

'King of pipelines'

Rockies gas project wins final approval.

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FERC member Suedeene Kelly



IBC Bank opening two more branches

► A second Owasso location and an office in Miami, Okla., mark the latest expansions.

By Laurie Winslow
World Staff Writer

IBC Bank continues to branch out in the Tulsa area with the opening this week of its second location in Owasso.

The bank also will be opening a branch Monday in Miami, Okla., and has another site under contract in Broken Arrow.

IBC's newest Owasso branch, which opened Monday at 9350 N. Garnett Road, is a standard 3,600-square-foot prototype branch, said Bill Schonacher, president of the bank's Tulsa region, during a phone interview Thursday.

"Owasso is just a really dynamic community right now. It's growing extensively, and we're just in the process of trying to keep up with demand," Schonacher said. "We really think that a second location and possibly more in the future will serve us well and our customers well."

IBC is held by Laredo, Texas-based International Bancshares Corp., which in 2004 bought out Local Financial Corp., an Oklahoma City-based holding company that operated Local Oklahoma Bank.

With the new Owasso and Miami branches, IBC will have a total of 60 locations in Oklahoma, including 20 in the Tulsa region.

The 5,600-square-foot Miami branch will open Monday. It will replace two existing IBC locations, including one in Miami as well as another in Commerce, Schonacher said.

The larger Miami branch also will have a community suite, which organizations will be able to use free of charge, Schonacher said.

The Broken Arrow site under contract is on 177th East Avenue, just off the Broken Arrow Expressway, in the

SEE IBC E-2

Thirst for success

Gatorade looking for dedicated work force

STORIES BY JOHN DOBBERSTEIN
World Staff Writer

PRYOR — The man who will manage Gatorade's sprawling new plant in Pryor told local students Thursday they must adapt to change and become involved in their communities — especially if they want to work for him.

"If you're looking for a job where you just want to come in, put in your time and leave, this isn't the place for you," plant manager Chris Weber said, standing on the stage at Pryor High School's auditorium before hundreds of youths.

"We're looking for people who want to be part of the community, part of the team, a part of the problem solving, and do what they can do to make tomorrow better than it is today," he said.

Weber spoke to students and community leaders during the 13th annual Carl G. and Gladys L. Herrington Distinguished Endowed Lecture, sponsored by Rogers State University.

Gatorade broke ground last year on a \$180 million, 1.4 million-square-foot plant at MidAmerica Industrial Park, a development that figures to bring some changes to the quiet town of Pryor.

The company, whose parent is New York-based PepsiCo, plans a hiring blitz this summer and already has a link on the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission's Web site.

PepsiCo employs 1,200 Oklahomans at other facilities.

The work force at the Pryor plant will likely be a mix of graduates picked from special programs at major colleges, along with candidates from the region who satisfy the company's requirements. There will be 60 salaried employees and 220 hourly workers.

Weber said Gatorade employs a "team-based" environment and asks that its employees be well-balanced and have good academics and social skills. Getting involved with community service and knowing how to manage priorities is also important, he said.

"We don't just look at the GPA. . . . It's also what you're doing with yourself and what kind of activities you're in," Weber said.

Weber, who grew up on a farm in central Illinois, said he didn't know



STEPHEN PINGRY / Tulsa World

Chris Weber, manager of the Gatorade plant being built in the MidAmerica Industrial Park, speaks Thursday at Pryor High School.

what he wanted to do when he left high school, and that hadn't changed much after he graduated with an engineering degree from the University of Illinois. But he's gone on to a career with Gatorade that spans two decades.

Weber helped launch new plants in Atlanta and Indianapolis, and he's worked at plants in North Carolina

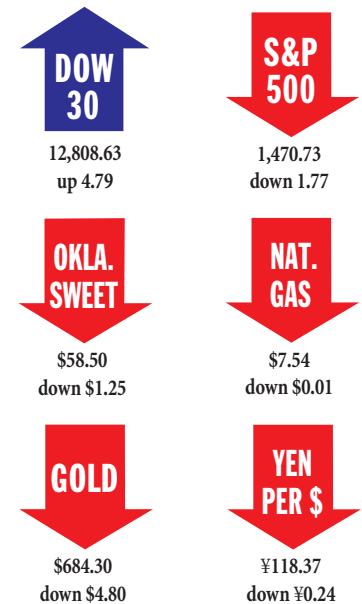
and Tennessee.

Weber said he expects the Pryor plant to be a success because of the cooperation he's seen so far from state and local leaders, and educators.

"From my wife's perspective and mine, moving to Oklahoma is probably one of the toughest relocations

SEE WEBER E-2

MARKET WATCH



BIZ QUICKS

Dow index inches higher to another record close

Wall Street closed essentially flat Thursday, with the Dow Jones industrials edging higher to a record close for the second straight day.

While a mix of corporate earnings reports pushed and tugged at stocks, investors also watched markets abroad, where stocks fell following word that economic growth in China's first quarter jumped a higher-than-expected 11.1 percent and inflation increased at its fastest pace in more than two years.

Chinese officials said they will take steps such as raising interest rates to curb growth.

China's sometimes volatile Shanghai Composite Index tumbled 4.5 percent Thursday. However, its decline wasn't as steep as the nearly 9 percent drop Feb. 27 that touched off a worldwide sell-off and shaved more than 3 percent from the major U.S. indexes that day.

