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The United States' last serious deflation occurred during the Great Depression.

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tion occurred during the Great Depression. A bad case of deflation can lead not only to widespread price declines — from goods and services to real-estate and stocks — but also to job losses and pay cuts.

Arguing against impending deflation is that the core rate of inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food prices, rose by 0.3 percent in May, the largest increase since August, after holding steady in April. A record 4.1 percent increase in lodging prices helped push up the core inflation rate last month.

Despite mixed economic indicators, White House spokesman Fleischer said Bush was encouraged by the stock market's rally since March and private forecasts that show greater economic growth in the second half of the year.

For consumers, falling prices for things they buy can be a good thing. But for a producer, falling prices for what he sells means more of a squeeze on profit margins.

Wholesale prices, for instance, posted a record drop in April and fell again in May.



Steve Cifarelli compares printers in a Staples store in New York. Consumer prices held steady in May, good news after a small decline the previous month.

Faced with lackluster customer demand, some businesses are keeping a lid on price increases and sometimes even cutting prices to lure shoppers. Computer prices fell 3.7 percent last month, clothing prices declined 0.3 percent and new automobile prices dipped 0.1 percent.

Energy prices, which had been stoked in recent months on war tensions, retreated for the second month in a row in May, dropping 3.1 percent. Gasoline prices fell 6.8 percent, fuel oil prices declined 6.3 percent and natural gas prices went down 1.6 percent.

Lower energy prices are good news for consumers, relieving a strain on household budgets and giving more leeway to spend elsewhere. All of that would help economic growth.

Food prices, however, rose 0.3 percent, after nudging down by 0.1 percent in April. Prices for medical care and education each increased 0.4 percent in May.

In the Fed's report, production at factories rose 0.2 percent in May, the first increase since January. At mines, output rose 0.8 percent last month, and at gas and electric utilities production fell 0.8 percent, reflecting cooler

than normal weather, economists said.

The increase in factory production is "a welcome sign that clearer skies may be on the horizon for manufacturers after a rough year," said Jerry Jasinowski, president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

**Web sites**  
**CPI**  
[www.www.bls.gov/](http://www.www.bls.gov/)  
**Industrial production**  
[www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov)  
**Housing**  
[www.commerce.gov/](http://www.commerce.gov/)

## RAMOS:

The new president has a master's degree in business administration.

FROM E-1

To help his parents, Ramos lives in both Tulsa and Oklahoma City. His familiarity with the two cities could aid the chamber in accomplishing its goal of

reaching the Hispanic population in both places, he said.

Ramos has worked with the Hispanic community in each of the cities. He served on the board of trustees for the Hispanic-American Foundation and the board of the Community Service Council. He was a charter board member of the Latino Community Development Agency, a member of the Greater Tulsa Hispanic Affairs Advisory Committee, the Latino Community Development Agency and the state's Cultural Diversity and Economic Development Advisory Commit-

tee. Ramos has been a member of the Hispanic chamber for about 18 months.

"His experience and longtime involvement in area organizations have allowed him a unique understanding of our community," chamber Chairman Xavier Neira stated in a news release. "This understanding will be of extreme benefit as we work to promote the continued growth and development of the Hispanic business community, and our Tulsa community as a whole."

Ramos said he has high ex-

pectations for the chamber's growth in the near future.

The chamber wants to help the Hispanic community and the Tulsa community as a whole to understand and appreciate each other's cultures, he said.

"We don't want to be integrated as much as we want to be assimilated," he said. "Assimilation means embracing the art and science in everything."

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## UNITED:

The new service will cost \$15.98.

FROM E-1

fought for their survival.

Airline consultant Michael Boyd, president of the Boyd Group in Evergreen, Colo., hailed the move by United, which is restructuring in federal

bankruptcy court after losing millions of dollars and many of its passengers.

"I don't know about the average person sitting down and spending 20 bucks to send e-mails to Mama," Boyd said. "But it shows some innovation happening over at United. Maybe the real message is that United is thinking of new ways of doing business."

**Web sites**  
[www.united.com](http://www.united.com)

## JOBS:

SARS and the war with Iraq may have affected the survey.

FROM E-1

softest it has been in more than a decade.

The nation's employment outlook, however, may not turn out as weak as the numbers suggest.

Because data was collected in April at the height of the SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, outbreak and the war with Iraq, the survey's results may have been affected.

