

Unclogging the courts

Judge dismisses trans fat lawsuit.

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Wind tower maker blows into Tulsa area

By JOHN STANCIVAGE
World Business Editor

DMI Industries of West Fargo, N.D., announced Wednesday it plans to open a wind-power tower manufacturing plant in the Tulsa area that would eventually employ up to 450 people.

DMI, an operating unit of Otter Tail Corp., a public company that trades on the Nasdaq market, said in a press release that it will acquire an existing plant after it receives necessary approvals and permits.

The facility DMI has selected has 500,000 square feet of space. Its exact location was not revealed.

Officials said they expect to open the plant by early 2008 after it is upgraded.

When the plant is fully operational, DMI's annual combined tower production will support more than 3,000 megawatts of wind-project capacity, officials said.

The deal would be the second plant acquisition for DMI in less than three years. The company acquired a facility in Fort Erie, Ontario, in 2005. That

plant began filling orders last May.

"DMI has achieved success in Canada and across the northern tier of the United States thanks to strong demand," said DMI president Lars Moller. "We plan to do the same things in Oklahoma and the south-central United States that enabled that success. As for today, we're focused on finalizing this purchase, customizing the facility and serving the needs of our customers."

Moller said the plant's proximity to the Tulsa Port of Catoosa was attractive, as it would allow DMI to ship

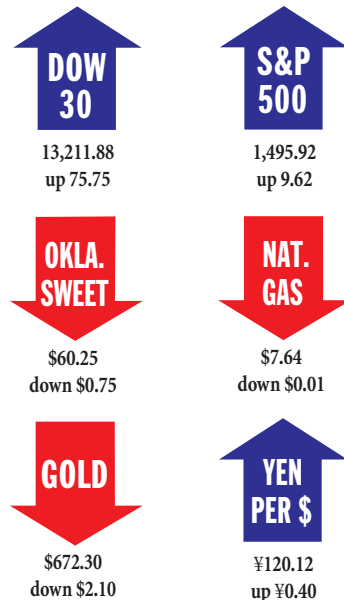
wind towers by barge either north to the Midwest or south to the Gulf of Mexico.

The additional plant will give DMI one of the largest annual tower fabrication capacities in North America.

The company has 500 employees — in West Fargo and Fort Erie, Ontario. DMI is a heavy steel wind tower manufacturer that also has capabilities to produce equipment for a wide variety of industries.

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MARKET WATCH



BIZ QUICKS

75-point gain puts Dow index at new high

Stocks jumped Wednesday, sending the Dow Jones industrials past 13,200 for the first time after a strong reading on U.S. factory orders stoked investor optimism about the economy.

The Commerce Department said orders to U.S. factories rose 3.1 percent in March — the largest increase in a year — amid strong demand for commercial aircraft.

Meanwhile, stronger-than-expected quarterly results were reported by Time Warner Inc. and Yum Brands Inc., parent of fast-food chains KFC, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut.

"The stronger-than-anticipated earnings releases have definitely been the catalysts for prices to move higher," said Tim Hartzell, chief investment officer at Kanaly Trust Co.

The Dow rose 75.74, or 0.58 percent, to a new closing high of 13,211.88. The blue-chip index, which hit a fresh trading high of 13,256.33 during the trading session, has set 16 record closes this year and 38 since the beginning of October.

Broader stock indicators also rose Wednesday. The Standard & Poor's 500 index advanced 9.62, or 0.65 percent, to 1,495.92.

The Nasdaq composite index rose 26.31, or 1.04 percent, to 2,557.84.

Dolan family taking Cablevision private

Cablevision Systems Corp., a New York-area cable TV provider that also owns Madison Square Garden, said Wednesday it has agreed to be taken private by the Dolan family, the company's controlling shareholders, in a deal worth about \$10.6 billion.

The transaction marks the Dolans' third attempt to take the company private in recent years, the first two having been rejected by a two-member committee of independent directors on its board.

That committee, and the full board of directors, have approved the Dolans' latest offer of \$36.26 per share.

The latest offer represents an 11 percent premium over Cablevision's closing price Tuesday of \$32.67 a share.

On Wednesday, Cablevision's shares rose \$3.23, or 9.9 percent, to close at \$35.90 on the New York Stock Exchange.

The Dolans, led by Charles Dolan, the chairman, and his son James, the CEO, control Cablevision through a special class of supervoting shares.

Wednesday's deal must be approved by holders of Cablevision's publicly traded stock that is not held by the Dolan family.

Charles Dolan said in a statement that the company would be better able to compete in today's "increasingly competitive environment" as a privately held company.

Panamanian airline orders more Boeing 737s

Boeing Co. said Wednesday it has received an order from Panama-based Copa Airlines for four Boeing 737-800 airplanes in a deal valued at about \$282 million.

Copa has now ordered a total of 34 of the next-generation 737s, Chicago-based Boeing said. The airline operates 24 of the two-engine aircraft from Tocumen International Airport outside of Panama City. Ten planes remain on order.

The four orders were previously attributed to an unidentified customer. Boeing has received 55 orders for the aircraft this year through April 25. The 737 family of aircraft is the best-selling commercial jet in history, according to Boeing.

The four single-aisle airplanes ordered today will be delivered in 2011 and 2012, and will seat 155 passengers each, Copa said.

Copa flies four of the world's longest 737 routes — from Panama to Buenos Aires, Santiago, Sao Paulo and Los Angeles.

From Bloomberg, AP and staff reports



BEN MARGOT / Associated Press file

Google CEO Eric Schmidt (top left) and co-founders Larry Page (top right) and Sergey Brin at company headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

Giant dates only to '98

Stanford University Ph.D. students Larry Page and Sergey Brin created what became Google in a garage in Menlo Park, Calif., in 1998.

