



April 2017

## Federal Reserve Releases Beige Book Showing Continued US Economic Expansion

The Federal Reserve says in its latest Beige Book report that the U.S. economy continued to expand in the early spring. The Federal Reserve survey found that its 12 regional banks “all depicted growth as either ‘modest or moderate’ from mid-March through early April,” based on “consumer spending, tourism, housing construction and manufacturing.”

Read more [here](#).



## As Washington Renews Focus on Manufacturing, NAM Survey Shows Surge in Optimism

Reporting on President Trump’s Tuesday visit to Wisconsin to highlight manufacturing, the Chicago Tribune says manufacturing has played a key role in Trump’s policy agenda. The Tribune adds, “Last month, Trump trumpeted the findings of a National Association of Manufacturers survey of industry executives that found 93 percent were optimistic about the economy’s future.”

Read more [here](#).



## Fed Says Employers Struggling to Find Skilled Workers

Business Insider reports that the Federal Reserve’s Beige Book, released Wednesday says that “employers are having a harder time finding skilled workers to hire as the labor market continues to tighten.” Employers had greater difficulty filling low-skilled positions, but “labor demand was stronger for higher skilled workers,” Business Insider adds.



Read more [here](#).

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## Federal Reserve: U.S. Industrial Production Rose 0.5 Percent in March

Reuters reports “manufacturing output rose at a 2.7 percent annual rate in the first quarter as the sector, which accounts for about 12 percent of the U.S. economy, continues to recover.”

Read more [here](#).



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## EPA Considers Repeal of Two Air Pollution Rules

The Washington Post reports that the EPA has asked the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals “to delay an oral argument in a challenge involving a 2012 regulation limiting the amount of mercury, lead and other airborne toxins emitted from power plants.” The power sector “has largely already complied with the rule,” but 15 states and several companies are seeking to overturn it.

Read more [here](#).



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## House Ways & Means Chairman Plans Tax Reform Hearings

The Hill reports that House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) said the committee “will soon be announcing congressional hearings on our blueprint starting next week.” The committee must announce hearings a week in advance, but a spokeswoman for Brady “could not give a specific date or topic for the committee’s first tax reform hearing.”

Read more [here](#).



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## Shandong Sun Paper Files First Permit Application with ADEQ

Shandong Sun Paper, the Chinese paper goods giant has filed its first permit application with the state Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) — jump starting the countdown for construction to begin on one of the largest economic development projects ever in south Arkansas, which is expected to create 250 new jobs at an average salary of \$52,000 a year.

Read more [here](#).



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## **AT&T Selected by FirstNet to Build/Manage Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network Dedicated to FirstResponders**



AT&T has been selected by the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) to build and manage the first broadband network dedicated to America's police, firefighters and emergency medical services (EMS). The FirstNet network will cover all 50 states, 5 U.S. territories and the District of Columbia, including rural communities and tribal lands in those states and territories.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Caterpillar Shuts Illinois Plant; Will Move 150 Workers to North Little Rock**

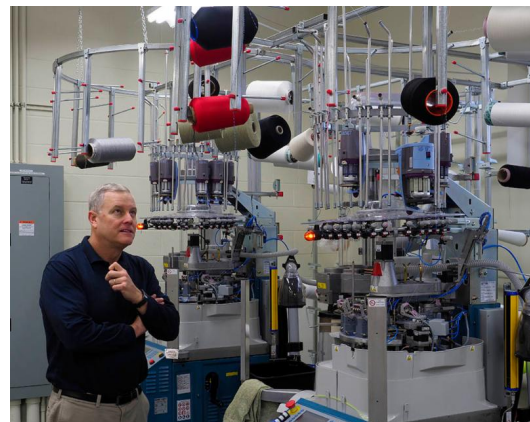


Caterpillar Inc. said it will shut its Aurora, Illinois, plant, costing about 800 employees their jobs as the world's largest construction and mining equipment maker shifts production to other U.S. facilities. The company will transition its large wheel loaders and compactors to its plant in Decatur, Illinois, and medium wheel loaders to North Little Rock, Arkansas, resulting in about 150 positions being added to the North Little Rock facility.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Textile Industry Making a Comeback in U.S. Southeast**



Area Development Magazine reports that textile companies "are considering highly automated, environmentally conscious production facilities in the U.S. Southeast, where the infrastructure necessary for this industry's success is already in place."

Read more [here](#).

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## **Arkansas Environmental Federation Holding Air Seminar May 10 in Little Rock**

The Arkansas Environmental Federation will hold an



The Arkansas Environmental Federation will hold an Air Seminar from 7:15 a.m. – 4:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 10th at the Airport Holiday Inn at 3201 Bankhead Drive in Little Rock.

Read more [here](#).



## U.S. Housing Starts Drop in March

Reuters reports that in March “housing starts decreased 6.8 percent to a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 1.22 million units as the construction of single-family homes in the Midwest recorded its biggest decline in three years,” according to Commerce Department data.

Read more [here](#).



## IMF Raises Global Growth Forecast To 3.5 Percent This Year

In its latest World Economic Outlook report, the International Monetary Fund raised its forecast for global growth to “3.5 percent this year, up 0.1 percentage point from January,” Bloomberg News reports. The piece notes “expansion will pick up to 3.6 percent in 2018, unchanged from the projection three months ago.

Read more [here](#).



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