

FCC REPORTS NETWORK NEWS 6:30 MARCH 1-15/ PART 1

03/01/2012

TENSIONS RAISE SPECTER OF GAS AT \$5 A GALLON

BLANCA ROSA VILCHEZ. NEW JERSEY

PKG 2:00

Gasoline for \$5 a gallon? The possibility is hardly far-fetched. With no clear end to tensions with Iran and Syria and rising demand from countries like China, gas prices are already at record highs for the winter months - averaging \$4.32 in California and \$3.73 a gallon nationally on Wednesday, according to AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge Report. As summer approaches, demand for gasoline rises, typically pushing prices up around 20 cents a gallon. And gas prices could rise another 50 cents a gallon or more, analysts say, if the diplomatic and economic standoff over Iran's nuclear ambitions escalates into military conflict or there is some other major supply disruption.

UNEMPLOYMENT LATEST

VILMA TARAZONA.MIAMI, FLORIDA

PKG 2:00

The number of people seeking unemployment benefits fell slightly last week to the lowest point in four years, a further sign that the U.S. job market is steadily improving. A seasonally adjusted 351,000 people sought unemployment aid, down from 353,000 the previous week, the Labor Department said Thursday. That matches the four-year low reached three weeks ago. It's the fewest since March 2008. A four-week average of claims, which smooths out weekly fluctuations in the data, also fell last week, to 354,000. That's also the lowest figure in four years. Applications have fallen steadily since October. The average has declined 14.6 percent since then. When applications drop consistently below 375,000, it usually signals that hiring is strong enough to lower the unemployment rate. Economists expect the government to report another strong month of hiring for February, similar to the average net gain of about 200,000 in the previous three months.

US SENATE REJECTS REPUBLICAN BIRTH CONTROL CHALLENGE

VO :20

The U.S. Senate

narrowly backed a key plank of President Barack Obama's healthcare law on Thursday by rejecting a sweeping Republican measure that would have allowed employers to opt out of birth control coverage and other services on moral grounds. Senators voted 51-48 to set aside a measure proposed by Republican Roy Blunt that would have exempted employers like Catholic hospitals, universities and charities from an Obama healthcare provision that requires most employers to offer free insurance coverage for women's contraceptives.

MARYLAND SAME SEX MARRIAGE

VO :20

Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley today signed the marriage equality bill, making the state the eighth to allow same-sex couples to marry. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is a member of the Marylanders for Marriage Equality coalition, and Task Force staff were on hand for the bill-signing ceremony in Annapolis. O'Malley gave a speech in January at the Task Force's National Conference on LGBT Equality: Creating Change, the country's largest convening of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights advocates, where he spoke of his staunch support for marriage equality. The Task Force has worked with Maryland equality advocates over the years to secure protections for LGBT people and their families. This includes providing Equality Maryland with financial, technical and staff support throughout the 2011 legislative session. The Task Force, through its Faith Partner Organizing Project, has also worked with faith communities in Maryland on public education efforts leading to the passage of the marriage bill.

JUDGE BLOCKS CIGARRETTES IMAGES

VO :20

A judge on Wednesday blocked a federal requirement that would have begun forcing U.S. tobacco companies to put large graphic images on their cigarette packages later this year to show the dangers of smoking and encouraging smokers to quit lighting up. U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington ruled that the federal mandate to put the images, which include a sewn-up corpse of a smoker and a picture of diseased lungs, on cigarette packs violates the free speech amendment to the Constitution. He

had temporarily blocked the requirement in November, saying it was likely cigarette makers will succeed in a lawsuit, which could take years to resolve. That decision already is being appealed by the government. Some of the largest U.S. tobacco companies, including R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and Lorillard Tobacco Co., had questioned the constitutionality of the labels, saying the warnings don't simply convey facts to inform people's decision whether to smoke but instead force the cigarette makers to display government anti-smoking advocacy more prominently than their own branding.

=====

03/02/2012

NOTHING TO REPORT

=====

03/03/2012

6:30 & 11:30

NOTHING TO REPORT

=====

03/04/2012

6:30 & 11:30

NOTHING TO REPORT

=====

03/05/2012

CREDIT CARD DEBT TAXES

LUIS MEGID / SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

PKG 1:52

Billions of dollars in credit card debt that was charged off during the Great Recession some of it decades old - is coming back to haunt borrowers in the form of unexpected tax bills. Debt that is canceled or forgiven is considered taxable income, something many borrowers don't realize until they receive a 1099-C tax form from their lender. The IRS projects that creditors will send taxpayers 6.4 million 1099-Cs in 2012, up from 3.9 million in 2010.