"For that reason, we could find that hiring activity is slightly more positive in the upcoming quarter than survey results are indicating, as employers see progress in the resolution of these issues," said Jeffrey A. Joerres, chairman and chief executive of Manpower Inc., in a release.

Despite the timing of the sur-

vey, Tulsa employers still were positive.

"Reductions are now finally declining, and we're seeing an increase in hiring expectations. That's a good sign for us," Arndt said.

For the coming quarter, additional hiring is expected locally in mining, construction, durable goods manufacturing, wholesale and retail trades, and public administration. A mix of job gains and losses are expected in services and transportation-public utilities, according to the survey.

In Oklahoma City, 13 percent of employers surveyed said they plan to increase their work forces, while 57 percent expect no change, and 27 percent plan decreases. Three percent were uncertain.

The U.S. survey is based on interviews with nearly 16,000 public and private employers in 470 markets across the country.

Manpower provides work-force management services and solutions to customers through 3,900 offices in 63 countries.

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## Small SUVs perform poorly in crash tests

**By DEE-ANN DURBIN**  
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Small sport utility vehicles performed poorly overall in the first side-impact crash tests by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Only two received the highest rating, and most were rated "poor."

Some automakers indicated the results, released Tuesday, will lead to changes in vehicle design. General Motors Corp. said it already has added the Insurance Institute's crash test to the tests it regularly performs.

The Insurance Institute tests are among the first to measure what happens when dummies the size of small women are hit in side-impact crashes.

Two 2003 vehicles with side air bags — the Subaru Forester and the Ford Escape — received "good" ratings, the highest. The only other vehicle tested with side air bags, the Hyundai Santa Fe, received the second-best "acceptable" rating. The remaining nine vehicles tested do not have side air bags. Of those, two earned "marginal" grades, and seven got the lowest, "poor," scores.

The results were based on vehicle performance as well as the extent of injuries caused to identical dummies in the driver's seat and left rear seat in a 31 mph crash.

The Subaru Forester offers standard side air bags with tor-

so and head protection, while similar air bags are optional in the Ford Escape. The Insurance Institute found that the Escape tested without air bags earned a "poor" rating.

The Mitsubishi Outlander performed worst in the Insurance Institute's test. In an Outlander with no side air bag, the crash barrier crushed the side of the vehicle and struck the dummy's head, causing serious head, torso and pelvis injuries.

Mitsubishi said it will review the test results but said the Insurance Institute is using a severe test that has not been adopted universally by automakers. The company also pointed out that it received high ratings in a front crash test performed by the institute this year.

The Honda CRV and the Jeep Wrangler received "marginal" ratings, while the lowest rating of "poor" went to the Honda Element, the Saturn Vue, the Land Rover Freelander, the Suzuki Grand Vitara, the Toyota RAV4, the Escape without air bags and the Outlander.

The Insurance Institute said side-impact tests are critical, since many vehicles that perform well in front crashes still are vulnerable in side crashes. The boom in large SUVs and pickups also has contributed to an increasing proportion of deaths in side-impact crashes, since vehicles often are mismatched by height and weight, safety experts say.

## AIR FARES FROM TULSA

Round-trip air fares based on lowest coach rates.

**LEGEND:** AA — American Airlines; CA — Continental Airlines; DL — Delta Air Lines; NW — Northwest Airlines; SW — Southwest Airlines; UA — United Airlines

City	Normal fare**	Advance discount fare*
Atlanta	\$1,238 AA, NW, CA, DL	\$286 AA, NW, CA, DL
Chicago	\$402 SW	\$228 AA, SW, UA
Dallas	\$182 SW	\$98 SW, AA, DL
Denver	\$1,286 UA, AA, NW, DL	\$307 UA, AA, NW, DL
Houston	\$280 SW	\$170 SW, CA
Kansas City	\$184 SW	\$98 SW
Las Vegas	\$598 SW	\$158 SW, AA, DL, UA
Los Angeles	\$598 SW	\$282 SW, AA, DL, NW
Miami	\$1,644 AA, DL, UA, CA, NW	\$323 DL, NW, AA, CA, UA
New York	\$1,640 AA, UA, CA, NW, DL	\$328 AA, UA, NW, DL, CA
Phoenix	\$516 SW	\$158 SW, DL, AA, CA, UA, NW
San Francisco	\$1,770 AA, UA, DL, CA, NW	\$345 AA, UA, DL, NW
Seattle	\$2,026 AA, NW, UA, DL	\$326 SW, AA, NW, CA, DL
St. Louis	\$204 SW	\$112 SW, AA

\* — Prices are subject to availability of seats. \*\* — Price may vary depending on availability and if flying non-stop or through a hub. Additional taxes and fees apply.

