



Dow 30 10,144.19 ▲ 105.81 | S&P 500 1,078.47 ▲ 10.34 | Okla. Sweet \$71.75 ▲ \$0.75 | Spot natural gas \$5.50 ▲ \$0.02 | Yen per dollar ¥89.74 ▼ ¥0.16 | Gold \$1,094.20 ▲ \$18.40

American employees get payouts

■ The airline distributes \$10 million for meeting customer service goals.

BY D.R. STEWART
World Staff Writer

American Airlines is distributing \$10.3 million to 70,000 employees for exceeding customer service goals in the fourth quarter, company executives said Thursday. The payout averages about \$147 per employee.

In Tulsa, American's Maintenance & Engineering Center employs 7,000 people, including 6,000 aircraft mechanics and related work groups.

American's customer experience rewards program is part of the company's annual incentive plan, which rewards employees with up to \$100 per month for meeting or exceeding customer satisfaction and on-time performance goals.

"Customer experience rewards are designed to focus employees on continuous improvement in

the areas that matter most to our customers," said Jeff Brundage, American's senior vice president of human resources. "Employees made great strides in 2009 delivering great customer service, and it was reflected in how our customers judged our performance."

The program's goals were based on the average performance of 2007 and 2008 for on-time departures and customer satisfaction at the airport, onboard the aircraft, as well as whether customers are likely to recommend American

Airlines to others. When American employees exceed the goals, they are rewarded with a customer experience payout, officials said.

American's passengers rated their experience at the airport and onboard the aircraft almost 5 percentage points better in 2009 than in 2008.

"When employees are successful delivering the basics — great customer service and on-time dependability — not only are they rewarded with incentive pay, but customer loyalty increases and the company

is more successful and ultimately profitable," said Bob Reding, American's executive vice president of operations.

The awards come despite American's financial struggles. AMR Corp., the parent of American Airlines, lost \$1.47 billion last year.

In 2003, American's pilots, flight attendants and mechanics agreed to \$1.62 billion a year in wage and benefit concessions.

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TECH TWOSOME: WI-FI ENGINEERING



James Cavin (left) and Brian Ledbetter pause from their work at DTS Communications Inc. in Pryor. STEPHEN PINGRY/Tulsa World

Iraq veterans build business

■ The two former Guardsmen set up wireless networks for security and Internet systems.

BY KYLE ARNOLD
World Staff Writer

James Cavin and Brian Ledbetter met in Iraq while building barracks and fences as members of the Oklahoma National Guard's 120th Combat Engineer Battalion.

Five years after leaving the battlefield, they're doing building of a different sort — wireless networks for universities, municipalities and hospitals.

The two men teamed up in April 2006 to open a business, DTS Communications Inc., at the MidAmerica Industrial Park

DTS Communications Inc.

Headquarters: Pryor
Service: Wi-Fi systems
President: James Cavin
Founded: 2006
Employees: Five

in Pryor. The company, which now has five employees, specializes in setting up wireless net-

works for security and Internet systems, especially in outdoor settings.

"We've grown every year since we started except this last year, and even then business was just flat," said Cavin, the 35-year-old president of DTS Communications.

He and Ledbetter left Pryor in December 2003 for Iraq, where

SEE DTS E2

Tax authorities push electronic filing

■ The online method is used by more than half of Oklahoma residents.

BY LAURIE WINSLOW
World Staff Writer

With tax season fast approaching, taxpayers are urged to file both their state and federal returns electronically.

Not only is electronic filing fast, safe and less prone to errors, it saves the government money, proponents say.

