AP

Boston is seeking to ban fossil fuels from new building projects and major renovations, Mayor Michelle Wu announced.

The Democrat said the state's largest city will take advantage of a key provision in the climate change bill signed into law by Republican Gov. Charlie Baker.

That legislation, which is meant to bring the state closer to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, calls for a pilot project allowing 10 Massachusetts cities and towns to require new building projects be all-electric, with the exception of life sciences labs and health care facilities.

Wu said the city will file a home rule petition with the state Legislature to join the pilot.

"Boston must lead by taking every possible step for climate action," she said in a statement.

"Boston's participation will help deliver healthy, energy efficient spaces that save our residents and businesses on utilities costs and create local green jobs that will fuel our economy for decades."

Wu's office said natural gas, oil and other fossil fuels used in buildings represent more than one-third of the city's greenhouse gas emissions.

New York, Washington, D.C., and Seattle are among the major U.S. municipalities that have enacted similar bans, The Boston Globe reports.

Opinion: A Rare “Thin Place” May Determine the Future of Work

BY LARRY ROBERTSON

It may feel more like years have passed, but, barely a year ago, talk of our collective return to work first began in earnest. We were experiencing our initial sustained dip in COVID-19 cases and were ready for something other than working from our homes. Or were we? When faced with the previously only-wished-for prospect of a return to what once was, questions arose.

Given many of the benefits discovered, should remote work continue? Or should we instead re-embrace the long-held view that work takes four shared walls? What about hybrid options?

If you were to look back at the headlines, you’d see that even as things felt as if they were settling a bit, the future of everything was still deeply unpredictable. Yet, that is precisely what most leaders at the time were busy trying to do: to predict, and more, to guarantee. A majority of leaders were seeking solutions to the future of work in a once-and-for-all form.

Different views of a possible future of work

In a key study then, McKinsey & Co. described leaders as seemingly possessed by a “finish line” mentality and a need to declare both victory over COVID-19 and a stable future. It wasn’t just that leaders wanted this; they seemed to believe their employees wanted, above all else, “freedom from the wolves” of uncertainty, to borrow from philosopher Isaiah Berlin. The trouble was, leaders were wrong.

While a full 75% of leaders sought a finish line, the same study revealed that 75% of their workers perceived the future of work in the exact opposite way. Perhaps they intuited the rest of Berlin’s observation, that “[f]reedom from the wolves, has often meant death to the sheep.” Bottom line, employees didn’t believe the future was, or perhaps even could be, certain.

Yet, the more compelling data point at the time (continuing today) is what has come to be called the Great Reshuffle (or Resignation, or Reorder): millions of employees expressing their very different view of the future by voluntarily leaving their jobs to seek places where they can have a hand in where their organizations are headed.

Discovering a rare “thin place”

Following the study, I wrote an article for SmartBrief about what leaders were missing in all of this. But the truth is that leaders and their employees were together missing something greater: a rare opportunity or, said more poignantly, one of those rare “thin places” where great change is possible.

When I first heard the term, a thin place was described as a moment when the seemingly immoveable barrier between the world we live in or the way we operate in that world and “something bigger” becomes thin, to the point of offering up a connection between the two. Thin places are, for example, where artists, athletes and others tap a flow state. When the idea of purpose begins to actually be realized, that, too, is most likely to happen in a thin place.

A thin place is a unique zone. And nearly a year since the Great Reshuffle began in earnest, organizations still have access to one. This thin place is the chance to see that leadership is something very different from, and much greater than, the person with the leader title. Leadership is collective, and in the best cases, cultural.

How to recognize a thin place

How do we begin to see this thin place and to seize the opportunity it presents? What are the signals that show us where to step into it and make change for the better? Here are some signs to look for:

When senior leaders don’t have the answer — indeed, when there is no known solution — a thin place exists.

When a problem recurs repeatedly, in part because the attempted resolutions support conflicting priorities, the ground is thin and ripe for change. When people must work across borders to find a way forward, or when the path forward is clearly nonlinear, the thin facade between the leader-as-hero tale we were all raised on and the truth that leadership is a shared human capacity allows some light to come peering through.

A long-running project at Harvard focused on adaptive leadership, in which Eric Martin of Adaptive Change Advisors took part and about which he has thoughtfully written, dubbed such signals as “leadership flags” and encouraged executives to use them as moments to step up and lead.

Identification and use by senior leaders alone isn’t what makes these thin places. The thinness is revealed when, in seeing these signals, we also accept that senior leaders can no longer step into such leadership moments alone. The treasured thinness comes when all of us accept and embrace that leadership, rather than something gifted only to those with the title leader, is instead acknowledged as our shared human capacity.

Let innovation lead to new future of work

The wisest organizations in these uncertain times — in other words, the ones that are thriving, are using collective leadership not just to decide what work must look like, but what innovation looks like, and value, and reward, and every other aspect of work. That’s what ought not be missed in the headlines focusing on mass exoduses or executive over promises. That thin place is where the future of success ongoing resides.

More U.S. Climate-Change Lawsuits Against Big Oil Head Back to State Court, Reuters

Two lawsuits targeting major oil companies over climate-change mitigation costs belong in state courts, a federal appeals court panel, further thwarting efforts by major oil companies to transfer the cases to the federal system.

The decision by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals marks the latest loss for the oil industry, which has argued in similar suits across the country the federal court system is the appropriate place to address whether the companies should pitch in on the bill for infrastructure projects to help fortify cities and states against the impacts of climate change.

The 2020 lawsuits brought by the state of Delaware and the city of Hoboken, New Jersey were filed in state court, which is generally considered a more plaintiff-friendly venue.

“Climate change is an important problem with national and global implications,” Judge Stephanos Bibas wrote for the three-judge panel. “But federal courts cannot hear cases just because they are important.”

The lawsuits claim 19 oil companies and the American Petroleum Institute, the country's biggest oil and gas lobby group, knowingly contributed to the damaging effects of climate change and misled the public about the risks.

A spokesperson for Chevron Corp, one of the oil companies targeted in the suits, said in a statement about Wednesday's ruling that the company believes the cases belong in federal court due to their "sweeping implications for national energy policy, national security, foreign policy and other uniquely federal interests."

BP America Inc declined to comment. Spokespeople for other oil companies sued including Exxon Mobil Corp and Shell PLC didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment.

The 3rd Circuit’s decision is in line with four other appellate courts that have already rejected arguments

More U.S. Climate-Change Lawsuits Against Big Oil Head Back to State Court, Reuters

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made by the oil companies that the cases are governed by or preempted by federal law. The oil companies in June appealed a 10th Circuit ruling, asking the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on the issue.

Mat Marshall, a spokesman for the Delaware Attorney General's Office, said of the ruling: "We agree with the 3rd Circuit panel's clear and unanimous opinion."
"Defendants' delay tactics have failed," Hoboken's attorney Matthew Brinckerhoff said. "Hoboken will now prove its claims in state court."

The cases are City of Hoboken v. Chevron Corp and State of Delaware v. BP America Inc, 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, No. 21-2728 and No. 22-1096.

For Hoboken: Jonathan Abady and Matthew Brinckerhoff of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel

For Delaware: Stephanie Biehl, Matt Edling and Vic Sher of Sher Edling
For Shell: David Frederick of Kellogg Hansen Todd Figel & Frederick

For BP: Nancy Milburn and Diana Reiter of Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer

For Exxon: Kannon Shanmugam, Daniel Toal and Ted Wells of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison

For Chevron: Joshua Dick, Andrea Neuman and William Thomson of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher

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