

Survey:

# Economy Slows In Midwest, Plains

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Economic growth appears to be slowing in nine Midwest and Plains states, but a monthly survey of business leaders released Friday suggests the region remains healthy overall.

The report's overall economic index declined to 57.6 in May from April's 60, but remained well above the neutral score of 50.

"The businesses that we survey continue to benefit from healthy farm income and exports," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey. "As a result, our survey indicates growth for the next three to six months for the region. However, it is clear that this growth is softening as a result of the stronger dollar."

May's export index dropped to 55.1, from April's 57. The import index rose to 57.1, from April's 56.7.

Goss said exports are an important factor driving economic growth in the region, but the stronger dollar will slow new export or-

ders in the months ahead. As the U.S. dollar strengthens, the region's exports become more expensive overseas.

The economic survey uses a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Any score above 50 suggests expansion, while a score below 50 suggests contraction.

The survey of business leaders and supply managers covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Hiring remains strong in the region even though the employment index dipped to 61.2 in May, from April's 62.1.

"I expect the region to continue to add jobs in the months ahead. However, the regional growth is likely to move lower as the global and U.S. economies weaken," Goss said.

The report's prices-paid index that tracks the cost of raw materials dropped to 59.9 in May, from April's 67.8.

"This is the lowest reading for our inflation gauge since the recession ended in June 2009. Slower economic growth and a stronger dollar are both slowing the growth in prices for inputs across the board," Goss said.

Business leaders appeared less certain about the economy over the next six months because the confidence index declined to 55.8 in May, from 64.5 in April.

Other components of the overall index were:

- The inventory index declined to 55.3 in May, from 56.7 in April.

- New orders fell to 57.2, from April's 64.

- Production or sales increased slightly to 61.9 in May, from 61.3.

- Delivery lead times declined to 52.7 in May, from April's 56.1.

Online:  
Creighton University economic reports:  
<http://www.outlook-economic.com>

Augustana President:

# Education No Longer Priority For Government

BY KRISTI EATON  
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — Education no longer seems to be a priority among people in government, the president of Augustana College said Friday.

Rob Oliver said an upcoming interest rate hike on the subsidized Stafford loan shows education does not carry the same weight as obtaining a loan for a house or car. The Stafford loan is scheduled to increase from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1.

"I don't know how we can look these young people in the

eye and say, 'You're not worth it,'" Oliver said. "It's a statement of priority."

Contrary to popular belief, Augustana, a private university, is not made up solely of students from wealthy families, Olive said. He noted that 76 percent of Augustana students use some sort of financial aid.

Oliver's comments came at a meeting organized by U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson about college affordability. Johnson met with students and administrators from Southeast Technical Institute, Augustana College and the University of South Dakota to learn

about the issues facing current and recent graduates of institutions in South Dakota.

Jaelene Pascoe, who graduated from Southeast Technical Institute last month, said financial aid is important for non-traditional students such as herself. The 29-year-old worked full time while attending the technical school.

"If I didn't have financial aid, I wouldn't have gone," she said.

Johnson noted that South Dakota has the highest percentage of students graduating with debt in the U.S. A recent report

found 75 percent of four-year graduates leave school with debt, although the average amount — \$23,000 — is less than other states.

The Democratic senator pledged to try to halt the interest rate increase on the Stafford loan, which more than 30,000 South Dakota undergraduates receive. He also said he would continue to support Pell Grants and work study programs.

"We need to make college more affordable and not allow this devastating rate hike to punish our students," Johnson said.

# Neb. Court: Man Waited Too Long To Be Girl's Dad

BY TIMBERLY ROSS  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — A St. Louis man who found out three years ago that he had a nearly 10-year-old daughter living in Omaha does not have custody rights to her because he waited too long to seek them and he failed to follow up after learning the girl's mother might be pregnant, the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled Friday.

Todd Withrow learned from a co-worker that a former flame, Amy Long, travelled from Omaha to St. Louis looking to speak with him in 1999 and that she might be pregnant, but he never tried reaching out to her, the high court said in its decision, which overturned a lower court's order transferring custody of the now 12-year-old girl to Withrow from the Omaha man who helped raise her, Jeffrey Bulduc.

"While Todd slept on his rights, Jeffrey fulfilled the obligations of a father," the opinion said.

