

NEWS IN BRIEF

H&M announces plan for 3rd store in state

Fashion retailer H&M will open a third location in the state later this year, the company said Tuesday.

Its new, 20,000-square-foot store will be located at Outlets of Little Rock. The store will offer clothing for women, men and teens as well as "store within a store" sections for accessories, according to a news release. The store is expected to employ about 30 workers and is expected to be open in late 2017. In late January, the company said it is opening a store at Park Plaza in Little Rock. The Park Plaza location will be 29,000 square feet and will be on two floors. It is expected to open in the fall. The company opened its first Arkansas store in Jonesboro in 2016.

H&M, Hennes & Mauritz AB is based in Sweden and employs more than 16,000 people in 467 locations across the U.S., according to the company.

J.B. Hunt's full fleet to use tracking tech

J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc. will implement fleetwide container tracking immediately.

"End-to-end visibility to the entire supply chain is the new expectation and as a technology leader in the industry, we are excited to provide this service to our customers," Terry Matthews, executive vice president and president of the intermodal division, said in a news release.

The Lowell-based company chose Orbcomm Inc. to provide the technology. The New Jersey company sells machine-to-machine communications systems that can track and monitor fixed and mobile assets.

J.B. Hunt's 90,000 pieces of tracking equipment is the nation's largest 53-foot container fleet, will feature solar-rechargeable GPS tracking devices and sensors to detect cargo.

The companies have been piloting the technology on the fleet for over a year, and installation will continue throughout 2017.

Index slides 6.42, ends day at 350.20

The Arkansas Index, a price-weighted index that tracks the largest public companies based in the state, sank 6.42 to 350.20 Tuesday.

"The major averages pulled back modestly as investors moved to the sidelines ahead of President [Donald] Trump's highly anticipated speech to Congress," said Bob Williams, senior vice president and managing director of Simmons First Investment Group Inc. in Little Rock.

Total volume for the index was 36.1 million shares.

The index was developed by Bloomberg News and the Democrat-Gazette with a base value of 100 as of Dec. 30, 1997.

The Arkansas Index

	Close	Chg
Arkansas Index	350.20	-6.42
Arkansas's Car-Mart	31.85	-0.35
ArcBest	29.35	-0.60
Bank of the Ozarks	54.73	-0.69
Bear State Financial	9.52	-0.44
Murphy Oil Corp.	28.29	-0.48
Dollar Tree Corp.	74.32	+0.33
Delta Air Lines	28.22	-0.93
Home BancShares	21.14	-0.50
JB Hunt Transport	98.17	-1.95
Murphy Oil Corp.	28.29	-0.48
Montgomery	18.23	-0.19
Wal-Mart Stores	70.93	-0.81
Simmons First Ntl.	57.50	-1.10
Tyson Foods	62.56	+0.20
US Trust	4.51	+0.23
Unit-Group	28.97	-0.27
Wal-Mart Stores	70.93	-0.81
Windstream	7.47	-0.38

*Formerly Communications Sales & Leasing Inc.

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Grand opening today for steel mill



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

DAVID SMITH
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Big River Steel set a record for the most expensive economic development project ever built in Arkansas, and it continues to set new records in its first months of operation, the mill's chief executive officer said.

The \$1.3 billion mill near Osceola produced 63,000 tons of hot rolled steel in January, its first full month of operation, a world record for similar small mills, CEO Dave Sticker said in an interview last week. The mill was expected

to produce more than 90,000 tons of steel in February, which would approach or pass the world record for production for a plant's second month of operation, he said.

The record totals are based on statistics kept by SMS Group of Dusseldorf, Germany, Sticker said.

Big River Steel also is the world's first smart mill, Sticker said. The mill has positioned itself as a technology company that just happens to make steel, Sticker said.

"We're using artificial intelligence and algorithms such

that the mill is constantly learning," Sticker said.

Sticker compared the mill to a Google driverless car.

"The first day, the car doesn't know how to drive itself but the more it drives the more it learns," he said. "It's the same with this mill. The algorithms and the artificial-intelligence tools allow the mill to correct any production deficiencies automatically."

The mill is also the first of its kind to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

See **MILL**, Page 4D

Tech Park building opens



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BENJAMIN KRRAIN

Ritter Communications employees (left) meet Tuesday at the Little Rock Technology Park as contractors complete work on the building, which opens officially to clients today. The tech park includes property located in and next to a downtown city block between Main and Scott streets off Capitol Avenue.

Herbicide bills filed in Legislature

Fines increased for drift damage; Senate targets dicamba

JOHN MAGSAM
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

New bills increasing the penalty for the egregious use of herbicides in Arkansas were filed in both the House and Senate on Tuesday.

