

NEWS

National and world news in brief

By Patrick Webster
paw175@psu.edu

Iceland continues plan to phase out fossil fuels

Reykjavik, Iceland: The isolated nation of Iceland began the process of eliminating the need for fossil fuels in that country almost 50 years ago, and expect the plan to be completely successful within 50 more.

By taking advantage of every renewable source of energy in the country, Iceland has already completely eliminated the use of carbon-heavy fossil fuels for power generation. In fact, the network of wind turbines, solar plants, geothermal energy stations and hydroelectric dams produces so much surplus electricity that the government is moving ahead with plans to use that energy to separate hydrogen and oxygen from water.

Iceland and its population of over 300,000 plan to become the first country in the world to be totally independent of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas, with all electricity gathered from renewable sources and all vehicles powered by clean hydrogen. "Iceland is the ideal country to create the world's

first hydrogen economy," said Bragi Arnason, a retired professor from the University of Iceland. His work in pioneering the clean-energy plans has earned him the nickname "Professor Hydrogen" in Iceland.

The country is already taking steps to update its infrastructure, installing 15 new hydrogen pumping stations around the country. About 50 hydrogen cars will be on the road this year, and most major auto companies such as Toyota, General Motors and Mercedes-Benz. Hydrogen-fueled vehicles produce no pollution, with the only thing coming out of their exhaust pipes being liquid water and water vapor.

"We are a very small country but we have all the same infrastructure of big nations," Arnason said. "We will be the prototype for the rest of the world."

Global Warming creates "Northwest Passage"

BOULDER, Colorado: The European Space Agency and the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center have determined that the "Northwest Passage," a water route to the American west coast and Asia, has formed for the first time in recorded history due to a sharp decline in the polar ice cap.

European explorers searched for a navigable western route to Asia for around 300 years starting in the 1500's. Now, satellite imagery shows that the Holy Grail of oceanic exploration is a reality.

Economic opportunities aside, the magnitude of the environmental ramifications is of great concern to scientists and climatologists.

"It's almost an exclamation point on the pronounced ice loss we've seen in the past 30 years," said NSIDC senior research scientist Mark Serreze.

The arctic ice pack has lost 20 percent of its volume in just the last two years, and ice surface coverage is at its lowest point since 1978,

when satellite tracking methods first became available. Where previous estimates predicted that there would be an iceless summer at the north pole in 2070, Serreze says "losing summer sea ice cover by 2030 is not unreasonable."

Among the possible consequences of arctic ice loss is a rise in the worldwide sea level by almost a meter, which would force the relocation of almost 1 billion people from low-lying and near sea-level areas around the world. Loss of the reflective white ice could also speed up warming yet further as sunlight that was previously reflected back into space would instead be absorbed by the much-darker water. Ecologically, the damage would be massive and irreversible.



Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News

Louisiana rallies formed in support of the "Jena Six" and the fight against racial inequality

By Lenny Smith
news editor
lr5046@psu.edu

Six black teens from Jena, Louisiana have become the focus of a modern day civil rights fight, according to Martin Luther King, III.

Thousands of angry activist have flooded the streets in support of "The Jena Six," as they are being called. The six teens are being charged with the Dec. 2006 beating of one of their white classmates.

Initially, the six teens were charged with second-degree attempted murder. Five of the teens' charges have since been reduced to battery while one teen has yet to be arraigned. When



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A speaker talks to a group of people about freeing the "Jena Six" in Louisiana.

through the park where the nooses where once hung. Throughout the marches crowds yelled, "Black power" and "No justice, no peace." King spoke to a crowd as well saying that punishment for the six may be necessary, however, "the justice system isn't applied the same to all crimes and all people."

Tina Jones, a mother of one of the "Jena Six" said, "I hope that the D.A. will wake up and realize that he's doing the wrong thing, and to release these kids," she said. "It's not equal. The black people get the harsher extent of the law, whereas white people get a slap on the wrist per se. So it is not equal here."

Parish District Attorney Reed Walters is prosecuting the teens and denied that racism had any bearing on his decision to charge them. The three white teens were never charged for hanging the nooses because Walters couldn't find any Louisiana law that said it was illegal.

During a press conference, President Bush was asked about the protests in Louisiana, who said that the events saddened him. "All of us in America want there to be fairness when it comes to justice," he said.

For those who couldn't attend the rallies in Jena, support groups like "Support the Jena Six" and events were formed on popular websites like Facebook.com. Events formed on the site asked students all over America to wear black on Sept. 20 in support of the six.

The protesters wore black and marched to the local courthouse and

Newly published book provides insight into successful businesses through civility



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON
Rod Troester and Cathy Mester pose with their new book, *Civility in Business and Professional Communication*. Mester and Troester have been professors at Behrend for a number of years.

By Aerielle Cooksey-Kramer
staff writer
aak5101@psu.edu

Interviewing strategies, civility strategies, and communication practices are simply a few of the topics discussed within Cathy Mester and Rod Troester's newly published book, *Civility in Business and Professional Communication*.

Mester has been teaching a course in communications and civility for five years, and she contributed background to their book in that aspect. Troester has taught business and professional speaking courses for almost five years. Combining their knowledge in those specific fields of study, they wrote and published a book that thoroughly investigates Civility and Communications, like no other book written before. They have both directed the Janet Neff Sample Center for Manners and Civility, which brought their ideas together for the first time, and helped conceive a creative outlet within them enough to talk about writing a book.

The book is primarily based upon civility practiced in businesses to help professionals achieve their goals more effectively and to ultimately become more successful. It explains and provides tips for the background of civility, alongside theories and principles of communications that draw back into the practice of civility.

"One thing we did," Mester replied with a smile, "was look at the list of 100 best companies to work for in Fortune Magazine. They also put out a list of the most successful companies and as we compared lists, what we found there was a cross-over between many of the companies." She went on to explain that the bosses of many of these highly successful and 'best to work for' companies treated their

employees with respect. It's a simple logic that companies seemingly pride themselves on. If the employees are happy, they become more productive, and if they are more productive, the business becomes more successful. Civility and communications make up a large part in determining if a business is successful or not, as both Mester and Troester noticed.

One main feature of their book, Mester pointed out, was that they asked a few Behrend Alumni, all rooted in different occupations, to give testimonial statements from their workplaces that showed civility and communication practices. There are excerpts from their statements throughout the book, which gives those Alumni a "prominent place and provides credibility that two professors aren't the only ones writing the book." *Civility in Business and Professional Communication* will be used as a textbook in Mester's Civility and Communications course starting in the Fall of 2008. Troester made sure to include that their book was not only meant for college textbook purposes, but to anyone in the business field. Mester said, "I think to anyone who works in business or industry, it's written in such a way that it's simply not a textbook. Anyone who interviews people or who works in any kind of corporation will find useful information in it."

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-Cathy Mester
Author and professor

Quotes on Civility

"A kind word is like a spring day."

— Russian proverb

Janet Neff Sample Center
for Manners & Civility