=====

03/06/12

SCHOOL DICIPLINE REPORT

JAIME GARCIA / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PKG 2:02

A report to be released today by the Education Department raises questions about whether students of all races are disciplined evenhandedly in America's schools. An early snapshot of the report says that more than 70 percent of students involved in school-related arrests or cases referred to law enforcement are Hispanic or African-American. It also finds that black students are more than three times more likely than their white peers to be suspended or expelled. Education Secretary Arne Duncan tells reporters it's a "sad fact" that minority students across America face much harsher discipline than non-minorities, even within the same school. The report was based on 2009-2010 data.

OBAMA PRESS CONFERENCE

LOURDES MELUZA / WASHINGTON, DC

PKG 2:01

President Barack Obama declared Tuesday that diplomacy can still resolve the crisis over Iran's possible pursuit of nuclear weapons, and he accused his Republican critics of "beating the drums of war." "Those folks don't have a lot of responsibilities," Obama said. "They are not commander in chief." Tension with Iran, and Obama's preference for restraint, dominated his first full news conference of the year, held on the same day that Republican Super Tuesday voting was drawing attention as well.

=====

03/07/11

GAS DOWN

VO :20

Gas prices are down for the second day in a row. Triple-A says prices dropped about three tenths of a cent. The nationwide price for a gallon of regular remains at 3-76. Congressional Republicans and Democrats are again battling over rising gas prices. At a hearing Wednesday, Republicans and oil industry leaders called for more U.S. production, while Democrats focused on conservation and the role of Wall Street speculators.

ADP SURVEY JOBS

VO :20

Private-business hiring in February was solid, according to a report released Wednesday. The number suggests an equally strong gain in Friday's payrolls report. Private-sector jobs in the U.S. increased 216,000 last month, according to a national employment report published by payroll giant Automatic Data Processing Inc, and consultancy Macroeconomic Advisers. The gain was close to expectations of 215,000 put forth by economists surveyed by Dow Jones Newswires. The January data were revised to show a gain of 173,000 instead of the 170,000 increase reported earlier.

MERCURY DISCOVERED IN COSMETIC PRODUCTS

MARTIN BERLANGA. MIAMI, FLORIDA

PKG 2:00

FDA identified 35 products. Women in at least seven states may have been unwittingly slathering poison on their faces by using mercury-tainted cosmetics, the Food and Drug Administration warned today. The products, usually used for lightening skin, are sold as soaps, skin creams, and lotions. In all, the FDA has identified 35 products, most of them manufactured overseas, and most sold in Latino, Middle Eastern, African-American, and Asian neighborhoods. Mercury poisoning can cause illness and even death, and while the amounts of mercury in the cosmetics is typically low, mercury, like lead and some other poisons, accumulates in the body. Mercury is also readily absorbable through skin. It damages the nervous system and other organs such as kidneys. Consumers could be giving themselves frequent small doses of poison that will eventually lead to symptoms like irritability, tremors, depression, memory problems and changes in hearing and vision.

=====

03/08/2012

US IMMIGRATION ALABAMA

MARIA ANTONIETA COLLINS. MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

PKG 2:00

A U.S. appeals court ordered the state of Alabama on Thursday to stop enforcing additional parts of its controversial new immigration law, pending review of a federal challenge to the measure that is considered the toughest in the nation. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, based in Atlanta, issued a brief order expanding its initial injunction to include provisions that barred illegal immigrants from obtaining a driver's license and barred courts from enforcing contracts that involved illegal immigrants. The appeals court in October blocked the state from enforcing another key provision of the law that required schools to check the immigration status of children on enrollment.

US: MORE WORK NEEDED TO STOP YOUTH TOBACCO USE

BLANCA ROSA VILCHEZ. NEW YORK

PKG 2:00

More work needs to be done to keep young Americans from using tobacco, including creating smoking bans and increasing taxes on tobacco products, the U.S. Surgeon General's office said in a report released Thursday. Almost one in five high school-aged teens smokes, down from earlier decades, but the rate of decline has slowed, the report said. It says it's particularly important to stop young people from using tobacco because those who start smoking as teenagers can increase their chances of long-term addiction. They also quickly can experience reduced lung function, impaired lung growth, early heart disease and other health problems like asthma. More than 80 percent of smokers begin by age 18 and 99 percent of adult smokers in the U.S. start by age 26, according to the 920-page report, which is the first comprehensive look at youth tobacco use from the surgeon general's office in nearly two decades.