Tulsa World

SOURCE: Spears Travel

## FYI: BUSINESS

### Tupperware leaving Target, going to party

Tupperware Corp. on Tuesday said it is pulling its products from Target Corp. stores Sept. 1 after an eight-month run because the partnership has had a "detrimental effect" on its business staple, the Tupperware party.

Tupperware, which has made a success of selling its food storage cartons through home parties, said fewer people have attended the gatherings because of the availability of its products at more than 1,000 Target stores.

"Tupperware sales in Target stores exceeded our expectations and confirmed the power of the brand," said Rick Goings, chairman and chief executive of Tupperware. "However, the party remains our most productive source of sales. It is important that we support this channel and our independent sales force earnings opportunities."

In October, Tupperware announced it was expanding its line of plastic food-storage containers into all 1,148 Target stores after a yearlong pilot project in 62 SuperTarget locations.

At the time, Goings said the move did not signal the end of the suburban American icon of the Tupperware party.

Three years before, the company had successfully started selling product in mall kiosks, on the Internet and through television. Tupperware said would continue to support those channels.

### WorldCom earnings rise on lower revenue

WorldCom Inc.'s operating earnings increased by \$30 million in April from the previous month, despite a small drop in revenue, the company reported Tuesday.

In a monthly operating report issued to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan, N.Y., WorldCom said its sales totaled \$2.05 billion in April, compared with \$2.10 billion in March.

Operating earnings rose to \$114 million, from \$84 million. However, the operating earnings do not include one-time costs associated with the company's Chapter 11 restructuring. Those items totaled \$117 million in April, compared with \$48 million in March.

The higher earnings stemmed from cost reductions driven by contract restructurings, the company said.

"While the environment continues to be challenging, we are making clear progress in reducing our costs and rebuilding our business," said Bob Blakely, chief financial officer of WorldCom.

The company, now operating under the name of its MCI long-distance unit, increased its cash on hand to \$3.7 billion, from \$3.3 billion at the beginning of April.

WorldCom, which filed the biggest bankruptcy in U.S. history last summer, is hoping to leave Chapter 11 protection this fall. A major obstacle is opposition to a proposed \$500 million fine negotiated between the company and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The fine is the largest of its type ever imposed by the SEC, but competitors and other WorldCom critics say it is an insufficient penalty for the company's massive accounting scandal. A federal judge is reviewing the proposed settlement.

### Circuit City posts loss, lower sales

Circuit City Stores Inc. reported lower sales and a net loss in its first quarter as the war in Iraq and general economic weakness kept consumer spending down.

Contributing to the loss was a drop in performance in the company's finance operation, and the Richmond, Va.-based company said it is exploring "all viable options for that operation."

Circuit City, the second-largest consumer electronics chain behind Best Buy Co., said it lost \$43.9 million, or 21 cents a share, in the quarter that ended May 31. That compared with net income of \$28 million, or 8 cents a share, in the year-ago period.

The company said remodeling and relocation costs continued to affect the bottom line, adding 5 cents a share to the first-quarter loss compared with 2 cents in the same quarter last year.

Sales in the most recent quarter totaled \$1.9 billion, down 9 percent from \$2.1 billion a year earlier.

"Significant declines in average retails, driven by our industry's rapid technological development, and economic weakness, particularly early in the quarter with the onset of the war with Iraq, were the key contributors to the first-quarter sales weakness," said W. Alan McCullough, chairman and chief executive.

The finance unit, which consists mainly of Circuit City's credit-card operations, posted a pretax loss of \$22.1 million in the latest quarter compared with a pretax profit of \$20.4 million in the first quarter last year.

### Fire damage at refinery severe, Murphy Oil says

Murphy Oil Corp. said Tuesday that its refinery in Meraux, La., will remain closed through September as the company repairs "severe" damage from a June 10 fire.

