

Hiring Surges In January

Jobless Rate At 8.3 Percent, Lowest In 3 Years

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — In a long-awaited surge of hiring, companies added 243,000 jobs in January — across the economy, up and down the pay scale and far more than just anyone expected. Unemployment fell to 8.3 percent, the lowest in three years.

The job growth was the fastest since last March and April. Before that, the last month with stronger hiring, excluding months skewed by temporary census jobs, was March 2006.

The unemployment rate came down by two notches from December. It has fallen five months in a row, the first time that has happened since 1994, two economic booms and two recessions ago.

"The economy is growing stronger," President Barack Obama said. "The recovery is speeding up."

Indeed, the report Friday from the Labor Department seemed to reinforce that the nation is entering a virtuous cycle, a reinforcing loop in which stronger hiring leads to more consumer spending, which

leads to even more hiring and spending.

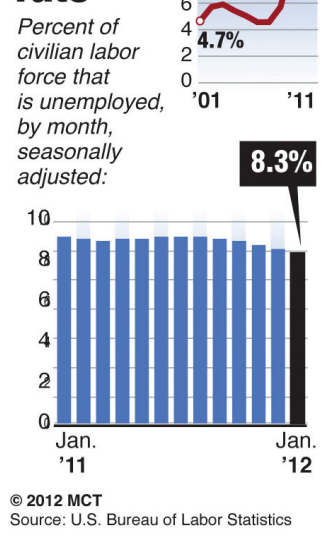
On Wall Street, where investors had already driven stocks to their best start in 15 years because of optimism about the economy, the jobs report triggered a spasm of buying.

The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 156.82 points, its second-best showing this year, and finished the day at 12,862.23, its highest close since May 2008, four months before the financial crisis struck.

The Nasdaq composite index finished at its highest level since December 2000, during a steep decline after the dot-com stock craze. Money poured out of bonds, which are considered less risky than stocks, and bond yields rose.

"Virtually every economist on the planet had expected a drop in the rate of job gains in January, which makes today's upward surprise even more surprising," Dan Greenhaus, chief global strategist at the brokerage BTIG, said in a note to clients. In December, 203,000 jobs were created.

Jobless rate



Komen Drops Plans To Cut Planned Parenthood Grants

BY DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK — For leaders of the nation's pre-eminent breast-cancer charity, it was a firestorm they didn't see coming — and couldn't withstand.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure on Friday abandoned plans to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood. The dramatic retreat followed a three-day furor that resounded across the Internet, in Congress and — perhaps most tellingly — among Komen affiliates who openly rebelled, suggesting the leadership had bowed to anti-abortion pressure.

"We want to apologize to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives," a Komen statement said.

As first reported by The Associated Press on Tuesday, Komen had adopted criteria excluding Planned Parenthood from future grants for breast-cancer screenings because it was under government investigation, citing a probe launched by a Florida congressman at the urging of anti-abortion groups.

"We will amend the criteria to make clear that disqualifying investigations must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political," Komen said Friday. "That is what is right and fair."

As a result, Komen said, "we will continue to fund existing grants, including those of Planned Parenthood, and preserve their eligibility to apply for future grants."

Komen officials were unavailable for further comment on how they came to change their plans. There was no indication that the organization had come under pressure from its corporate partners. But many of Komen's own affiliates nationwide had objected to cutting off the grants, which totaled \$680,000 in 2011. An Aspen, Colo., affiliate announced Thursday that it would defy the new rules and continue grants to its local Planned Parenthood partner, while all seven of Komen's California affiliates said they "strongly opposed" the planned cutoff.



DAVID KENT/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/MCT
Nan Wagner (left) and Hilda Ceron express their opposition to abortion on Houston Street outside Planned Parenthood of North Texas' 2012 annual luncheon at the Omni Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas, Friday, February 3, 2012. Discussion was lively among the attendees after the Susan G. Komen Foundation's reversal of its recent decision to sever ties with Planned Parenthood.

In addition, Komen was inundated with negative comments via emails, on Twitter and on its Facebook page. Many of the messages conveyed a determination to halt gifts to Komen — organizer of the popular Race for the Cure events — because of the decision.

Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood was reporting an outpouring of donations, large and small, that totaled \$3 million between Tuesday evening and Friday afternoon. Planned Parenthood said the funds would be used to expand its breast health services, which already provide nearly 750,000 breast exams each year.

Hackers Intercept Call Between FBI, Scotland Yard

BY RAPHAEL SATTER
Associated Press

LONDON — Trading jokes and swapping leads, investigators from the FBI and Scotland Yard spent the conference call strategizing about how to bring down the hacking collective known as Anonymous, responsible for a string of embarrassing attacks across the Internet.

Unfortunately for the cyber sleuths, the hackers were in on the call too — and now so is the rest of the world.

Anonymous published the roughly 15-minute-long recording of the call on the Internet on Friday, gloating in a Twitter message that "the FBI might be curious how we're able to continuously read their internal comms for some time now."

The humiliating coup exposed a vulnerability that might have had more serious consequences had someone else been listening in on the line.

"A law enforcement agency using unencrypted, insecure communications is a major fumble," said Marcus Carey, who spent years securing communications for the U.S. National Security Agency before joining security-risk assessment firm Rapid7.

"What if this event was talking about some terrorist plot to blow up something and 'they' were listening in? It could've been much worse if it was related to an al-Qaida plot or something ... So this is a lesson learned."

The leak was one of a slew of Anonymous hacks that hit websites across the United States Friday, including in Boston, where the police site was defaced, and in Salt Lake City, where officials said that personal information of confidential informants and tipsters had been compromised.

Anonymous also claimed credit for defacing the Greek Justice Ministry's website and stealing a mountain of data from the Virginia-based law firm that defended a U.S. Marine recently convicted for his role in the bloody 2005 raid in Iraq that became known as the Haditha massacre.

Activists Say At Least 23 Killed In Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Deadly clashes erupted between government troops and rebels in suburbs of the Syrian capital and villages in the country's south Friday, sparking fighting that killed at least 23 people, including nine soldiers, activists said.

President Bashar Assad is trying to crush an 11-month-old uprising with a sweeping crackdown that has so far claimed thousands of lives, but neither the government nor the protesters are backing down and clashes between the military and an increasingly bold and armed opposition has meant much of the country is now engulfed in violence.

The fighting spread to new areas Friday, with army dissidents reportedly seizing a security post in the rural town of Andan in the northwestern province of Aleppo, marking the first time rebels have struck so close to the powerful merchant city of Aleppo. The reports could not be independently confirmed.

With the violence in Syria growing increasingly chaotic, diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the crisis have gained pace.

Micron Says CEO Steve Appleton Killed In Crash

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A small experimental plane piloted by the chief executive and chairman of Micron Technology Inc. crashed after take-off Friday at the Boise airport, killing the head of the Idaho memory chip maker who survived a similar crash eight years ago.

Steve Appleton, a professional stunt pilot and former motor cross racer, was the only person aboard the plane when witnesses said it steeply banked, stalled and rolled to the ground, according to Zoe Keliher, air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. It was the aircraft's second take-off attempt for the morning.

Appleton's death was confirmed by Micron spokesman Dan Francisco, and trading in the company's stock was halted. The company's shares have traded between \$3.97 and \$11.95 over the past year, and shares were up 23 cents at \$7.95 Friday before the announcement.

"Steve's passion and energy left an indelible mark on Micron, the Idaho community and the technology industry at large," Micron's board of directors said in a prepared statement.

Clashes Highlight Security Vacuum In Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Protesters filled the streets and clashed for a second day Friday with police who fired tear gas and birdshot in Cairo, as a deadly soccer riot focused rising public anger over lawlessness and collapsing security a year after Egypt's uprising.

Six people have been killed and more than 1,500 injured in the latest bloodshed that followed a violent melee and stampede after a soccer game Wednesday in the Mediterranean city of Port Said in which 74 people died.

Egyptians streamed out of Friday prayers in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and several Nile Delta cities, criticizing police and calling on the military rulers led by Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi to step down.

On Cairo's Tahrir Square — the heart of the uprising that ousted President Hosni Mubarak a year ago — protesters raised banners and pictures of those killed in Port Said and chanted, "The people want to execute the marshal."

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