

BUSINESS

Dow 30 Industrials	S&P 500	Nasdaq	Russell 2000	Toronto Stock Exchange	Gold	Oil per barrel	Dollar vs. Canada	Dollar vs. Euro
+ 62.87 ▲ 17,006.77	+ 6.59 ▲ 1,999.99	+ 9.60 ▲ 4,717.02	+ 5.89 ▲ 1,081.93	+ 88.85 ▲ 13,212.50	+ \$12.50 ▲ \$1,269.90	+ \$1.35 ▲ \$35.92	- 0.0077 ▼ 1.3329	- 0.0033 ▼ 0.9092

U.S. adds 242K jobs in February

However, wages drop slightly, tempering the otherwise upbeat monthly Labor Department report.

New York Times

With anxiety about the economy bubbling up on Wall Street and at campaign rallies across the country, the government reported Friday that employers added 242,000 workers in February, a hefty increase that highlighted the labor market's steady gains.

Four years ago, at this point in the last presidential election cycle, the jobless rate was 8.3 percent and the economic recovery

was in a relatively early stage. Then, worries centered on rising gas prices, deep consumer debt and government layoffs.

Now, the recovery is in its seventh year, the unemployment rate has dropped sharply to 4.9 percent and the private sector has chalked up 72 months of uninterrupted job gains, the longest streak on record.

Oil prices may still be causing ulcers, but this time it is primarily producers who are feeling the pain, because prices have plunged.

The shadow on the otherwise positive Labor Department report was that wages fell 0.1 percent in February, a disappointment after January's promising 0.5 percent increase. That put the yearly growth in wages at 2.2 percent, only slightly ahead of the inflation rate. The average length of the workweek declined

by 0.2 hours last month.

Perhaps the most encouraging sign in the monthly statistics was evidence that people who had long been sidelined were being lured back to the job market. The overall share of Americans in the labor force ticked up 0.2 percentage points to 62.9 percent.

"We are seeing job growth across a range of industries, but we're also seeing a polarization in the labor market," said Tara

Sinclair, chief economist for the job site Indeed.

Robust demand for hospital-ity and service workers has been helping keep total job growth count up despite losses in manufacturing, transportation, warehousing and energy, industries that also tend to be dominated by blue-collar white men.

The manufacturing sector, for example, lost 16,000 jobs last month.

"Working people in states like Michigan and Ohio feel the lousy manufacturing job loss and growing trade deficit with China, even if Wall Street and D.C. do not," Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing, said in a statement.

"If you're wondering why there's so much interest in political insurgencies among both Democrats and Republicans this year, here's your answer:"

Duke's coal ash ponds pollute N.C. waterways

Environmental regulators in the state are considering fines.

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Duke Energy is violating North Carolina pollution laws because its coal ash pits are polluting nearby waterways, state environmental regulators said Friday. Fines are being considered.

The state Division of Water Resources sent letters to Duke, accusing the country's largest electric company of violating state law by allowing wastewater to leak from coal ash basins at 12 of the company's 14 current or former coal-burning power plants.

Wastewater is what leaks from coal ash ponds into nearby water bodies. Coal ash is the residue left after decades of burning coal to generate power. It contains toxic materials like arsenic and chromium.

Duke Energy, which serves much of west-central Florida, has 30 days to respond officially to regulators. It said in a statement Friday, "There is nothing new here" and work to shut down the ponds is under way.

Southern Environmental Law Center attorney Frank Holleman said his group has been telling Gov. Pat McCrory's environmental agency, the Department of Environmental Quality, about the illegal discharges for three years.

"It has taken DEQ three years to take this proposed action. But still, at many of these sites, DEQ is only proposing to issue fines," Holleman said. "Proposed fines will not do these communities or their rivers one bit of good."

The DEQ is holding hearings this month to get public input on proposed classifications for all 32 coal-ash pits at 14 plants that will set their clean-up schedule.

Countdown to One



SCOTT KEELER | Times

St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony Friday for the One St. Petersburg condominium, hotel and parking garage. One will be the tallest building in downtown St. Petersburg and house 253 luxury condos, a 40,000-square-foot elevated resort deck with a fitness center, swimming pool, cabanas, whirlpool and spa, and a 173-room Hyatt Hotel with more than 17,000 square feet of retail space. Kolter Group is the developer of One, which was designed by SB Architects. In the background is Bayfront Tower condominium.

Preserving Publix's past is labor of love

Jennifer Bush knows a lot about Publix, having worked there 35 years.

Like, did you know that body weight scales have been in Publix stores since the beginning? The iconic green scales found in store lobbies are still a staple in Florida supermarkets, but they don't exist in Publix locations outside of the state.