Lloyd Taylor, director of operations for Google Inc., said the two scrounged whatever computers they could find for the project, and even housed one in a base made of Lego bricks. The name is a play on the word googol, which is a number represented by the numeral 1 followed by 100 zeroes.

Google's search technology quickly took off, and the company now says it's the most popular search engine in the world in terms of users.

Today, Google employs 12,000 people worldwide, with 40 sales, operations and engineering offices, includ-

SEE 1998 E-2

Google impact big



STEPHEN PINGRY / Tulsa World

Gov. Brad Henry (left) gives a centennial coin to Lloyd Taylor, director of Global Operations for Google Inc., during a news conference Wednesday at which the company announced its entry to Mid-America Industrial Park in Pryor.

Industrial park boosts region's economic base

STORIES BY ROBERT EVATT
World Staff Writer

Google's arrival at Mid-America Industrial Park in Pryor, which came months after a similar announcement by Gatorade, could usher in plenty of other development in northeast Oklahoma, area officials said Wednesday.

"Gatorade and Google are just unbelievable to think about," said Pryor Mayor Jimmy Tramel. "What's next?"

The Internet giant officially announced it would spend \$600 million to construct a data center in Mid-America over the next year, and will eventually employ 200 people.

Though no official economic impact figures were released, Bob Ball, an economist at the Tulsa Metro Chamber, estimated Google could have an impact of \$400 million during construction and an ongoing impact of \$14 million to the entire area, with \$7.3 million of that within the Tulsa metro area.

He's hopeful Google will encourage more younger workers to move to the area.

"It's a big deal that'll draw a lot of people here," he said. "They're a sought-after employer people want to work for."

Last year, Gatorade unveiled its plans for a 1.4 million-square-foot, \$180 million plant that will employ 280 at Mid-America when it opens this September. The company estimated it would have a \$5 billion to \$7 bil-

SEE GOOGLE E-2

Cheesecake Factory on Woodland menu

By DEBBIE BLOSSOM
World Staff Writer

A major restaurant chain famous for its enormous portions, long lines and loyal fans is scheduled to open in late summer at Woodland Hills Mall.

Calabasas Hills, Calif.-based Cheesecake Factory Inc. plans to build the 10,300-square-foot restaurant in a former parking area outside the Macy's department store south entrance, facing 71st Street for heightened access and visibility.

Although it won't be physically connected to the covered mall, the restaurant "will be a part of the mall

property," just like any other retailer, said Les Morris of Simon Property Group, which owns the mall.

It will be a wonderful addition to Woodland Hills, Morris said. "They're a great operator, and people know about Cheesecake Factory."

The Tulsa location — including the patio area — will seat up to 400 and employ a staff of about 200, said Howard Gordon, senior vice president for business development and marketing at the chain.

No construction start date has been

SEE MALL E-4

Area jobless rate edges lower

By LAURIE WINSLOW
World Staff Writer

Job numbers rose in March, helping the Tulsa area's unemployment rate to edge lower.

The seven-county metro area's jobless rate dipped to 4.0 percent from 4.1 percent in February, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission reported Wednesday. The rate is unchanged from a year ago.

Nearly 75 percent of Oklahoma's 77 counties saw rate drops over the month, according to the OESC. Among those was Tulsa County, where the jobless rate fell to 3.9 percent.

Coal County had the state's highest county rate in March at 6.7 percent. Woodward County held onto the lowest rate for the month at 2.7 percent,

the OESC stated.

Last month, the OESC released data for nonfarm employment showing how various sectors fared in March. Based on that, the Tulsa area gained 4,100 jobs, giving it a total of 426,600 nonfarm jobs. That figure is 4,600 jobs higher than a year earlier. The nonfarm data is not seasonally adjusted.

The year-over-year gains are getting smaller, but they're still gains, said Bob Ball, research manager for the Tulsa Metro Chamber.

Revisions to some of the data suggest that Oklahoma's growth rate is slightly below the national level, but one economist said he doesn't think that's the case at all.

SEE JOBS E-2

IN BUSINESS

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

When a child brings home "A's" on his or her report card, praise typically follows — and sometimes a little money for the achievement.

But when a nationally known company comes in with those same grades — but was expected to earn A-pluses — the reception is colder.

Tulsa-based Helmerich & Payne Inc. says its quarterly earnings were up but fell short of expectations, causing a 3 percent dip in its stock.

A company spokesman said "random situations" affecting rig movements were to blame.

But H&P's FlexRig is still in demand — the company is building 24 to bring the count to 125.

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PREPARED FOR STORMS

English politician Harold Wilson once said, "I'm an optimist, but an optimist who carries a raincoat."

Too bad many Oklahoma businesses don't own raincoats.

John Parsons, CEO of Perimeter Technology, said most companies don't have business continuity plans in place in the event of a disaster — natural or man made.

The plan's creation, he said, takes time, organization and objectivity — always lacking during emergencies.

The smell of rain, thundering skies and high winds signal an impending storm. Business owners need to pull up their galoshes, throw on their trench coats and head for shelter.

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FOREIGN CONCEPT

Shares of Whirlpool Corp. hit a record high Wednesday after a Morgan Keegan & Co. analyst boosted her full-year earnings estimate.

The stock rose \$5.04, or 4.7 percent, to close at \$113.14 on the New York Stock Exchange.

Laura Champine raised her estimate for 2007 profit to \$8.49 a share, saying Whirlpool's profit margins outside the U.S. will widen. Her estimate is 34 percent higher than the company's profit of \$6.35 in 2006.

Whirlpool will get about 31 percent of earnings before interest and taxes from international markets, up from 19 percent in 2006, Champine said.

She rates the company, which makes kitchen ranges at a plant in Tulsa, as "outperform."