Thursday on Wall Street, the Dow rose 4.79, or 0.04 percent, to 12,808.63. Wednesday's trading high of 12,838.46 and its close broke records set Feb. 20.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 1.77, or 0.12 percent, to 1,470.73. The S&P hit a new 6½-year high Wednesday.

The Nasdaq composite index slipped 5.15, or 0.21 percent, to 2,505.35.

New Balance owner gives up CEO post

New Balance owner Jim Davis is stepping down as CEO of the shoe and apparel maker to make way for a new leader from outside the company.

Boston-based New Balance said this week that Davis will stay on as chairman but cede the CEO job to Robert T. DeMartini, a 45-year-old with more than 22 years of experience in the consumer products industry.

"After 35 years of managing the company, we feel that it is time to introduce younger and more progressive management," said Davis, 62.

Davis' wife, Anne Davis, will remain vice chairman, and the couple "very involved in the company," a spokesman said.

The Davises this year made Forbes' list of the world's richest people, ranking No. 488 with an estimated \$2 billion in wealth.

New Balance's production capacity was tiny when Jim Davis bought the company for \$100,000 in 1972, but sales took off with a surge in the popularity of running and jogging in the 1970s.

Today, New Balance has more than 2,800 employees, with 2006 sales of \$1.55 billion.

Franchisee opening Which Wich eatery

Tulsa's first Which Wich sandwich shop opens Friday at 6028 S. Memorial Drive in the Copper Mountain shopping center.

The Texas-based chain sells only sandwiches, chips and beverages, including a spicy house chip made on site and hand-dipped milk shakes.

The restaurant has a unique ordering system where customers mark preferences on preprinted menus on brown sandwich bags.

Sandwiches are custom-made from 10 different categories, including turkey, ham, beef, chicken, seafood, vegetarian, "saladwich," classics and breakfast. There are 50 available combinations.

Doug Hall has the franchise rights to the entire metro area and for communities as far away as Muskogee. He said he expects to have 10 Which Wich shops open in three to five years.

Which Wich is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday.

From Bloomberg, AP and staff reports

Earnings jump 52 percent at Southwest

By D.R. STEWART
World Staff Writer

Southwest Airlines, the nation's leading discount carrier that has 20 flights a day at Tulsa International Airport, reported a net profit of \$93 million, or 12 cents a share, in the first quarter. It is Southwest's 64th consecutive quarter of profitability and compares with a \$61 million profit, or 7 cents a share, in 2006's first quarter.

Southwest's revenue in the first quarter was \$2.19 billion, an 8.9 percent increase compared with the \$2.02 billion in revenue in the same period a year ago.

Southwest CEO Gary Kelly said first-quarter revenue was not as strong as a year ago. A series of winter storms in the quarter and higher fares slowed demand, he said.

"Led by higher fuel costs, our year-over-year first quarter 2007 economic operating costs increased 4.3 percent per available seat mile, as expected," Kelly said in a prepared statement. "Based on the strength of last year's overall revenue growth, we had hoped this year's revenue growth would surmount these cost pressures."

"First-quarter 2007 unit revenue growth of 1.4 percent was solid, but slower compared to last year's growth rate. Inclement weather, a slowing economy and higher fare levels likely combined to cool the rate of growth in domestic air travel."

Despite a fuel hedging program that saved Southwest \$65 million in the first quarter, Kelly said, fuel costs per gallon increased 11.6 percent, to \$1.63. The company has fuel hedging

SEE PROFIT E-2



KEVORK DJANSEZIAN / Associated Press

Southwest Airlines ticket agents assist passengers Wednesday at the airline's check-in station at Los Angeles International Airport. Dallas-based Southwest reported first-quarter revenue of \$2.19 billion, up 8.9 percent from the same period a year ago.

IN BUSINESS

MINT CONDITION

From popes to buildings, the 13 European nations that use the euro have featured a variety of images on their coins since they became legal tender Jan. 1, 2002.

Belgium marked the 75th anniversary of its cartoon hero — Tintin, and his dog Snowy — with a commemorative 10-euro coin in 2004. Austria has Mozart, and Italy has Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of "The Vitruvian Man," on their 1-euro pieces. Greece even has a picture of a tanker ship.

But the dollar is having trouble keeping up with that coin, and it hovered near a record low Thursday.

Maybe Lassie can come to our rescue, and put Snowy in his place.



ASIAN EXIT

As car ownership in Thailand and Malaysia increases, ConocoPhillips has decided to sell its gasoline stations in those countries.

PTT, Thailand's largest energy company, will pay \$275 million for ConocoPhillips' 147 Jet and Jiffy stations.

Fuel sales at those stations are around 800 million liters per year.

Meanwhile, ConocoPhillips is selling 44 ProJet gasoline stations and 14 vacant land sites in Malaysia to Royal Dutch Shell.

Houston-based ConocoPhillips said it put its gas stations in Thailand and Malaysia up for sale because they weren't in line with the company's strategy.

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CUSHING'S FULL TANKS

Oil prices tumbled Thursday as traders focused on an inventory buildup in Cushing, a key North American terminal for crude oil.

A February fire that shuttered Valero Energy Corp.'s McKee refinery in Texas has caused crude inventories to build up at the Oklahoma storage hub, said John Kingston, director of oil at Platts, a division of McGraw-Hill Cos.

The refinery is partially back online this week. Still, "There's plenty of oil hanging around in Cushing right now," agreed Phil Flynn, analyst at Alaron Trading Corp. in Chicago.

Light, sweet crude for May delivery slipped \$1.30 to settle at \$61.83 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.