



Cold With A Few Clouds

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INSIDE TODAY



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U.S. Economy Enters New Year With Momentum

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. manufacturing grew slightly last month and factory hiring increased. The modest gain suggests the economy entered the new year with some momentum.

The Institute for Supply Management said Wednesday that its index of manufacturing activity rose in December to 50.7. That's up from a reading of 49.5 in the November, which was the lowest reading since July 2009, one month after the recession ended.

A reading above 50 indicates growth, while a reading below signals contraction. The ISM is a trade group of purchasing managers.

A measure of employment increased last month to 52.7. That's up from 48.4 in November, which was the first time the employment gauge fell below 50 in three years.

Factories have cut jobs in three of the four months through November, according to government data. The jump in employment in the ISM survey suggests manufacturers may have stepped up hiring last month.

The Labor Department releases the December jobs report on Friday.

Still, a gauge of new orders was unchanged and production grew more slowly, the survey found. Manufacturers also cut back on stockpiles, a sign of concern about future demand.

"The trend in manufacturing remains weak," Jim O'Sullivan, an economist at High Frequency Economics, said in a note to clients. The closely watched

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Fiscal Cliff Averted, For Now

Deal Lays Groundwork For More Struggles Ahead

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Onward to the next fiscal crisis. Actually, several of them, potentially. The New Year's Day deal averting the "fiscal cliff" lays the groundwork for more combustible struggles in Washington over taxes, spending and debt in the next few months.

President Barack Obama's victory on taxes this week was the second, grudging round of piecemeal successes in as many years in chipping away at the nation's mountainous deficits. Despite the length and intensity of the

debate, the deal to raise the top income tax rate on families earning over \$450,000 a year — about 1 percent of households — and including only \$12 billion in spending cuts turned out to be a relatively easy vote for many. This was particularly so because the alternative was to raise taxes on everyone.

But in banking \$620 billion in higher taxes over the coming decade from wealthier earners, Obama and his Republican rivals have barely touched deficits still expected to be in the \$650 billion range by the end of his second term. And those back-of-the-envelope calculations assume policymakers can find more than \$1 tril-



Obama

lion over 10 years to replace automatic across-the-board spending cuts known as a sequester.

"They didn't do any of the tough stuff," said Erskine Bowles, chairman of Obama's 2010 deficit commission. "We've taken two steps now, but those two steps combined aren't enough to put our fiscal house in order."

In 2011, the government adopted tighter caps on day-to-day operating budgets of the Pentagon and other cabinet agencies to save \$1.1 trillion over 10 years.

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Yankton High School graduate Joe Giganti moved to New York City in 2010 to follow his dreams of working in the film industry. As an assistant editor in post-production, Giganti has worked on numerous projects, including shows on TLC, the Food Network and HBO.

Giganti Living His Dream

BY DEREK BARTOS
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After movies and television shows are shot, the actors stop acting, and the camera operators stop filming.

But the work isn't done yet. In fact, for people like Joe Giganti, it's just getting started.

A 2007 Yankton High School graduate, Giganti works in New York City in the field of post-production. The process typically includes the editing of video, sound and special effects.

"Right now I'm an assistant editor," Giganti said. "It's a lot of technical work — processing footage into the computers to start editing, doing rough cuts, finding footage, stuff like that."

Since moving to New York in 2010, Giganti has worked on several types of productions, from reality TV to documentaries to episodic television. Those shows include TLC's "Say Yes To The Dress," the Food Network's "Chopped" and an HBO documentary on singer Beyonce Knowles. He is currently assisting with

the editing of HBO's "Treme," a drama series about post-Katrina New Orleans.

Being involved with such a wide variety of shows is common for people in the film industry, Giganti said. Like many others, he does freelance work and is not associated with only one company.

"After one show, it's just on to the next thing," he said. "It happens with all facets of the film industry, whether you're shooting, editing, producing or directing. Everyone kind of floats from show to show."

Giganti said he has enjoyed the diversity he has experienced "floating" between projects, as well as the numerous people he has met.

