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THE LINCOLN STAR

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Unemployment lowest in 2 years

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unemployment fell to 8.4 percent in November, the lowest rate in two years, as 749,000 Americans found work and swelled the job force to 102.7 million.

The White House called the report "the best Christmas gift this country can receive."

The new civilian jobless rate, down 0.4 percentaged points from October's 8.8 percent unemployment, was far below the fourth-quarter projection made by the Reagan administration last July.

That assessment predicted unemployment would average 9.6 percent in the last quarter this year, and dip no lower than 8.6 percent a year from now.

But the seasonally adjusted civilian rate for November came in at 8.4 percent, and total unemployment fell from more than 9.9 million to about 9.4 million.

Deputy White House press secretary Larry Speakes said that "as each month passes, the . . . economic improvement becomes stronger and the prospects for sustained job opportunities becomes greater."

Martin S. Feldstein, chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, said the unemployment report "is really quite remarkable. It is a dramatic drop, two months in a row. Today's news is more indication of a strong economy."

The AFL-CIO said that while the report was "welcome news," too many Americans are unable to find work.

"With 9.4 million workers still without jobs," the federation said, "massive unemployment remains the nation's most pressing problem."

Meanwhile, the government reported that factory orders for new manufactured goods rose 0.7 percent in October, and that sales of new, single-family houses the same month jumped 8.2 percent while prices slid from the record set in September.

Robert Ortner, the Commerce Department's chief economist, said the three economic reports Friday were good news.

Since the civilian unemployment rate hit a post-Depression peak of 10.8 percent last December, with more than 12 million out of work, some 3.6 million people have found jobs, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said.

The November rate was the lowest since the 8.3 percent recorded in November 1981. The total number of Americans with jobs last month reached 102,671,000, beating the previous high of 101,945,000 registered in September.

An alternate unemployment measurement, which includes the 1.7 million members of the armed forces stationed in the United States, dropped from 8.7 percent to 8.2 percent last month, the report said.

The improvement in employment last month was shared by virtually all population groups within the labor force. Joblessness among adult men and adult women posted sharp declines, and unemployment among blacks and teen-agers receded significantly.

The overall civilian rate fell despite the fact that approximately 220,000 people entered the labor force to compete for available work.

Sen. Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, called the report "great news for the American worker." But he also urged action to reduce federal deficits in the next session of Congress.

COLOR

Youth settles in at Cornhusker

By Patty Beutler
of The Lincoln Star

Lottie Green calls the Cornhusker Hotel home.

The Lincoln teen and parents, Fannie Sue and David, moved into the unfinished building late last month — the first, and only full-time, residents of the roomy downtown inn. Her father is the new hotel manager.

Hotel living isn't new to the Lincoln High School sophomore. Before she was a year old she took up residence in a Euclid, Ohio, hotel.

By the time she'd hit her teens she had lived in hotels from Puerto Rico to Kalamazoo, Mich., from the Admiral Benbo Motor Hotel in Alabama to the Playboy Club Hotel in Wisconsin.

Youth In Action

No wonder her dad dubs her "Eloise," after the mischievous little hotel-dweller in a celebrated children's book.

Although she never poured a bucket of water down a mail chute, as did her namesake, Lottie has dipped into freezers full of ice cream on hot summer days and foraged in restaurant pantries when hunger called.

Hotel hopping has been harder since she's become a teenager, she confided.

"I clearly told my parents if they're moving again, I'm not going with them. Sixteen to 21 moves, it's just too many. I think this is a good place to stop," she said.

Making new friends and then never knowing how long she could keep them has been the hardest part of moving, she said.

But Lottie is a survivor. She beat the "new kid" syndrome by learning names quickly and by never letting others intimidate her. By the end of her first year in Lincoln, for example, she earned a spot as graduation speaker at Everett Junior High School commencement.

"I think I would be shy if I didn't live in a hotel. Dad has a lot to do with it. He makes me talk," she said.

The good part of hotel living has been having a swimming pool under her roof — she now strokes for her school swim team — and meeting Sally Struthers, Mel Torme, Norm Crosby and other celebrity guests.

The bad part comes in doing without a backyard, her own front door and never hearing the rain on the roof.

The Cornhusker marks the first time Lottie has moved into a hotel under construction. She'd like it to be the last. Chatting guests in the lobby will be a welcomed replacement for the constant banging of the carpet layers' hammers from both above and below the family's third floor apartment.

Lottie's 16th birthday buffet celebration Friday will christen the hotel's kitchen and bring some life to the empty building. Then she'll be counting the days until the first guests check in.

Gail Foster/Lincoln Star
Green checks out the hotel kitchen.

