

# THE UPDATE

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*The goal of our monthly update is to provide information on timely matters that may impact your practice and professional interests.  
HAPPY NEW YEAR AND SEASONS GREETINGS*



## **STATES DIVIDE OVER CLIMATE WARMING ISSUES**

*The roughly 12 states that wish to launch their own initiatives to curb greenhouse gas emissions are fueling potential problems with neighboring states and federal government aides resisting efforts of other developed countries to have the U.S. agree on greenhouse gas emission curbs. For example, Western states with plentiful coal supplies oppose California's call for them to adopt the same emissions regulations imposed in Sacramento. California which currently obtains about 1/4 of its energy needs from out-of-state power plants has proposed to require those out-of-state plants to have emissions on par with its own natural gas power plants. Given that roughly 20 or more western states coal-fired power plants now under construction could supply needed power to California-which might otherwise face future energy shortages if such a policy is adopted, some rethinking may be in order.*



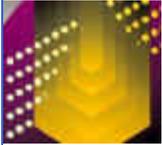
## **LAUNCHES LESS THAN 1950 OFF FLORIDA COAST**

*Only 10 rockets took off from Florida's Space Coast this year-the lowest number since the U.S. military began launching missiles off Cape Canaveral in 1950. The low number is believed attributable to: failure to fix the shuttle's foam problem following the Columbia disaster; the wider use of cheaper rockets built overseas; foreign launch sites now available to boost satellites and Boeing's grounding of its Delta 4 booster rockets. With NASA's planned launch of four of five missions in 2006 to meet its deadline for completion of the International Space Station along with its planned testing of a series of new rockets to replace the shuttles for moving people and goods to the space station, the moon and eventually Mars, we may be looking up more again along the Florida Coast.*



## **FIXING THE BIG EASY WILL BE HUGE AND COSTLY**

***The disagreements over how to reconstruct the City of New Orleans are many but about one thing there is general agreement- it must involve a flood protection system capable of surviving a Category 5 storm. Yet attaining that level of protection now appears to be cost prohibitive and technically challenging since it involves more than simply making the levees taller. Experts have concluded that it would require significant modifications to the city's drainage canals and pumps, environmental rehabilitation of the area's wetlands and barrier islands and installing sea gates near the Gulf of Mexico. Preliminary cost estimates by state officials indicate that the work could cost more than \$32 billion and would take decades to complete. With the next hurricane season just 6-7 months away and with the Mayor now urging former residents to return home to New Orleans, are local, state and federal disaster planning capabilities and financial resources "up to the job" of protecting Big Easy citizens and visitors in 2006?***



#### **TRAFFIC ENGINEERS TOUTING ROUNDABOUTS FOR US**

***To reduce growing traffic congestion and get vehicles through crowded intersections, traffic engineers are now considering an old idea-namely using more roundabouts. This would allow taking out traffic lights and move vehicles around a circular island continuously at low speeds. Roundabouts would require drivers entering the circle to yield to those already in it -much like NASCAR. A recent study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that crashes typically drop by 40% or more when roundabouts replace right angle intersections with traffic lights. Fuel consumption and air pollution also drops sharply. These arguments give new meaning to that old adage: what goes around comes around.***

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