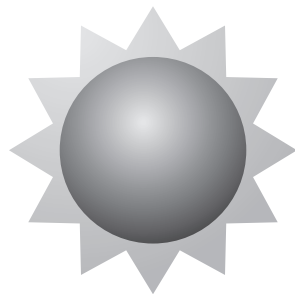


Weather Corner



National Weather Service

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 54. North wind between 5 and 15 mph.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 80. Northeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after 1 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a low around 53. East wind around 10 mph.

Sunday: A slight chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 1 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 73. Southeast wind between 10 and 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55.

Monday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 78.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 54.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 84.

Thursday: High, 82; Low 55

Precip: Thursday 0.00 inches
 Month: 3.16 inches
 Year: 20.00 inches
 Normal: 16.41 inches
 (K-State Experiment Station)

Sunrise and Sunset
 Saturday 7:10 a.m. 8:19 p.m.
 Sunday 7:11 a.m. 8:18 p.m.
 Monday 7:12 a.m. 8:16 p.m.
 (U.S. Naval Observatory)

Cash for Clunkers boosts spending numbers in July

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumer spending edged up in July with help from the popular Cash for Clunkers program, but household incomes, the fuel for future spending increases, were flat.

Consumer spending is the big question mark as the economy struggles to emerge from the recession. Economists worry that households hurt by rising unemployment, weak income growth and depleted investments will not provide the support the economy needs to rebound to sustained growth.

The Commerce Department said Friday that consumer spending rose 0.2 percent in July, matching economists' expectations. Personal incomes were unchanged last month, a weaker showing than the expected 0.2 percent gain.

With incomes flat in July as spending rose, the personal sav-

ings rate dipped slightly to 4.2 percent from 4.5 percent in June. The savings rate was 2.6 percent a year ago.

Economists expect the savings rate to rise in coming months to around 6 percent as workers try to rebuild depleted nest eggs. The process of rebuilding savings is one of the factors expected to depress consumer spending and weaken the broader recovery.

The modest rise in spending last month followed a 0.6 percent jump in June, a gain driven by a surge in gasoline prices. Adjusting for inflation, spending rose 0.2 percent in July, and 0.1 percent in June.

The slight rise in spending reflected a 1.3 percent jump in purchases of durable goods such as cars, a gain propelled by the clunkers program that started at the end of July. Purchases of nondurable

goods such as clothing actually fell 0.3 percent last month.

The unchanged reading for personal incomes followed large swings in the previous two months that reflected payments to individuals from the government's \$787 billion economic stimulus program. Those payments pushed incomes up 1.4 percent in May and their absence in June caused incomes to fall 1.1 percent.

Incomes have taken a beating during the recession as employers slashed payrolls and forced workers to take unpaid days off to hold down wage costs. In addition, households with sufficient income to hit the shopping malls have trimmed their purchases and boosted savings to cope with a severe financial crisis which sent the stock market into a nosedive last year.

The concern is that consumer

spending, which accounts for 70 percent of economic activity, may not be strong enough to propel a sustained recovery from the longest recession since World War II.

The Federal Reserve has pushed a key interest rate to a record low near zero in an effort to boost the economy and is pledging to keep rates low for a considerable period even as the economy begins to grow again.

The Fed is able to make that pledge because inflation is not a problem. A price gauge tied to consumer spending was unchanged in July after a 0.5 percent jump in June that had reflected a big rise in energy prices. Excluding food and energy, the price gauge showed a 0.1 percent rise, and over the past year increased 1.4 percent, well within the Fed's comfort zone for inflation.

The government reported Thurs-

day that the overall economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, fell at an annual rate of 1 percent in the April-June quarter. It marked the fourth consecutive decline in gross domestic product, the longest stretch on records that go back more than six decades.

Many economists believe the gross domestic product in the current July-September quarter will rebound to growth above 3 percent and remain at that level in the fourth quarter. The economic growth likely will reflect a boost from the highly successful clunkers program to boost car sales and other government stimulus efforts.

But the fear is that economic growth will slip back in the early part of 2010 as the impact of the government programs fade and unemployment rises.

Groups warn of more state education budget cuts

From "BUDGET," Page 1

which prevented a further \$194.4 million cut in state education funding. Those funds are available next year, but expire in 2012, along with \$46 million in Title I aid.

Because of the diversity of Kansas school districts, how districts are responding to these challenges has also varied. To help replace dollars lost from state funding, some school boards have increased local mill levies, shifting the cost from the state to local taxpayers. Other districts are at the legal maximum they can raise locally. In addition to property tax increases, many districts have been forced to raise fees paid by families to maintain services previously funded by state dollars.

In June, districts reported plans to the Kansas State Department of Education to eliminate over 2,000 teaching and administrative positions and 1,600 non-licensed positions to save about \$100 million, plus over \$67 million in other cost-saving measures. The

actual budget changes will not be known until later this fall when the Department of Education analyzes school district budgets being adopted this month, but districts have reported cutting before, after and summer school programs, teacher professional development, student activities and transportation, and closing school buildings.

Educators say such a loss of state and federal funds would force school districts to dismantle programs put in place over the past decade to increase student achievement and close the "achievement gap" for low income, minority and disabled students. Scores on state academic tests have increased steadily since 2000, and the state's graduation rate has improved.

The Kansas State Board of Education voted in July to request an additional \$280 million for fiscal year 2011 to fund the school finance system as provided by current law, with no enhancements. Even that level remains significantly below the amount the Kansas Legislative Post Audit Division said is required to meet state academic outcome requirements.

County officials attend flu summit

From "SUMMIT," Page 1

perform immunizations at the schools, since children are an at-risk group.

"As a county health department, that's something we can do," she said. "We can get a big group done there."

In the past, she said, the department has also done seasonal flu immunizations at senior centers and businesses in town, an approach that could work for the swine flu vaccine.

One of the difficulties, Roth said, is coordinating the public and private entities, such as medical clinics, who will be receiving the vaccine. The vac-

cine will be a two-series shot, people will need two separate shots to be completely immunized. Rothchild said this can create some difficulties in record keeping, making sure those who get the first shot also get the second, and making sure those who show up for the second shot have already gotten the first.

Other speakers at the meeting included U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who spoke about the need to protect students from becoming infected, State Health Director Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips and Col. Terry Maple, superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol.

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