Although Lottie never saw the first Cornhusker Hotel, she's heard enough to know that people are expecting great things of its replacement.

"Everybody's excited about it and that makes me excited, too," she said.

She has already decided the hotel lobby will be her favorite place.

"I'm a people-watcher," she said.

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Weather

Lincoln: Fifty percent chance of light snow Saturday. High in the mid to upper 20s. Southeast winds at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of light snow Saturday night and Sunday. Low in the mid-teens Saturday night. High in lower to mid-20s Sunday. **(Weather digest, Page 18)**

SNOW

Today's Corn

Termites never die. They just go on living happily ever rafter.

Send your stories, puns and jokes about Nebraska to "Today's Corn," The Lincoln Star, 926 P St., Lincoln. If we publish yours, we'll give you credit.

Three packing plants charged in meat scam

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Agriculture Department has charged that a Colorado meat packing company made hamburger from cattle which had died before arriving for slaughter, a spokesman said Friday.

If upheld, the charges could lead to the shutdown of three meat packing plants in Colorado and Nebraska, said the spokesman, John McClung of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

McClung said in response to questions that charges were brought against Cattle King Packing Co., Denver; Nebraska Beef Packers Inc., Gordon, Neb.; and Stanko Packing Co., Gering, Neb. The three plants are jointly owned, he said.

A Gering, Neb. attorney representing the owners said the department's complaint was based on "unfounded allegations."

Two of the plants — Cattle King and Stanko Packing — have figured in USDA's impoundment of 18 million pounds of frozen ground beef that had been headed for use in the nation's school lunch program. The meat was impounded on Sept. 29 after reports that some of it may have come from sub-standard animals. Company officials denied the allegations.

The school lunch meat is still impounded and undergoing laboratory tests. Meanwhile, schools are getting alternative shipments to stave off shortages. The USDA buys meat and other commodities and donates the food to the school lunch program.

McClung said the Gordon plant had not been involved in school lunch contracts for the meat. However, he said, all three plants figure in the action being brought against them.

The complaint, he said, stated that "on numerous occasions" between July 1, 1981, and Oct. 1, 1983, Cattle King "illegally processed adulterated meat and meat food products . . . by processing cattle which had died otherwise than by slaughter" and distributed the products in violation of the law.

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Amen may have ignored own staff's objections

Banking chief raised guarantee from $10,000 to $30,000

By Ed Howard
of The Associated Press

Investigators have been told that former Banking Director Paul Amen may have ignored some staff objections when he allowed the Nebraska Depository Institution Guaranty Corp. to increase its advertised insurance on accounts to $30,000 from $10,000, The Associated Press learned Friday.

Amen said in an interview that he didn't overrule his staff. He said he did recall that "someone may have said they had some reservations, but you look at the pluses and minuses . . . but to say I overruled is grossly misrepresenting what took place."

The insolvent Commonwealth Savings Co. of Lincoln was a member of the NDIGC. The corporation lacked sufficient funds to cover Commonwealth depositors when the institution was declared insolvent and taken over by the state Nov. 1.

Amen signed an order April 28, 1980, increasing the maximum limit of a covered claim "to an amount not in excess of $30,000."

Most of the documents relating to the NDIGC, other than the increase in the limit on covered claims, were signed by department employees other than Amen, investigators have been told.

Amen said the economy was "moving along" in the spring of 1980 and that he understood the NDIGC would try to get reinsurance. He also said NDIGC members had competitive concerns because the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. was increasing its guaranty level.

The NDIGC didn't get the reinsurance.

The AP also learned that David Domina, special assistant attorney general, was seeking interviews with individuals who were in the Banking Department when Amen approved the increase.

Commonwealth depositors, and some lawmakers, have questioned why the department approved the increased level in the NDIGC guaranty.

The AP also learned that earlier requests from the NDIGC, to have the limit raised from $10,000 to $15,000, had been refused by lower-ranking department employees.

Domina and Sen. John DeCamp, chairman of the Legislature's Banking Committee, confirmed in separate interviews that they had been told Amen may have been counseled not to approve the higher guaranty level.

Domina would confirm only that the matter had been brought to his attention, and that it was part of his investigation.

Domina was appointed to the investigatory post after Attorney General Paul Douglas removed himself from the case. Douglas' business transactions with Commonwealth are the subject of local and federal investigations.

DeCamp said he had been told, "in the course of our inquiries, that Mr. Amen was advised against taking this action . . . obviously it raises questions."

"I think you'll find that the NDIGC, and some people from one or two financial institutions, told Mr. Amen that they needed the increase so they could be competitive with other institutions," DeCamp said. "I know hindsight is 20-20, but it raises questions when you increase an insurance guaranty and don't increase the premiums or require reinsurance up front."

