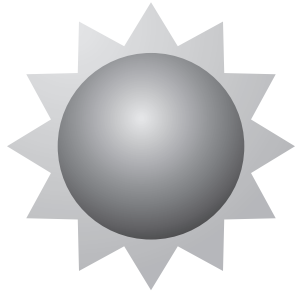


Weather Corner



National Weather Service
Tonight: Patchy fog after 4 a.m. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a low around 52. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.
Friday: Patchy fog before 9 a.m. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 78. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.
Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 52. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.
Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 78. South wind between 5 and 15 mph.
Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 51.
Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 83.
Sunday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53.
Monday: A slight chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 70. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.
Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 47.
Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 76.
Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 46.
Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 76.

Wednesday: High, 75; Low 48
 Precip: Wed. 0.00 inches
 Month: 0.16 inches
 Year: 20.69 inches
 Normal: 17.71 inches
 (K-State Experiment Station)
Sunrise and Sunset
 Friday 7:28 a.m. 7:47 p.m.
 (U.S. Naval Observatory)

Recession may be easing, but economy still fragile

From "ECONOMY," Page 1

reflected a 25.3 percent surge in construction of multifamily units, a volatile sector that had fallen 15.2 percent in July.

The single-family sector dipped 3 percent last month to an annual rate of 479,000 units, the first setback following five straight monthly gains.

Paul Dales, U.S. economist at Capital Economics, noted that housing starts remain 74 percent below their 2006 peak and predicted the housing recovery would be a very "long-winded process."

Meanwhile, initial claims for unemployment benefits dropped last week to a seasonally adjusted 545,000 from an upwardly revised 557,000 the previous week, the Labor Department said Thursday. Wall Street economists expected claims to rise by 5,000, according to Thomson Reuters.

The decline was the third in the past four weeks. The four-week average, which smooths out fluctuations, dropped 8,750 to 563,000. Despite the improvement, that's far above the 325,000 per week that is typical in a healthy economy.

"The message here is that the labor market's healing process is agonizingly slow," Shapiro said.

The number of people claiming jobless benefits for more than a week rose by 129,000 to a seasonally adjusted 6.2 million. The continuing claims data lags initial claims by one week.

When federal extended benefits are included, 9.01 million people received unemployment insurance in the week ending Aug. 29. That's down from 9.16 million the previous week. Congress has added up to 53 weeks of extended benefits on top of the 26 weeks provided by the states.

Some economists said the overall housing construction gain was an encouraging sign that the worst is over for that troubled market.

"This sector is likely to start adding to growth rather than holding back the economy," said Joel

Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisors.

Regionally, construction rose 23.8 percent in the Northeast and 0.9 percent in the Midwest. Activity was flat in the West and fell 2.4 percent in the South.

Builders have been ramping up because buyers want to take advantage of the new federal tax credit for first-time homebuyers. The National Association of Home Builders said this week that its housing market index rose in September, reflecting growing optimism in the industry about rising home sales. The trade association said its index rose one point to 19, the highest reading since April 2008.

Homebuilders' stocks jumped following the release of that report and mostly moved higher

early Thursday. Shares of Beazer Homes USA Inc., and Hovnanian Enterprises Inc., were each up more than 6 percent in morning trading. Financial results for homebuilders also were better than expected in the latest quarter.

The Dow Jones U.S. Home Construction Total Stock Market Index has surged since bottoming in November but remains about 72 percent below the level achieved at its recent peak in 2005.

Thursday's reports come a day after the Federal Reserve said production by the nation's factories, mines and utilities increased for the second straight month in August, the latest sign the economy is recovering.

But the economy isn't improving fast enough to spur greater hiring. Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke

on Tuesday said the recession is likely over, though he noted that the economy isn't likely to grow fast enough to lower unemployment anytime soon.

The jobless rate is widely expected to peak next year above 10 percent, up from its current 9.7 percent. Some analysts say that claims need to drop below 400,000 before the unemployment rate will start to decline.

More job cuts were announced this week. Drugmaker Eli Lilly & Co. said Monday that it will cut 5,500 jobs over the next two

years, 14 percent of its work force, as it restructures the company into five business units.

Among the states, Washington had the largest increase in claims of 4,546, which it attributed to greater layoffs in the construction, public administration, and manufacturing industries. The next largest increases were in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Illinois.

California had the largest drop in claims of 2,751. The next largest were in New York, Wisconsin, Texas and New Jersey.