Senate Bill 501 would allow the state's Plant Board to levy fines of more than \$1,000 but not more than \$25,000 for violations for the use of the herbicide dicamba or its related products that the board determines were egregious.

"To be egregious, the violation must result in significant off-target crop damage because of the application of the products. The bill is sponsored by Sens. Blake Johnson, R-Corning, and David Wallace, R-Leachville.

The current maximum fine for illegal application of a pesticide or herbicide in Ar-

kanasa is \$1,000 per incident, which several Plant Board members and some farmers have said is too low to be a deterrent.

Last summer, some farmers illegally sprayed older versions of the herbicide dicamba on crops, harming thousands of acres of cotton, soybeans, fruits and vegetables in Arkansas and neighboring states. On Oct. 27,

2016, a dispute over spraying with dicamba resulted in the fatal shooting of an Arkansas farmer.

Wallace said Tuesday that dicamba was a particularly volatile herbicide and the Plant Board needed a heavier monetary deterrent when dealing with its misuse. Wallace, a farmer, said his bill targeted dicamba specifically

See **BILLS**, Page 4D

Amazon breakdown in cloud computing affects eastern U.S.

MAE ANDERSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — A glitch Tuesday in Amazon's cloud-computing service, Amazon Web Services, in its eastern U.S. region, caused unprecedented and widespread problems for thousands of websites and apps.

Beginning around midday on the East Coast, one region of its "S3" service based in Virginia began to experience what Amazon, on its service site, called "increased error rates" and "customer outages."

In a statement, Amazon said that as of 3 p.m. central time that it was still experiencing "high error rates" that were

"impacting various [Amazon Web Services] services."

"We are working hard at repairing S3, believe we understand root cause, and are working on implementing what we believe will remediate the issue," the company said.

Amazon's Simple Storage Service, or S3, stores files and data for companies on remote servers. It's used for everything from building websites and apps to storing images, customer data and customer transactions.

"Anything you can think about storing in the most cost-effective way possible," is executive Rich Mogull, chief

See **CLOUD**, Page 2D

Banks' earnings rise 7.7%, but bigger loan losses logged

MARCY GORDON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — U.S. banks' earnings in the final quarter of 2016 rose 7.7 percent from a year earlier, as lending continued to grow and banks set aside less for losses on loans for the first time since late 2015.

The data issued Tuesday by the Federal Reserve Insur-

ance Corp. showed strength in the industry more than eight years after the financial crisis struck. However, banks continued to post bigger losses on loans, especially for credit cards and commercial and industrial loans.

The FDIC reported that U.S. banks earned \$43.7 billion in the fourth quarter, See **BANKS**, Page 4D



APAMEL EVANIS

A United Airlines jet lands at Newark Liberty International Airport in Newark, N.J., in this file photo. The airline said it plans to add more flights from key airports this summer.

Going on offense, airline exec says

United to add flights, renovate terminals

DAVID KOENIG
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — United Airlines, which lost the distinction of being the world's biggest carrier after shrinking for several years, plans to regain lost ground by adding more flights from key airports this summer.

The airline wants to upgrade facilities at airports and trim the use of smaller planes on some business routes.

If the expansion plans pan out, United said it could slash stanching revenue num-

bers, which fell nearly 2 percent in the past five years while revenue at industry leader Delta Air Lines Inc. rose 8 percent.

United has slipped in other ways, too. Only once in the past five years did United Continental Holdings Inc. top Delta's operating income. And it consistently ranks worse in on-time flights and cancellations.

Delta and American Airlines Group Inc. have been adding flights, often on bigger planes, between major cities. Not United.

"We've been shrinking, and our competitors have been growing at our expense," says Scott Kirby, who jumped from president of American Airlines to the same job at United in August. "We're going back on offense."

Many analysts are upbeat about United's prospects but say the path won't be easy for the Chicago airline.

"Delta is not standing still either, so it's not only getting back to where they used to be, but it's leapfrogging Delta."

See **UNITED**, Page 2D

Growth in GDP 1.9% in quarter

U.S. grew 1.6% for all of 2016

MARTIN CRUTSINGER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy grew at an anemic 1.9 percent rate in the fourth quarter, unchanged from an initial estimate, although consumers spent more than first thought.

The increase in the gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic health, represented a significant slowdown from 3.5 percent growth recorded in the third quarter, the Commerce Department reported Tuesday.

The fourth-quarter figure was unchanged from the first estimate a month ago, although some of the components were revised. The government found that consumers spent at a faster rate, but spending by state and local governments and businesses' equipment purchases were weaker.

Growth for 2016 overall was just 1.6 percent, the poorest showing in five years. Since the recession ended in mid-2009, annual growth has averaged 2.1 percent, the worst performance for any recovery in the post-World War II period.

President Donald Trump See **QUARTER**, Page 4D