Amen asked AP to talk with Banking Department counsel Barry Lake and Deputy Director Charles Mitchell about the decision to increase the guaranty. Lake is also the receiver for Commonwealth.

"I think there was discussion that there should be reinsurance," Mitchell said in an interview.

Asked if there were those who argued that the reinsurance should come before the increased guaranty, Mitchell replied: "I don't remember . . . not to my recollection."

Lake said he wasn't involved in any decision making discussions about the guaranty increase.

He was asked: "Are you saying that you don't know if Mr. Amen was advised against the increase, or if he wasn't?"

Lake responded: "Right."

Kerrey explains Copple dealings

By Nancy Hicks
of The Lincoln Star

Commonwealth President S.E. Copple once invested $24,000 in a limited partnership in a bowling alley owned by Gov. Bob Kerrey. And, Copple and Commonwealth have been involved in other financial relationships with Kerrey.

But that relationship was neither "substantial" nor "personal," Kerrey said in a Friday afternoon telephone interview.

"I never had a banking relationship with S.E. Copple nor a business relationship," said Kerrey, after he made the financial relationships public Friday.

Information on the financial relationship is contained in a letter from Kerrey to Special Assistant Attorney General David Domina, who is examining the past association of eight public officials with Commonwealth.

In the past, when asked by reporters what dealings he had with either Copple or Commonwealth, Kerrey said he had purchased land in west Lincoln from West Gate Inc., owned by Ed Copple, a Lincoln insurance executive and a son of S.E. Copple.

Kerrey said he did not detail the other relationships because they were not "substantial" nor "direct" relationships.

S.E. Copple was one of 25 original investors in a West Lincoln bowling establishment started by Kerrey and his brother-in-law. Copple invested $24,000 in Bowling Associates Ltd, the partnership that operates Sun Valley Lanes at 321 Apple Creek Road, according to an Oct. 11, 1977, filing with the Lancaster County clerk.

Kerrey and Dean Rasmussen of Omaha raised $720,000 from the investment of limited partners such as S.E. Copple to start Sun Valley Lanes, according to the document.

Copple was entitled to 3.2 percent annual profits of the bowling alley but as a limited partner he had no control over the business.

A limited partner is not contacted about the daily operations of a business and has no influence or control over the operations, Kerrey explained.

"He had absolutely no influence and I did not consult him. He is not a partner in the general sense of the word," said Kerrey.

A limited partnership is much different than a banking relationship where "you borrow money and give them a financial statement," said Kerrey.

In addition, Commonwealth Savings Co. purchased a $2,500 bond from the West O Development Corp. That $2,500 was part of a $500,000 Small Business Administration program financing package for Kerrey's Grandmother's Skillet Restaurant at 201 Sun Valley Blvd.

The corporation has assisted in financing several West O businesses, including those operated by Kerrey.

Also, Kerrey's business once borrowed money from Commonwealth to pay for insurance on restaurant buildings. The insurance was purchased from Ed Copple's insurance agency, which also arranged the financing.

The payments were made to Commonwealth but the insurance itself and the arrangements were made through the insurance agency, Kerrey said.

"I resent the implication that I'm hiding anything," said Kerrey when asked why he didn't detail the financial relationships before the Domina request.

"S.E. Copple is not my banker. He never has been and he is not now," said Kerrey. The questions (by reporters about Kerrey's dealings with the Copples or Commonwealth) related to "relevant dealings not indirect relationships with S.E. Copple," said Kerrey.

Copple to face felony charge next week

From United Press International

The president of insolvent Commonwealth Savings Co. likely will be arraigned next week on a felony charge, his attorney said Friday.

Attorney John S. Berry said Commonwealth President S.E. Copple, 66, who has been staying in Tucson, Ariz., is returning voluntarily to plead innocent.

Copple is charged with receiving a $700,000 loan from his industrial loan and investment firm in 1981 in violation of a state law restricting such loans to $60,000.

Lancaster County Attorney Mike Heavican said an arrest warrant for Copple would not be served in Arizona because Berry had given authorities assurances Copple would return voluntarily.

When Copple returns, he probably will be arraigned in a special hearing, not at the daily arraignments in Lancaster County Court, Heavican said.

Berry said it is common practice for private attorneys and prosecutors to work informally to bring about the return of out-of-state criminal defendants.

Heavican said Copple was not receiving preferential treatment.

"With white-collar crimes, this is a normal type of thing," he said.

Despite the intense publicity the Commonwealth insolvency has generated in Lincoln, Berry said he does not want to seek a change of venue in the case and hopes it can be tried in Lancaster County.

Copple and other members of his family have been named as defendants in an $18-million lawsuit filed by the Nebraska Banking Department.

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