Bulduc, who was also romantically involved with Long in the spring of 1999, was established as the girl's father in a 2001 court decree that granted him visitation rights and ordered him to pay child support. That changed in 2005, when the state removed the girl from Long's care and gave custody to Bulduc. The records explaining the reasons Long lost custody are sealed.

The state Supreme Court opinion does not list the last names of the parties involved in the case, but they are identified in Sarpy County District Court records.

Long's attorney, Tony Liakos, said the high court made a tough, albeit correct, decision.

"Whether or not Jeff is the biological father, it is the right decision for her stay with him," he said.

A message left Friday for Withrow's attorney wasn't immediately returned. A call to an

attorney listed for Bulduc, who has been raising the girl, rang unanswered.

Long was sexually involved with both men when she became pregnant, according to court records. Withrow was in Omaha for a construction job but returned to St. Louis before Long realized she was pregnant. Long believed Bulduc was the father but still went to visit Withrow to determine whether their relationship was viable. She was unable to see him and never told him she was pregnant, but two of his co-workers with whom she spoke told him they suspected she was pregnant and told Withrow.

Court records say Withrow didn't believe he could be the father of Long's child and never attempted to contact her. In 2009, Long contacted Withrow because she then believed he was the father, based on physical similarities. A paternity test confirmed her suspicion.

Long sought in 2009 to regain custody of her daughter. Withrow, who recently learned he was the biological father, sought to intervene in that case and establish parental rights.

The district court ruled that Withrow sought to establish those rights within two years of the paternity test and that he was fit to be a parent, so he was granted custody of the girl.

Long and Bulduc appealed, and the high court overturned Withrow's parental rights and sent the case back to district court to consider Long's request to have custody. The opinion says the court has discretion in sorting parental matters that involve non-biological parents who assume those responsibilities.

Liakos said the girl is now aware that Withrow is her biological father and has visited him in Missouri. The district court order giving Withrow custody was put on hold while the high court considered the appeal.

# Some S.D. Candidates Lack Campaign Finance Reports

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Almost 30 candidates for the South Dakota Legislature have no campaign finance reports on the secretary of state's website a week after the submission deadline and just days before Tuesday's election.

The missing information is due to some candidates failing to submit reports on time and also to difficulties some are having with a new online system put in place last year to track campaign spending, Secretary of State Jason Gant told the Argus Leader newspaper (<http://argusne.ws/JWPSib>). This is the first election in which candidates are using the system called Campaign Account Statement History, or C.A.S.H.

"It's mostly just people getting used to a new system and starting to navigate it," Gant said.

Gant's office is receiving new reports daily from candidates using the old method of filing campaign finance reports by mail, he said.

Candidates are required to submit reports of the donations they receive and how they spend that money before each election. Legislative candidates in competitive primaries had until 5 p.m. on May 25 to submit their campaign finance reports to the secretary of state.

Gant said candidates not filing on time "is a problem that we've had for a number of years." He can fine candidates \$50 for every day their campaign finance report is late, but he does not plan to fine candidates whose reports trickle in over the next few days.

"If they've had complications with using the C.A.S.H. system, then I'm giving them leniency," he said. "I won't even look at who the late filers are until we get all the way through the primaries, when we can discuss with those candidates ... as to why they were late."

All candidates will be required to submit reports online for the November general election.

# Sentence

From Page 1

"I'm sorry this happened, and I'll do my best to make sure it never happens again."

Eng noted that the child pornography was downloaded as part of larger pornographic files, and that Goetsch did not apparently intend to download the illegal material.

He agreed to give Goetsch a suspended imposition of sen-

tence, adding that it is like a trap. If Goetsch violates the four-year probation she has been sentenced to, Eng said he could sentence her to 20 years in the state penitentiary.

The judge gave Goetsch credit for 45 days she has spent in the Yankton County jail, but also sentenced her to spend the first 15 days of January and August during her four-year probation period in jail.

Additionally, Goetsch was fined \$1,000 and ordered to pay court-related costs.

# Lincoln Eyes State's First Diamond Interchange

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's first diverging diamond interchange could be coming to Lincoln.

The Nebraska Department of Roads wants to build it as part of the continued six-lane expansion on Interstate 80 through the city.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* says the interchange uses traffic signals and curving lanes to route drivers to the opposite side of the road — thereby eliminating left turns against traffic — then brings them safely back to the correct side of the road.