"The Oklahoma Tax Commission is emphasizing the importance

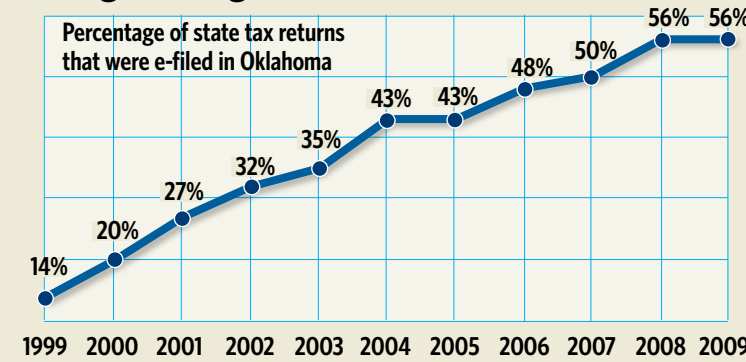
of electronic filing. With furloughs and cutbacks in manpower due to the current budget cuts, it's the best way for Oklahomans to ensure a quick refund," said Paula Ross, communications director for the OTC, in an e-mailed comment.

E-filing's popularity has steadily grown among Oklahomans. In 1995, only 4 percent of all state returns were filed electronically, compared to 56 percent last year.

"We're obviously always encouraging the electronic filing just because it's so much more accurate, simple and much easier," Ross said.

SEE TAX E2

E-filing catching on with Oklahomans



Source: Oklahoma Tax Commission

DAVID HOUSH/Tulsa World

Trustees also approved — sub-

SEE AIR E2

BIZ QUICKS

EU pledge to support Greece sends stock market higher

Relief about Europe's pledge to support Greece sent the stock market higher Thursday (See story on E-2).

The 16 countries that use the euro promised to "take determined and coordinated action, if needed, to safeguard financial stability in the euro area as a whole."

That said, European Union leaders offered no detailed bailout for a debt crisis that has plunged the euro into its deepest crisis since it was launched 11 years ago.

Encouraging news about jobs in the U.S. also supported the stock market.

The Labor Department said first-time claims for jobless benefits fell more than expected last week.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 105.81, or 1.1 percent, to 10,144.19, its highest close in more than a week. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 10.34, or 1 percent, to 1,078.47. The Nasdaq composite index rose 29.54, or 1.4 percent, to 2,177.41.

Foreign investment in U.S. airlines pushed

United Airlines CEO Glenn Tilton renewed his call for overseas investment in U.S. airlines Thursday as part of deregulation worldwide to boost



UNITED CEO

Glenn Tilton: Capital "doesn't have sovereign inhibitions."

industry profitability.

"Capital is global, it is global and doesn't have sovereign inhibitions," Tilton told reporters at the U.K. Aviation Club in London.

The European Union has proposed expanding those investments across borders as part of pending talks on a second "Open Skies" treaty to ease limits on flights between the U.S. and Europe. U.S. law now prohibits nonciti-

zens from controlling airlines or owning more than 25 percent of voting stock.

"I support the EU view that in phase two, foreign ownership should be on the table," said Tilton, who has urged looser rules for such investments.

Tilton said the industry's failure to make sustained profits was a result of "protectionist policies" shielding carriers from competition. Global losses will narrow to \$5.6 billion this year from about \$11 billion in 2009, says the International Air Transport Association.

Natural gas condensate spills from Williams line in Louisiana

A pipeline owned by Williams Cos. Inc. has spilled 200 to 300 barrels of natural gas condensate and salt water in Johnson's Bayou, La., the company

said Thursday.

The release from the 2-inch Transco pipeline began at 3:55 a.m. Wednesday and was secured by Williams personnel at 4:05 a.m., the Tulsa-based company reported to state police.

"The spill was from what is called a slug catcher tank that is used as part of the smart-pigging process on the pipeline," said Jeff Pounds, a Williams spokesman. "It was a mixture of salt water and condensate."

Condensate is a light petroleum liquid commonly found in natural gas and typically processed into fuels or chemical feedstocks.

The cleanup is expected to be finished by the weekend, Pounds said.

Williams delivers about 12 percent of U.S. daily gas supply.

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