Oil holds ground, settles near 3-week high … Oil settled little changed on Tuesday, but fighting in Iraq and tensions between the U.S. and Iran kept prices at their highest level in nearly three weeks. “Geopolitical risk supported the initial move higher, but we’ve pushed to price levels that are clearly attractive to U.S. shale producers,” Robbie Fraser, commodity analyst at Schneider Electric, told MarketWatch. November West Texas Intermediate crude tacked on a penny to settle at $51.88 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after tapping a high of $52.25. Brent crude for December rose 6 cents, or 0.1%, to $57.88 a barrel — also its highest since late September. Among refined products Tuesday, November gasoline added 0.8%, to $1.63 a gallon and November heating oil ended at $1.81 a gallon, down 0.2%. November natural gas rose 0.5% to $2.962 per million British thermal units. [MarketWatch, 10/17]

EPA Administrator Pruitt issues directive to curb settlements with outside groups … Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt issued a directive on Monday to limit the extent to which the EPA can reach legal agreements with groups suing to force it to take regulatory action. Ending the practice known as sue and settle has been a top priority for conservatives and business groups. In recent years, especially under the Obama administration, the EPA and other agencies resolved litigation over delays in issuing rules by agreeing to specific timelines to act and reimbursing plaintiffs’ attorney fees. [EEI, 10/1]

Clean Power Plan repeal would not affect electric transmission, companies say … A repeal of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan, as was recently proposed, would not affect the electric transmission and generation plans of such companies as Idaho Power and FirstEnergy, company officials told TransmissionHub. In a statement provided to TransmissionHub, Quin Shea, Edison Electric Institute Vice President, Environment, said: As EPA moves to repeal the Clean Power Plan, we also encourage the agency to move forward with a replacement rule that provides states with compliance flexibility, and that allows the electric power industry to continue its fleet transition. [EEI, 10/17]

FERC’s Powelson defends gas plant reliability in face of DOE rule request … Federal Energy Regulatory Commission member Robert Powelson brushed off assertions that natural gas plant performance issues drove power outages during the 2014 polar vortex, a key assumption behind the U.S. Department of Energy’s recent proposal to better compensate coal and nuclear plants to ensure reliability. Powelson spoke Oct. 16 at the American Association of Blacks in Energy’s, or AABE’s, 2017 policy summit in Washington, D.C. [EEI, 10/17]

Project approvals splinter FERC, trigger rare dissent … The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s decision last week to approve two contentious natural gas pipelines featured a rarity for the agency: a dissent. FERC’s newly appointed Chairman Neil Chatterjee and Commissioner Robert Powelson late Friday gave a green light to the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines, two projects that would transport shale gas across Appalachia. [EEI, 10/17]

PG&E says nearly all electricity restored after wildfires … More than 3,000 Pacific Gas and Electric Co. employees and mutual-aid partners continued to make progress Monday restoring electric and gas service to customers in the aftermath of the unprecedented wind-driven wildfires. PG&E anticipates restoring service to essentially all electric customers who are able to receive it, and once approval to energize is granted, by late Monday. [EEI, 10/17]

WEC takes stab at MISO behind-the-meter definition … WEC Energy Group uncovered a Tariff inconsistency while it was developing a proposal to improve MISO’s behind-the-meter generation participation rules, a company representative said last week. WEC’s Chris Plante said MISO’s definition of
what constitutes a network resource, defined in Module B of the Tariff, doesn’t recognize all capacity acquired under Module E, which covers the procurement of resource adequacy. [EEI, 10/17]

**Nuclear industry in terminal decline as China is set to miss 58-GW goal …**  Nuclear energy is in irreversible decline across the world, with the construction of new units appearing to bottom out, a new report found. “The deterioration of the situation is accelerating,” warned Paris-based nuclear consultant Mycle Schneider at the U.S. launch of the World Nuclear Industry Status Report on Oct. 12 in Washington, D.C. The event was hosted by the anti-nuclear Natural Resources Defense Council, the Union of Concerned Scientists and the German Green Party-linked Heinrich Boll Stiftung North America foundation. [EEI, 10/17]

**Coal plant closures are coming to Texas. Now what …**  If anyone needed a reminder of the breadth of change coming to the electricity sector, Vistra Energy Corp. offered a big one last week. The company said Friday that its Luminant subsidiary plans to close the Big Brown and Sandow coal-fueled power plants in Texas. That came a week after Luminant disclosed a decision to retire its Monticello plant, which also runs on coal. [EEI, 10/17]

**Wind generation capacity outpacing coal in Texas …**  An analysis by the University of Texas at Austin’s Energy Institute shows wind energy generation capacity in Texas may already have surpassed coal-fired capacity in the state, and wind almost certainly will have leapfrogged coal by early next year, as wind farms continue to dot the landscape while more coal plants in the state are shuttered. The report from the Energy Institute comes on the heels of last week’s announcements of the closing of three large Vistra Energy coal plants in Texas Big Brown, Sandow, and Monticello, operated by Vistra subsidiary Luminant. All three plants are set to close in early 2018. [EEI, 10/17]

**Energy plant developer pulls the plug on its natural gas project in Oxnard …**  The developer of a proposed natural gas energy plant in Ventura County asked state regulators Monday to suspend review of the plans, effectively ending the controversial project. In response to regulators’ recommendation this month to reject the project, NRG Energy asked the California Energy Commission to end all hearings regarding its proposal while the company determines whether it will completely withdraw the application. [EEI, 10/17]

**Solar industry wants to build Puerto Rico’s energy grid of the future …**  The island is focused on restoring power as quickly as possible, but it can’t ignore the chance to rethink its entire energy grid. It began with a question posed by Richard Birt, a Las Vegas Fire & Rescue captain: What do you need? The answer for the San Juan fire house was simple enough: electricity. [EEI, 10/17]

**Helena triathlete Grahame wins Maine AquaBike, takes 2nd at NYC Tri …**  Capital City triathlete Heather Grahame took part in the Maine 70.3 AquaBike on Aug. 29, where she captured her age-group title in the 1.2-mile swim and 56.1-mile bike race. Grahame, 62, placed fourth among all women and finished 10th overall, including the men. Her bike split was 2 hours, 45 minutes, which she said she was “very happy with.” “Swimming in the Atlantic Ocean was a challenge, with chop, currents and 2,000 of my new best friends,” related Grahame, who placed 19th in her age-group at last year’s World 70.3 Australian Iron Man Triathlon in Australia. Six weeks earlier, she placed runner-up in her age-group at the New York City Triathlon, in July. Grahame was competing against 919 women in the Olympic distance triathlon, and finished 112th overall. By placing second in her division of 29 triathletes, she earned an invitation to the 2018 NYC Lifetime Tri National Championship. In this year’s Big Apple race, Grahame’s 25-mile bike split was the fastest in her age-group, and No. 35 of all women. She also ranked 676 overall against the entire field of 3,158 men and women. “The best parts of the race were competing for Team ALS and raising money for that organization, and helping a swimmer in distress” Grahame recounted. “The result was a huge surprise because it was a PR … swimming in the Hudson River was a leap of faith.” [Helena Independent Record, 10/17]

**Aloe Vera Juice …** Should you drink aloe vera juice? Some manufacturers claim that this juice can help digestion and boost the immune system; however, many health experts are cautious since there is little scientific data behind these claims. Side effects may also include abdominal cramps and diarrhea. When considering any herbal nutritional product, talk with your doctor first about possible risks and side effects. [Wellness Program, 10/17]

**Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time ~ George Bernard Shaw**