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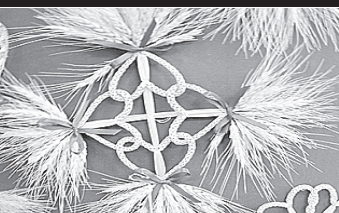
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Fake cop caught after pulling over mayor

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — Police say a man impersonating an officer with a flashing red light in his car has been arrested after he pulled over the wrong driver — the mayor of Shreveport, La.

Police think the suspect was using the in-dash light to maneuver through traffic Monday night in northwest Louisiana. Mayor Cedric Glover says he pulled over when he drove behind him, but the fake officer then sped away.

Glover says he followed the car and called police. Daniel Niederhelman, 21, of Shreveport has been charged with false personation of a peace officer.

Police seized the light and a handgun from Niederhelman's holster. Authorities say Niederhelman works for a private security company, but wasn't authorized to use the light.

Booking records did not list an attorney for Niederhelman.

Kansas casino project may try for hotel resort

WELLINGTON (AP) — A company involved in a proposed casino in south-central Kansas says it's trying to attract a hotel to its project but has met with some skepticism from members of the state review board that will decide the project's fate.

Lakes Entertainment Inc. of Minnetonka, Minn., is negotiating with four hotel companies, said Chief Executive Officer Lyle Berman said. Lakes and its partners in the proposed Chisholm Creek project hope to open their casino in September 2011, but they don't have a timetable for the hotel.

Chisholm Creek is the only proposal for the Wichita area before the Lottery Gaming Facility Review Board since companies that had been competing for a contract with the Kansas Lottery combined forces. The lottery will own the new games under a 2007 law authorizing a single casino in each of four areas.

The board held a hearing Wednesday in Wellington. The new casino would be built near Mulvane, about 20 miles south of Wichita, off the Kansas Turnpike exit for K-53 highway.

"You say 'Trust me.' You say 'It'll happen,'" board member Jim Bergfalk of Mission told Berman. Berman replied: "A hotel is wonderful frosting on the cake, but it isn't the cake."

"We fully intend to do everything in our power to get an outside developer to build a hotel with their financing and probably with some subsidy and support from the casino."

A hotel is a significant issue for the board because legislators

envisioned the state having "destination" casinos, large, tourist-drawing complexes with hotels, restaurants and other amenities. They believed such complexes would do more business — resulting in more revenues for the state.

The same issue arose for the lone proposal in northeast Kansas, where a partnership proposes to build a casino at the Kansas Speedway, the NASCAR track in the Kansas City area. The partnership doesn't plan to begin construction on a hotel until 2014, which also led to questions from board members.

The review board plans to meet again Oct. 26-27 in Topeka to consider detailed studies on the proposals from its own consultants and decide Dec. 1-2 whether to approve the Sumner and Wyandotte county plans.

"If the information we get from the applicant and our consultants and all of you suggests the state didn't get all it should from this opportunity," said Chairman Matt All said.

The Chisholm Creek partnership plans to spend \$125 million on the first phase of construction, financing the work with funds from Lakes and two private investment firms.

The partnership would spend \$100 million to expand its complex later. It said the expansion could take 12 years, depending on market conditions, which board member Jackie Vietti, of El Dorado, said "makes me uncomfortable."

Berman said once the casino opens, Lakes should be able to get better interest rates.

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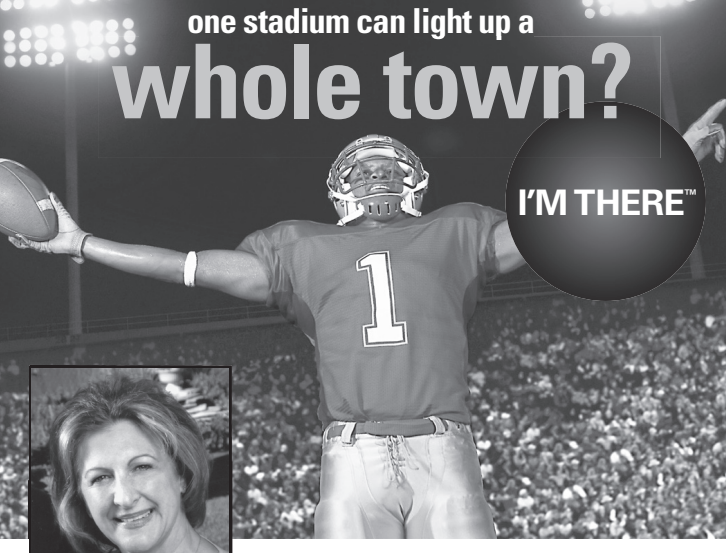



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