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Questions, comments, story ideas?
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Business

-142.21
↓
11,036.37
DOW

-37.07
↓
2,494.95
NASDAQ

-17.11
↓
1,180.73
S&P 500

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2010, LANCASTER, PA., PAGE C7

U.S. gets \$11.7B from GM stock

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Treasury Department said it has received \$11.7 billion from the sale of 358.5 million shares of General Motors stock.

Treasury announced that the net proceeds from the GM stock sold last week were delivered on Tuesday. Treasury officials said the government could receive an additional \$1.8 billion assuming the underwriters exercise options to purchase an additional 53.8 million shares of GM common stock within 30 days of the initial stock offering.

The government put \$49.5 billion into GM as part of its bailout of the automaker.

In addition, Treasury said it will receive another \$2.1 billion from GM when the

automaker repurchases preferred stock that was issued under the government's \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program.

TARP was used to stabilize the financial system and prop up auto companies GM and Chrysler and insurance giant American International Group.

With the receipt of the \$11.7 billion from last week's sale of GM stock, Treasury said that a total of \$252.1 billion has been returned to taxpayers from the TARP program.

Reflecting a stabilization of financial markets, Congress earlier this year voted to reduce the original \$700 billion authorization for TARP to \$475 billion.

New home for Re-Uzit Shop

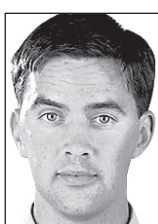


Suzette Wenger / Staff

Shoppers browse through the clothing section of Re-Uzit Shop in New Holland.

The Re-Uzit Shop opened Monday at the former Good's Furniture & Flooring showroom at 707 W. Main St., New Holland.

The move from 148 E. Main St., New Holland, quadrupled the store's size, giving it about 40,000 square feet of space, including more room to sell furniture.



What's in store
Chad Umble

In addition to furniture, the store sells clothing, books, cards and household items. It also has more parking and is staffed by six part-time workers and some 150 volunteers.

Proceeds from the store benefit Akron-based Mennonite Central Committee.

Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. Phone: 354-8355.

Furniture store opens

Tellus360 opened Nov. 12 at 24 E. King St. The 8,000-square-foot store sells imported antique Irish furniture and also makes furniture from reclaimed wood.

In addition, it offers gifts made from recycled materials, including briefcases and wallets made from recycled tires.

Owned by Joe Devoy, it is located in the former home of Biomat USA, a plasma donation center.

Hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Friday; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday. Phone: 393-1660.

Deli opens

A Little Taste of Philly opened Nov. 8 at 23 Center Square, Elizabethtown. The take-out deli has hoagies, sandwiches, salads and wraps as well

as milkshakes, sundaes and smoothies.

It features rolls and pastries from the Philadelphia area and offers specialty tea drinks. Stan Branigan is the owner.

Hours: 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday. Phone: 361-6064.

People's Restaurant

Boswell's Restaurant debuted earlier this month at 140 W. Main St., New Holland, the former home of People's Restaurant, and will keep many Pennsylvania Dutch menu items offered by its predecessor.

The family restaurant has an 80-seat main dining room, a 10-seat counter and a back banquet room. Owners Chip and Eldris Boswell oversaw some painting but didn't make many physical changes to the restaurant.

Eventually, Boswell's will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday

and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Temporarily, the restaurant is just open for breakfast and lunch, closing at 3 p.m. Phone: 354-2276.

Craft store opens

B&K Country Crafts & Quilts will open Friday at 40 S. Charlotte St., Manheim. The site formerly housed Rick's News Agency.

Owned by Bonnie Martin, the new store will sell country crafts, quilts and wool felting in addition to sewing supplies, and greeting cards. The store also will offer cake decorating, quilting and various craft classes.

Hours: 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m.-noon Saturday. Phone: 664-7600.

Computer store opens

Susquehanna Association for the Blind and Vision Impaired has opened a computer store on the third floor of its facility at 224 N. Queen St. It sells used computers, equipment and hardware that have been refurbished or inspected by SABVI staff.

Hours: 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Phone: 291-5951.

Correspondent Rochelle A. Shenk contributed to this report. cumble@lnpnews.com or 397-3674

Armstrong declares special dividend

BY TIM MEKEEL
Business Editor

It will be a Merry Christmas for shareholders of Armstrong World Industries.

The company said Tuesday it has completed its refinancing, allowing it to declare a special dividend of \$13.74 a share.

The special dividend is payable Dec. 10 to shareholders of record Dec. 3.

Lancaster-based Armstrong said earlier this month it would pay the special dividend, if it could arrange new financing to help cover the cost.

Armstrong has. It's in the form of a \$1.05 billion credit facility.

The facility consists of a \$250 million revolving loan (none of which has been drawn, other than letters of credit), a \$250 million term loan and a \$550 million term loan.

Armstrong used some of the term loans to repay \$430 million in existing debt.

The rest of the term loans,

plus cash on hand, will be used to fund the special dividend, an \$800 million expense.

As Armstrong expected, the extra borrowing has led to lower credit ratings.

Standard & Poor's cut its rating to BB- while Moody's reduced its rating to B1.

Armstrong once paid regular quarterly dividends, but that stopped shortly before it entered bankruptcy in 2000 to resolve its asbestos liability.

Since it emerged from bankruptcy in 2006 as a new corporation, Armstrong has only paid one other special dividend.

That came in 2008 at \$4.50 a share.

The new special dividend was sought by Armstrong's two largest shareholders.

They are a private equity firm, TPG Capital, which bought a 14 percent stake in August 2009, and a trust formed to pay personal-injury claims against the old Armstrong. The trust owns 51 percent.