One unit of the refinery, a residual oil supercritical extractor, "is considered a total loss and plans are already under way to replace the unit," El Dorado, Ark.-based Murphy said in a news release.

The company also must repair other equipment, including a vacuum unit, and piping and electrical wiring.

The plant, the larger of two Murphy refineries, can process 100,000 barrels of crude oil a day.

"Current estimates suggest that it will be a year or more before the damage is completely repaired," the company said. "Fire damage was severe but confined to a small area of the plant."

The fire was caused by a mechanical failure, officials said. Murphy also operates a refinery in Superior, Wis., that can process 35,000 barrels a day.

### Venezuelan says more oil workers may be fired

Venezuelan Energy and Mines Minister Rafael Ramirez said Tuesday that more employees of the state oil company may be fired in an ongoing purge of workers who participated in a two-month strike that paralyzed production and exports.

The Restructuring Committee of Petroleos de Venezuela SA will determine who will be fired, Ramirez told the state news agency. His threat came almost three weeks after more than 900 fired workers were rehired.

"If a manager, who participated in the coup, or a worker, who was involved in sabotage, was reinstated, they will be fired," Ramirez said. "When we detect them, we will do it."

PDVSA may find it difficult to maintain its current output of about 3.2 million barrels of day unless more workers are hired, analysts have said. Many of the company's wells need maintenance and may face production declines if they aren't serviced or repaired.

The strike in December and January, which cut oil production by as much as 95 percent, cost the economy \$7.4 billion. Labor unions, business leaders and former oil executives organized the national work stoppage to pressure Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to step down and hold elections.

From Bloomberg, AP and staff reports

## OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURE

### Oklahoma Markets

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The state Department of Agriculture reported the following closing prices Tuesday:

U.S. No 1 HARD RED WINTER WHEAT: Steady to 1 cent lower. 2.65-2.91. Buffalo 2.65, Alva 2.69, Davis 2.70, Shattuck 2.71, Manchester 2.74, Clinton, Medford, Weatherford 2.75, Banner, El Reno, Geary, Kingfisher, Okeene, Watonga, Yukon 2.76, Lawton 2.78; Frederick, Hobart 2.71; Perry, Silllater 2.80, Ponca City 2.81, Keyes 2.83; Eldorado 2.84, Atton, Miami 2.86, Temple 2.91, Gulf 3.51.

MILK: 2-3 cents higher. 3.45-4.04. Medford, Shattuck, Manchester 3.45, Weatherford 3.46, Atton, Miami 3.52, Ponca City 3.54, Keyes 3.86, Kingfisher NA, Alva, Buffalo 4.04, Gulf 4.67.

SOYBEANS: 4 to 6 cents higher. 5.56-5.92. Shattuck 5.56, Medford 5.67, Alva, Buffalo 5.71, Ponca City 5.76, Atton, Miami 5.85, Stillwater 5.92, Gulf 6.49.

CORN: 2.37-2.55. Atton, Miami, Ponca City 2.37, Weatherford 2.40, Manchester 2.42, Keyes 2.56, Gulf 2.73.

Grade 41, Leaf 4, Staple 34 Cotton in Southwestern Oklahoma Averaged 53.00 cents per pound F.O.B. railcar or truck.

Alfalfa hay \$80-\$95; Grass hay \$50-\$65. Eggs: A large 83 cents; A medium 70 cents; A small 51 cents.

### Oklahoma Livestock

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Here are Tuesday's

opening cattle and closing hog quotations from the Oklahoma National Stockyards:

CATTLE — No opening quotes.

HOGS — 100 head.

Compared to Monday: Barrows and Gilts: 1.00 higher. U.S. 1-3 220-265 lbs. 45.00. U.S. 2-3 220-265 lbs. 43.00.

Sows: Steady to 1.00 higher. U.S. 1-3 300-500 lbs. 27.00-29.00. U.S. 1-3 500-700 lbs. 30.00-31.00. Boars: 200-250 lbs. 20.00. Over 250 lbs. 5.00.

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Here are Monday's closing quotations from the Oklahoma National Stockyards:

CATTLE — 9400; last Monday: 17,187; last year: 10,637.