JUSTINE GRIFFIN
What's in Store

They've always been free to use.

Bush started working for Publix part time in the accounting department when she was still in high school in 1980, when company founder George Jenkins was still there. She worked in advertising and public relations, too, serving for some time as the company's spokeswoman. » See GRIFFIN, 5B



Photo from Publix Super Markets

George Jenkins opened his "dream store" in 1940. It was one of the first grocery stores with automatic sliding doors, frozen food cases and air conditioning.

Beyond Tampa Bay

AMC ENTERTAINMENT will acquire Carmike Cinemas for about \$737 million in cash, forming the country's largest chain with more than 600 theaters. The deal is the biggest by AMC since it returned to the public markets in a 2013 stock sale. AMC is currently the country's second-biggest movie theater chain with 5,426 screens, behind the Regal Entertainment Group's 7,361. Carmike operates 2,954 screens.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT is investigating complaints that the brakes can fail on Ford's F-150 truck, one of the nation's most popular vehicles. The inquiry covers about 420,000 pick-ups with 3.5-liter, six-cylinder engines from the 2013 and 2014 model years, according to documents posted Friday on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website. The NHTSA says some drivers have reported that the pedals can suddenly go to the floor with a complete loss of braking.



COSTCO is raising entry-level wages for its hourly workers for the first time since 2007 as the warehouse club operator fights to compete in a tighter labor market. It will pay workers \$1.50 more per hour in the U.S. and Canada, effective this month. Workers will now earn at least \$13 or \$13.50 per hour, up from a minimum of \$11.50 or \$12 per hour. The announcement came as Costco reported fiscal second-quarter net income of \$546 million, down from \$598 million a year earlier.

GAS PRICES spiked this week, with the average price of a gallon of unleaded gas rising to \$1.811 on Friday, up from \$1.728 a week earlier. The increase in the Tampa Bay area over the same period was even higher, rising to \$1.813 from \$1.649 a week ago. Though crude oil prices increased about 10 percent this week, closing Friday up \$1.35 to \$35.92, the gas price jump largely reflects the change in seasons. Every year at this time, refineries have to stop for maintenance and then switch to more expensive summer blends.

\$1.8B

AMOUNT Denver-based luggage manufacturer Samsonite International is paying to acquire Tumi Holdings, based in South Plainfield, N.J., seeking to expand its presence in the luxury bags market

THE BOTTOM LINE: Tesla says the Model 3, its \$35,000 electric vehicle, will be unveiled March 31 in Los Angeles ... Airbnb hires Peace Corps director David J. King III as its first director of diversity, part of the trend of technology companies trying to build more inclusive workforces

Maker of lenses to cut 120 workers

Transitions Optical is planing to end production at its Pinellas Park facility.

BY JUSTINE GRIFFIN
Times Staff Writer

PINELLAS PARK — Lens-maker Transitions Optical is phasing out all manufacturing from its Pinellas Park headquarters and plant over the next year and a half.

Transition Optical is known for creating and manufacturing photochromic eyeglass lenses that shift from light to dark in different amounts of light. The company employs 300 full-time workers at its Pinellas Park operation at 9251 Belcher Road. An estimated 40 percent, or around 120, of those positions will be eliminated from July this year through the end of 2017, said Lesley Sillaman, a spokeswoman for the company. Most of those positions are in the company's production facility.

"Manufacturing will be moved to other facilities around the world and our overall global manufacturing capacity will be increased to meet anticipated future demand. This move will help us to further reinforce our competitiveness so we can accelerate the development of the photochromic category and better support the Transitions brand and our customers through the development of new offers and capitalizing on our expertise, especially in fast-growing markets and Europe," Jose Alves, general manager of the American branch, said. » See LAYOFF, 5B

Spaghetti Warehouse to shutter

Times staff

Spaghetti Warehouse will close its restaurant in Ybor City after serving the Tampa Bay community for more than 25 years.

The restaurant's last day is Wednesday.

"We are working closely with everyone on our staff, whose hard work and dedication is appreciated, and we thank them for their many contributions," a news release from the restaurant states. "To our many guests, we say thank you. We enjoyed serving you, your family and friends."

The restaurant, located at 1911 13th St. in Ybor City, opened for business in 1991 in a building that once housed a cigar factory.

Spaghetti Warehouse is part of a chain of restaurants that has 15 locations in seven states. The chain began in Dallas in 1972 and is known for its family atmosphere and Italian dishes. For some time, the Tampa restaurant hosted murder mystery dinner shows.