=====

03/09/2012

UNEMPLOYMENT

LOURDES MELUZA. WASHINGTON, DC

PKG 2:00

Once again, the numbers are better than expected -- with the United States adding 227,000 jobs last month. The unemployment rate held steady at 8.3 percent -- the first time in six months that it didn't decline -- and that's only because a half-million Americans started looking for work. Campaigning today in Mississippi, Mitt Romney didn't directly address the report, but he criticized President Barack Obama for failing to bring the jobless rate below 8 percent. Obama, meanwhile, says there is still work to do, more than three years after what he calls the worst economic crisis of our lifetime.

FLORIDA STARTS INITIATIVE

VO :20

"STARS" Act (Studying Towards Adjusted Residency Status) it's a modified version of the controversial DREAM Act, the long-stalled legislation that would allow undocumented students to remain in the country. Currently, undocumented immigrants do not begin to accumulate unlawful status until six months after they turn 18. Under the STARS Act, students within the six-month grace period would be allowed to extend their stay in the United States if they are graduating high school and planning to attend a four-year university. Students considered for residency adjustment would have to have arrived in the United States before they turned 16, as well as lived in the country for five consecutive years before applying.

=====

03/10/2012

DREAM ACT WEEK PROTEST

VIVIANA AVILA - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

PKG: 1:39

Three undocumented immigrant college students led a group of people across the Golden Gate Bridge this afternoon to kick off a cross-country march to Washington, D.C. in support of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, also known as the Dream Act. The three students and one ally student, who is the first

American-born citizen in her family, are set to travel some 3,000 miles and visit 285 cities and towns nationwide to educate people about the DREAM Act, which would provide a path to citizenship for undocumented college students. Backed by various immigrants' rights groups, the marchers call their journey the "Campaign for the American Dream" and expect to reach the capitol in October just before the presidential election, according to John Rodney, a spokesman for the California Immigrant Policy Center. Saturday afternoon, the four students were joined by staff members from immigrants' rights groups and about 20 local supporters, including students from the University of California at Berkeley and City College San Francisco. Chants of "Education, not deportation!" and "Dreamers united will never be divided!" echoed as the group made its way to the Presidio shortly after 1 p.m.

ALAMABA IMMIGRATION MARCH

MARIA ANTONIETA COLLINS

PKG:2:23

Speakers at a Friday rally at the Capitol that capped this week's Selma-to-Montgomery march attacked Alabama's immigration law and a law that starting in 2014 will require Alabamians to show photo ID at the polls, with some exceptions. Wade Henderson, president of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights in Washington, called Alabama's immigration law, known as House Bill 56, the "most vile" in the country. "The state of Alabama ... is once again using fear and intimidation as weapons against those without power. This time, the targets are Latinos and the aim is to drive them from their homes and their communities," Henderson said. "And just like segregation, we know that this path leads to the death of the American dream," he said

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

VO: 20

Most of the United States begins Daylight Saving Time at 2:00 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and reverts to standard time on the first Sunday in November. In the U.S., each time zone switches at a different time. In the European Union, Summer Time begins and ends at 1:00 a.m. Universal Time (Greenwich Mean Time). It begins the last Sunday in March and ends the last Sunday in October. In the EU, all time zones change at the same moment.

=====

03/11/2012

6:30 & 11:30

SPRINGBREAKERS PADRE ISLAND WARNING

DALIA RAMIREZ - PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS

PKG: 1:45

For the third year in a row the Texas Department of Public Safety has issued a travel warning, advising students to stay out of Mexico during spring break. Just Friday the bodies of four victims ranging in age from 14 to 21 years old were found in plastic bags along with a threatening note in Central Mexico. Police said the victims were killed by a drug gang. The dangers are also strong for spring breakers headed to South Padre Island and that plan to cross the border into Mexico. It's been 23 years since a UT Austin student went to South Padre Island during spring break, crossed the border into Matamoros, Mexico and never returned. He was kidnapped and brutally killed by a cult. It's now a story that has resurfaced as spring breakers of both past and present remember Mark Kilroy. Freshman college student Jordan Pina who has plans to spend his spring break at the island said, "I'm pretty excited. I get the feeling that I got when I first went. A lot of festivities, a lot going on so I'm pretty excited". It's a playground for college students who often cross the nearby border into Matamoros where minors can drink. But, one thing is for sure, Jordan has no plans to party in Mexico. He said, "I have family over there in Brownsville, which is right by there so we all know not to go over there, it's very dangerous over there". This is the third year in a row the Texas Department of Public Safety put out a warning on the dangers of spring breakers traveling to Mexico. But, for Maritza Reyes the danger extends back to her college days when a UT student was kidnapped and mutilated by a Mexican cult.