Traffic engineers say a diamond interchange improves traffic capacity, eliminates conflicting traffic movements, is less expensive to build and maintain, improves safety and requires less right of way.

The traffic count on this part on I-80 is about 35,000 vehicles. It's expected to grow to over 90,000 by 2034.

# University Of Neb. Offers Aid In Database Case

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The University of Nebraska has opened a service center for people whose personal data may have been exposed when a hacker reached a major university database.

A toll-free number has been set up: 888-215-4321. The university says it will be answered from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week, although that might change with call volume.

Officials announced last Friday that someone breached security to reach the database of more than 650,000 records belonging to students, alumni, parents and university employees. Officials said there's no evidence that information was downloaded.

The university says its identified a suspect, but no arrest has been reported.

# NU Regents To Consider Same-Sex Benefits

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — University of Nebraska regents will again consider whether to extend employee benefits to same-sex partners.

University President J.B. Milliken proposed "employee plus one" coverage last fall, saying same-sex benefits would be important to help attract and retain top faculty and staff. The Board of Regents considered the proposal but took no action.

The university said Friday that the proposal will be revisited at the board's June 8 meeting.

The "employee plus one" proposal would extend employee benefits to a qualifying, unrelated adult who shares an employee's household, and with whom the employee is financially interdependent. It also would include family coverage for the employee, the other adult and their dependent children.

# Neb. Child Death Case Sent To District Court

FRANKLIN, Neb. (AP) — The cases against three family members charged in the death of a Franklin County toddler have been sent to district court for trial.

Two-year-old Joseph Rinehart Jr., of Naponee, died April 30. The boy's mother, Laura Rinehart, and grandparents, Peter and Nancy Draper, are charged with child abuse resulting in death.

The *Hastings Tribune* says a county court judge has found probable cause to send the cases to district court.

During preliminary hearings on Tuesday, Nebraska State Patrol investigator Tony Kavan said Peter Draper's out-of-control temper got the better of him when disciplining his grandchildren. Kavan also said Draper's wife and daughter were negligent by doing nothing to stop the abuse.

An autopsy showed the boy died of head and internal injuries caused by blunt force trauma.

# Some Upset By Price Of Dakota Dunes Levee

DAKOTA DUNES (AP) — Officials in Dakota Dunes are working to build a permanent levee to prevent a repeat of last year's devastating flooding, but some people aren't happy with having to pay for it.

Residents of the area built up around the Dakota Dunes Country Club are being asked to share the \$2 million in flood repair costs even if they don't belong to the club.

Dakota Dunes Manager Jeff Dooley tells KCAU-TV that the money will pay to take down a temporary levee on holes 17 and 18 and replace it with a permanent levee so the section will be better protected.

Resident Matt Eggers says it isn't fair to put the cost on people who aren't part of the club. But Dooley says everyone will benefit, club members or not.

# S.D. Woman Loses Appeal In Explosion Case

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by a Wessington Springs woman who lost her home when her neighbor's home exploded.

Marguerite Cashman's home was burned when flames spread after the home of her neighbor, Darrick Van Dyke, was destroyed in a propane explosion on Oct. 12, 2007. She claimed that Van Dyke was negligent in lighting a pilot light on his furnace.

A circuit judge ruled that Cashman did not prove Van Dyke acted negligently, and the Supreme Court justices agreed there was not enough evidence to support her claim.

Van Dyke suffered burns over a large part of his body in the explosion. The *Daily Republic* newspaper reports that a lawsuit he filed against his propane supplier ended with a confidential settlement.

# Northeast Neb. Judge Announces Retirement

WAYNE, Neb. (AP) — A judge with more than 20 years on the bench in northeast Nebraska has announced his retirement.

District Court Judge Robert Ensz plans to retire effective Oct. 21. Ensz said in his resignation letter that he's been "honored to serve the state of Nebraska as a district judge during the past 21 years."

Among his other accomplishments while serving in Wayne, Ensz helped establish the Northeast Nebraska Adult Drug Court in Madison.

Officials say the first step in replacing Ensz will be for the Judicial Resources Commission to determine whether the district workload merits his replacement or whether the vacancy should be shifted elsewhere in the state.

The 7th Judicial District serves Antelope, Cuming, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton and Wayne counties.

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