

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Pentagon Shooter's Parents Warned Officials

HOLLISTER, Calif. (AP) — The man who opened fire in front of the Pentagon had a history of mental illness and had become so erratic that his parents reached out to local authorities weeks ago with a warning that he was unstable and might have a gun, authorities said Friday.

It's still unclear why John Patrick Bedell opened fire Thursday at the Pentagon entrance, wounding two police officers before he was fatally shot. The two officers were hospitalized briefly with minor injuries.

Bedell was diagnosed as bipolar, or manic depressive, and had been in and out of treatment programs for years. His psychiatrist, J. Michael Nelson, said Bedell tried to self-medicate with marijuana, inadvertently making his symptoms more pronounced.

His parents reported him missing Jan. 4, a day after a Texas Highway Patrol officer stopped him for speeding in Amarillo, according to the missing person's report. Bedell told the highway patrolman he was heading for the East Coast, and the officer used Bedell's phone to call his mother, Kaye Bedell, because he seemed disheveled and out of sorts.

600 GM Dealerships Set To Not Be Dropped

NEW YORK (AP) — General Motors Co. will reinstate 661 dealerships it sought to drop from its sales network.

GM executives said Friday that 661 dealerships — more than half of the 1,100 seeking to stay with the automaker — will receive letters giving them the option to remain open. The company said it made the move because it would not have enough time to negotiate with all 1,100 dealerships within a four-month window imposed by the federal government.

"By doing this we save a lot of time, energy and dollars," said Jim Bunnell, GM general manager of network support, saying the company wished to avoid a "very large arbitration process."

As part of its restructuring, GM last year told about 2,000 dealerships it would not renew their franchise agreements once they run out in October 2010. But the dealerships have said GM treated them unfairly, and last month Congress passed a law requiring an appeals process for the dealers. About 1,100 dealers have appealed GM's decision.

GM's decision to keep the additional showrooms open effectively shrinks the number of appeals it has to contend with. Arbitration hearings for the dealers who did not get offers will begin later this month.

Strong Aftershocks Hit Quake-Stunned Chile

CONCEPCION, Chile (AP) — The most powerful aftershock in six days sent terrified Chileans fleeing into quake-shattered streets and forced doctors to evacuate some patients from a major hospital on Friday as the nation struggled to comprehend the scope of the disaster that hit it.

People raced into the streets in pajamas as a magnitude-6.0 aftershock struck Concepcion shortly before dawn.

A magnitude-6.6 shock at 8:47 a.m. (6:47 a.m. EST; 1147 GMT) then rattled buildings for nearly a minute.

It was the strongest aftershock since a magnitude-6.9 jolt shortly after Saturday's historic quake and it sent office chairs spilling from upper floor of an already-damaged 22-story building.

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Jobless Rate Holds, 36K Jobs Lost

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — The unemployment rate held at 9.7 percent in February as employers shed 36,000 jobs, fewer than expected. The figures suggested the job market is slowly healing but that significant hiring has yet to occur.

The Labor Department wouldn't quantify how the snowstorms that hammered the East Coast last month affected job losses. Economists said the storms probably inflated job losses but by less than predictions of 100,000 or more. Without the storms, the economy likely would have seen a net jobs gain in February for only the second time since the recession began two years ago.

Doubts about last month's data arose because the snowstorms occurred on the same week that the government surveys businesses about their payrolls. Employees who couldn't make it to work and weren't paid weren't included on those payrolls.

"It looks like the impact of weather was not as large as we thought it would be," said Marisa DiNatale, an economist at Moody's Economy.com.

Some economists said the data suggest that the job market is now pointed in the right direction and that the unemployment rate may have peaked. Nigel Gault, chief economist at IHS Global Insight, said private employers will likely add jobs in March and continue to generate jobs for the rest of the year.

Still, hiring is likely to be weak for much of that time. The recession eliminated about 8.4 million jobs. And it takes 100,000 new jobs per month just to keep up with population growth and keep the unemployment rate from rising.

Even optimistic economists don't expect employers to add much more than 150,000 jobs a month this year — and not until the second half of the year. Gault expects the jobless rate will remain above 9.5 percent by the end of 2010.

On Thursday, the House passed legislation giving companies that hire the jobless a temporary payroll tax break. Economists doubt, though, that it'll create many jobs. President Barack Obama and the Democratic Party are under pressure to address the jobs crisis in a congressional election year.

The report today shows a labor market with no momentum," said Larry Mishel, president of the liberal Economic Policy Institute. "Employment is not growing. And even a gener-

ous interpretation of the snow's impact suggests that the underlying trend is insufficient to drive down unemployment in the near future."

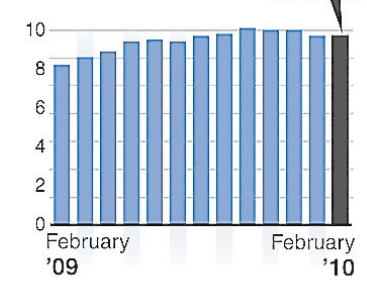
Nearly 14.9 million Americans are unemployed — nearly twice the total when the recession began. The Labor Department revised its estimate of job losses for January from 20,000 to 26,000.

Hiring for the 2010 Census accounted for 15,000 jobs last month, the department said. The government expects to hire 1 million temporary census workers this year.

The February Census gains were countered by steep losses in local government jobs, particularly in education. Overall, government at all levels lost 18,000 jobs.

Jobless rate

Percent of civilian labor force that is unemployed, by month, seasonally adjusted:



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Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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FLOODS

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\$100 million in damage. At least three deaths were blamed on the rising waters. Fargo and Moorhead stacked 6 million sandbags to hold off the Red River, which lapped to within 6 inches of the top of the floodwall, breaking a record set in 1897.

"I think people are still shell-shocked from last year," said Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the North Dakota Emergency Services Department.

Officials in Keokuk, Iowa, are testing pumps and emergency equipment and planning to haul large rocks from a quarry to protect the water treatment plant.

Folks in Fargo are beginning 12-hour shifts building sandbag barriers as thick as castle walls. Three machines called "spiders," each with 12 funnels, fill 5,000 bags an hour. Two hundred shovels are ready for volunteers filling bags the old-fashioned way.

BANK

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for the bank's locations in Yankton and Vermillion.

In his new role, Franzen will oversee the agri-business operations of all First Dakota locations.

"I hope to meet the challenges agriculture is facing now with all the expertise, foresight and patience that it requires," Franzen said.

Franzen is a graduate of Northern State University with a BS in management and marketing. He holds an MBA from the University of South Dakota, and is a graduate of the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Georgetown University.

He is active in the Yankton community as a past president and current member of the Chamber of Commerce, past president of Yankton Area Kiwanis, and is a member of Yankton Verve. He has served as a former chairperson of the South Dakota Bankers Association Ag/Commercial Lenders Committee and as a member of the American Banker's Association Ag Lending Conference Planning Committee. Franzen and his wife, Michelle, live in Yankton with their children Bailey and Kellen.

"It goes without saying that I have the utmost confidence that Nate will continue to grow First Dakota's presence in ag," Everson said. "First Dakota) is poised to serve its customers through these volatile times, and Nate will do a great job making sure that happens."

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