LOS ANGELES PRO IMMIGRATION MARCH

JUAN CARLOS GONZALEZ - LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PKG: 1:59

Hundreds of protesters have taken to the streets of Los Angeles, in the US state of California, during a week of campaigning to protest against a pattern of anti-immigrant

laws which have already passed legislation in numerous states throughout the country. "The 99 percent, the community, is not going to allow that kind of hatred to spill into states like California and others. So we're here to send a message to everyone that we're going to stand together united and not allow any of these things to happen," said Martin Terrones, a union organizer. Protesters say the country's anti-immigrant laws are against some of America's most important civil rights achievements, pushing the country back to racial hatred and division. "Fifty years after Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks took a stance against all these discriminations and laws in the South, now it's happening again but this time only to the Latino community," Terrones said.

=====

03/12/2012

GAS PRICES

LUIS MEGID / SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

PKG 1:56

The price of gasoline jumped by nearly a nickel over the weekend and is now \$3.80 per gallon. That's the highest ever for this time of year. Pump prices have risen an average 52 cents this year as refineries and wholesalers ass along the higher cost of crude oil. And this month they're getting an additional boost as investors bet that supplies will shrink ahead of the summer driving season.

OBAMA TX VOTER ID

VO :27

The Justice Department's civil rights division on Monday objected to a new photo ID requirement for voters in

Texas because many Hispanic voters lack state-issued identification. Texas follows South Carolina as the second state in recent months to become embroiled in a court battle with the Justice Department over new photo ID requirements for voters.

=====

03/13/12

RED MEAT DANGERS

LUIS MEGID / SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

PKG 2:00

People who eat a lot of red meat are more likely to die at any given time than those who go light on the burgers and hot dogs, a new study suggests. Researchers found that the more servings of processed or unprocessed red meat people reported eating daily, the higher their chance of more than a 20-year span. Red meat and especially processed red meat contains a lot of compounds and chemicals that have been linked to chronic disease risk," said Dr. Frank Hu, one of the study's authors from the Harvard School of Public Health -- and cooking red meat produces more carcinogens.

STUDENT LOAN DEBTS

JAIME GARCIA / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PKG 1:59

Millions of college students could be in for a shock this summer when the interest rate on a popular federally subsidized student loan doubles unless Congress acts. College students on Tuesday delivered more than 130,000 letters to congressional leaders asking them to stop rates from increasing from 3.4 to 6.8 percent. The rate hike affects new subsidized Stafford loans, which are issued to low and middle income undergraduates. They hope to raise enough awareness to get Congress to stop it.

=====

03/14/12

NOTHING TO REPORT

=====

3/15/12

GAS PRICES

VO :20

Oil prices are falling on reports that Britain and the United States will release oil from government-controlled emergency reserves. News organizations reported Thursday that the two countries will try to knock down oil prices by releasing spare supply on the market. High oil prices have helped push gasoline in the U.S. to the highest price ever for this time of year, \$3.82 per gallon. Experts predict the national average could reach as high as \$4.25 per gallon by late next month. The U.S. released oil from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve in August with only limited success. Prices dipped for just a few days.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

VO : 20

A resurgent U.S. job market that has lifted the economy appears to be enduring. Factories in the Northeast kept hiring in early March. And the number of people applying for unemployment aid fell back to a four-year low. The economy is adding jobs at a time when inflation remains relatively mild outside of higher gas prices. The upbeat government reports Thursday reinforced the message sent by last week's encouraging job figures. Applications for unemployment aid dropped to a seasonally adjusted 351,000, the Labor Department said Thursday. That matched a four-year low reached last month. The four-week average, which smooths fluctuations, was unchanged at 355,750, also a four-year low. Applications have declined 14 percent since October. When applications drop consistently below 375,000, it usually signals that hiring is strong enough to lower the unemployment rate. The steady decline has coincided with the best three months of hiring in two years. From December through February, employers added an average of 245,000 jobs a month. The unemployment rate has fallen to 8.3 percent, the lowest in three years.

NEW ANTI SMOKING ADDS

BLANCA ROSA VILCHEZ. NEW YORK

PKG 2:00

The government has revamped its strategy for getting people to kick the smoking habit, and the new campaign is about to hit TV and radio air waves and billboards, magazines and newspapers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will run ads containing graphic, eye-catching images of health problems that can come from cigarette smoking, such as heart surgery, a tracheotomy, lost limbs or paralysis. The \$54 million campaign is the largest and starkest anti-smoking push by the CDC. After aggressive anti-smoking campaigns in the past succeeded in substantially cutting back the percentage of people who smoke, the smoking rate has now stalled at about 20 percent. The CDC hopes the ads will get as many as 50,000 Americans to kick the habit.

=====END OF PART 1=====