Compared to last week: Feeder steers and heifers steady to 3.00 higher, advance on 8 weight steers and 7 weight heifers. Demand good for feeders. Steer and heifer calves steady to 2.00 lower with the exception of an increased supply of heavy weight new crop calves that sold 2.00-4.00 lower. Calf demand light for unweaned new crops, moderate for others. Farmers are back in the wheat fields after a ten to fourteen day break due to rains. Quality plain to average, several attractive feeders. Weigh-ups average. Feeder cattle in mostly medium, some moderate flesh conditions; calves in medium to fleshy conditions.

Supply consisted of 78 percent yearlings over 600 lbs.; 22 percent calves. Heifers comprised 37

percent of feeder and calf supply.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 Calves: pkg 385 lbs. 115.00; 400-450 lbs. 108.00-114.50; 450-500 lbs. 101.00-109.00; 500-550 lbs.

94.00-106.50; lot 500 lbs. fancy 109.00; 550-600 lbs. 90.00-96.00; 600-700 lbs. 82.00-88.50; 700-750 lbs. 83.50-87.00; Yearlings: 600-700 lbs. 90.00-95.50; 700-750 lbs. 87.50-92.00; 750-800 lbs. 84.25-88.25; 800-850 lbs. 82.25-86.50; 850-900 lbs. 79.00-84.75; 900-975 lbs. 76.00-81.50.

Medium and Large 1-2 400-450 lbs. 100.00-107.50; lot 490 lbs. 96.00; 500-525 lbs. 95.00-98.00; 550-600 lbs. 86.00-92.00; few 625-635 lbs. 89.00, pkg 640 lbs. calves 82.50; 650-675 lbs. 90.50-90.75; 700-750 lbs. 86.00-91.00; 750-800 lbs. 83.25-86.25; 800-850 lbs. 80.00-84.00; 850-900 lbs. 77.00-78.00; lot 925 lbs. 77.75; 950 lbs. fleshy 73.75.

Small and Medium 1-2 few 500-600 lbs. 89.50-90.00; pkg 715 lbs. 82.00. Medium and Large 2 500-600 lbs. 87.00-92.25; 600-700 lbs. 85.75-91.75; 700-800 lbs. 81.00-87.50; 800-925 lbs. 73.00-80.00.

Medium and Large 3 525-550 lbs. 82.50-82.75; 550-600 lbs. 84.00-85.00; 600-650 lbs. 83.00-84.50; 650-700 lbs. 79.25-85.50; 700-750 lbs. 79.25-82.00; lot 770 lbs. 78.50; 825-850 lbs. 75.75-81.50; 850-900 lbs. 73.00-75.00.

Hotsteins Large 3 few 650-675 lbs. 65.50. Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 Calves: pkg 360 lbs. 106.50; 400-500 lbs. 93.50-99.50; fleshy 87.00-87.50; 500-600 lbs. 81.00-88.50;

600-650 lbs. 80.00-85.50; 650-675 lbs. 77.00-82.25; Yearlings: 500-600 lbs. 89.00-94.50; 600-700 lbs. 85.00-87.50; 700-750 lbs. 82.50-88.25; 750-800 lbs. 79.75-84.50; 800-825 lbs. 79.00-81.00; 850-900 lbs. 75.50-76.50.

Medium and Large 1-2 450-500 lbs. 87.50-90.00; lot 540 lbs. 90.00, lot 510 lbs. calves 82.00; 600-700 lbs. 80.50-85.75, pkg 675 lb calves 81.00; 700-750 lbs. 81.00-83.00; few 775-825 lbs. 75.00-77.75.

Small and Medium 1-2 575-600 lbs. 84.00-87.50; pkg 715 lbs. 74.00. Medium and Large 2 lot 390 lbs. 94.00; 400-500 lbs. 83.00-90.50; 500-550 lbs. 85.50-93.00; 550-600 lbs. 81.50-89.00; 600-700 lbs. 80.50-86.00; 700-750 lbs. 76.50-82.25; 750-800 lbs. 74.25-78.25; lot 800 lbs. 72.00.

Medium and Large 3 425-500 lbs. 77.50-82.50; 500-600 lbs. 78.75-82.25; 600-675 lbs. 80.25-83.25; 725-750 lbs. 73.00-76.25; lot 835 lbs. 71.50; lot 935 lbs. 62.25.

HOGS — 130 head.

Compared to last Wednesday Barrows and Gilts: Steady. U.S. 1-3 220-265 lbs. 44.00. U.S. 2-3 220-265 lbs. 43.00.