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Construction contracts slip again, erasing gains for year

BY TIM MEKEEL
Business Editor

Contracts for new construction in Lancaster County tumbled again in October, falling 27 percent, according to a new report.

The drop marked the fifth

consecutive monthly decline in the key economic indicator, data firm McGraw-Hill Construction said Tuesday.

Total contracts signed in October for future construction here were \$34.9 million, off from \$47.5 million in October 2009.

Pulling down the total were significant slumps in both residential and nonresidential contracts.

Residential contracts skidded 30 percent to \$14.9 million from \$21.3 million in October 2009, McGraw-Hill said.

Nonresidential contracts

ebbed 24 percent to \$19.9 million from \$26.2 million in the year-earlier month.

Construction contracts have been in a tailspin for nearly a half-year, reversing direction after six straight months of strong increases.

The skid, which started in June, has erased almost all of the progress that had been achieved over 2009's level.

With the October downturn, the year-to-date figure stands just slightly above last year's mark.

Total contracts here in the first 10 months were \$365.5 million, a mere 4 percent greater than the \$352.1 million seen in the opening 10 months of 2009.

That slim margin was due to strength in the residential side, where contracts were up 17 percent to \$153.6 million from \$131.1 million.

On the nonresidential side, contracts dipped 4 percent to \$211.9 million to \$221.0 million.

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Cut costs on college visits

It's easy to visit a range of colleges within your own backyard — a tank of gas and a couple of sandwiches may just do it.

But what if your high school senior has applied this fall to schools all over the map? Think about airfare, hotel rooms, rental cars and meal money. Trying to juggle the trip planning is all but guaranteed to add to the unique stresses of senior year.

Parents have been known to spend a ton of money just on college visits, and no doubt, some of you already may feel tapped out if you started looking at schools in the junior year.

As someone who has gone through the college selection process twice already — and is in the middle of a third effort now — I have some thoughts on how to save money on travel expenses.

Students seemingly are applying to a half-dozen or more colleges these days so they'll have multiple backup plans in case the numero uno falls through. So, here's a radical



Kids and money
Steve Rosen

thought — limit visits to serious choices.

Assuming you're not under deadline pressure, even consider waiting until the acceptance letters have arrived before springing for plane tickets to check out the top two schools.

Another way to stretch your dollars is to combine a spring break vacation with side trips to a favorite university's science lab or business school. One caveat: It's best if school is in session before dropping in; otherwise you'll just be looking at buildings and won't get much of a feel for the diversity of the student body.

Procrastinators take note: Airfares are on the rise again, so it usually pays to buy tickets early, especially if you've circled the Presidents Day holiday weekend in February for a campus trip.

When it comes to nailing down the travel details, a new website called Go See Campus, at GoSeeCampus.com, could save you some time. Go See Campus bundles concise college trip information to

more than 2,300 campuses.

The free "College Trip Planner" allows users to download schedules on campus tours and information sessions, get help on parking, travel arrangements, and even find where to get a burger near the main gate.

Dates, meetings and other itinerary details are organized for families preparing to hit the road. The aim is to help families "narrow their focus, save time and reduce stress," said Kevin Preis, the website's founder.

Finally, here's one money-saving tip for parents of high school juniors in the Class of 2012: Bundle your campus travel plans.

Minnesota colleges, for example, coordinate visitor weekends for prospective students and offer discounts on application fees for visiting multiple campuses. Likewise, many schools in big urban areas work together in scheduling tour weekends.

Better to save money where you can on travel before you make the big-buck college decisions.

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IN BRIEF

Fed lowers its outlook for 2011

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve officials have become more pessimistic in their economic outlook through next year and have lowered their forecast for growth.

The economy will grow only 2.4 percent to 2.5 percent this year, Fed officials said Tuesday in an updated forecast. That's down sharply from a previous projection of 3 percent to 3.5 percent. Next year, the economy will expand by 3 percent to 3.6 percent, the Fed said, also much lower than its June forecast.

Fed officials project that unemployment won't change much this year, averaging between 9.5 percent and 9.7 percent. The current unemployment rate is 9.6 percent. Progress in reducing unemployment has been "disappointingly slow," the central bank said, according to the minutes of its Nov. 2-3 meeting.

The Fed is slightly more optimistic about 2012 and 2013, when it projects growth of 3.6 percent to 4.5 percent each year.

Weaver will build church addition

Weaver Construction, a general contractor based in East Earl, has been hired to build a \$1.6 million addition to Montgomery Presbyterian Church in Lansdale.

The 16,000-square-foot addition, to include a fellowship hall, classrooms and kitchen, is set to be completed in June.

EARNINGS

NEW YORK (AP) — Campbell Soup Co. saw its domestic soup sales drop in the first quarter along with its net income as more money spent on promotions didn't lure shoppers to buy.

U.S. shoppers did buy more of the company's condensed cooking soups, a sign that people wary about the economy are still eating in more. But the world's largest soup maker Tuesday reported declining sales of ready-to-serve and condensed eating soups.

Campbell earned \$279 million, or 82 cents per share, in the first quarter. This is down 8 percent from \$304 million, or 87 cents per share, a year ago.

Campbell experienced a 1 percent dip in its first-quarter revenue, which fell to \$2.17 billion from \$2.2 billion.

The baking and snacking unit reported a 3 percent increase in sales, helped by Pepperidge Farm products, Deli Flats rolls, Baked Naturals crackers and the expansion of the Goldfish snack brand.

Campbell has a Pepperidge Farm plant in Denver.

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