"It's exciting working with a lot of other creative people," he said. "I've worked with musicians, graphics people, people who work on the visual effects. Just interacting with all those people, it's nice to be in that kind of environment."

Giganti added that while it is not a regular

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Extraordinary Snowfall Needed To Relieve Drought

BY JIM SUHR
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — When his drought-stricken Nebraska farm was blanketed with several inches of snow, Tom Schwarz welcomed the moisture. But it wasn't nearly enough.

He had hoped for a wet, snowy winter. Instead, he's watched with worry as the sky spits mostly flakes that don't stick.

"I just shudder to think what it's going to be if we don't get snow," Schwarz said. "A friend told me it would take 150 inches of snow to get us back to normal precipitation."

Despite getting some big storms last month, much of the U.S. is still desperate for relief from the nation's longest dry spell in decades. And experts say it will take an absurd amount of snow to ease the woes of farmers and ranchers.

The same fears haunt firefighters, water utilities and many communities across the country.

Winter storms have dropped more than 15 inches of snow on parts of the Midwest and East in recent weeks. Climatologists say it would take at least 8 feet of snow — and likely far more — to return the soil to its pre-drought condition in time for spring planting. A foot of snow is roughly equal to an inch of water, depending on density.

Many areas are begging for moisture after a summer that caused water levels to fall to near-record lows on lakes Michigan and Huron. The Mississippi River has declined so much that barge traffic south of St. Louis could soon come to a halt. Out West, firefighters worry that a lack of snow will leave forests and fields like tinder come spring, risking a repeat of the wildfires that burned some 9.2 million acres in 2012.

Scores of cities that have already enacted water restrictions are thinking about what they will do in 2013 if heavy snows and spring rains don't materialize.

For a while, it seemed no snow would come. Midwestern cities including Chicago, Milwaukee and Des Moines, Iowa, had their latest first snows on record. How much would it take to make things right?

"An amount nobody would wish on their worst enemy," said David Pearson, a National Weather Service hydrologist in Omaha, Neb. "It's so out of this world it wouldn't make much scientific sense (to guess). It would take a record-breaking snowfall for the season to get us back on track."

That's why Schwarz is worried about his 750 acres near Lexington in south-central Nebraska. To save his corn last summer, he pulled water from deep wells and

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More Than 100 Pine Trees To Be Removed At Lewis and Clark Recreation Area

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
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State officials at the Lewis and Clark Recreation Area will begin 2013 by getting rid of more than 100 sick Austrian pine trees before they infect and kill other trees.

According to District Park Manager Shane Bertsch, staff at the park have noticed brown needles on some trees during the last three years. It's been determined that they have an affliction called pine wilt.

"The real die-off was in the last year," he stated. "The dead pines will be cut down, removed from the area and burned."

The majority of the dead trees — approxi-

mately 100 of them — are on the north side of Gavins Point Road at the park's west entrance. Dead trees are also scattered along the nature, horse and multi-use trails.

During the removal process, there will be days that Gavins Point Road at the west entrance to the park will be closed from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. While the road is closed, park visitors and homeowners will have access by using the Midway entrance to the park.

"We appreciate everyone's cooperation during the removal of these diseased trees," Bertsch said.

Most of the Austrian pines that have fallen victim to the disease were planted in the 1960s. According to John Ball, an Extension

forestry specialist for South Dakota State University and a forest health specialist for the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, pine wilt appeared across southern South Dakota in 2012.

"Numerous Scotch and Austrian pines from the Nebraska border to approximately Interstate 90 had their needles turn grayish green then brown during this past summer and autumn," he wrote in a recent article. "Now, these dead trees have brown needles that are hanging from the branches, and these will be dropping during the winter and into spring."

Pine wilt is associated with the



COURTESY PHOTO

These Austrian pines at the Lewis and Clark Recreation Area will be cut down this month. They have turned brown and died due to pine wilt, which is spread by the pinewood nematode.

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