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October 2017

## Arkansans for Jobs and Justice Launches Campaign for Tort Reform; Carl Vogelpohl Selected to Manage Campaign

A coalition representing a diverse group of Arkansans has joined together to support commonsense reforms that will help make Arkansas more competitive with surrounding states and protect everyday Arkansans. Carl Vogelpohl has been selected to manage the campaign.

Read more [here](#).



## Senator Thune: Trump Tax Plan “Works”

In a column for TIME, Sen. John Thune (R-SD) writes that “comprehensive tax reform is perhaps the single most important thing we can do to provide financial relief to American families and get our economy back on the path to long-term health.”

Read more [here](#).



## Deltic Timber Corp. To Merge with Potlatch Corp. in All-Stock Deal

Deltic Timber Corporation, an Associated Industries of Arkansas member, plans to merge with Spokane, Wash.-based Potlatch Corporation in an all-stock deal to create a “leading domestic timberland owner and top-tier lumber manufacturer.”

Read more [here](#).



**Column: Manufacturing Careers**

## Offer Opportunities, Must Move Past Misperceptions

In a column for IndustryWeek, Manufacturing Institute Executive Director Carolyn Lee writes that “today’s manufacturing is about advanced technologies, state-of-the-art facilities and fast-paced work environments,” and “manufacturing is an industry in constant transformation, innovating, modernizing and growing.”

Read more [here](#).



## Big River Steel Pays Off State-Funded Loan Nearly Two Decades Early

Big River Steel, an Associated Industries of Arkansas Pinnacle Crown member and the largest industrial project in Arkansas history, has already paid off its state loans years in advance. The company announced recently it had paid a \$50 million loan back to the state of Arkansas – 17 years before it was completely due.

Read more [here](#).

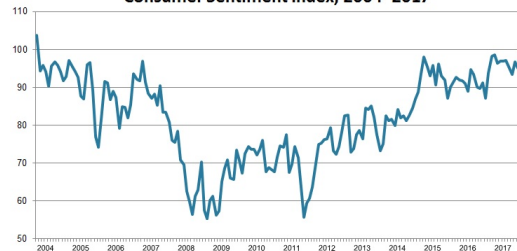


## Consumer Confidence Soared in October

In a column for ShopFloor, NAM Chief Economist Chad Moutray wrote that “the University of Michigan and Thomson Reuters reported that consumer confidence soared in October, rising to its highest point since January 2014.”

Read more [here](#).

University of Michigan and Thomson Reuters  
Consumer Sentiment Index, 2004–2017



## U.S. Unemployment Claims Hit 44-Year Low

Reuters reports that “the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits dropped to its lowest level in more than 44-1/2 years last week, pointing to a rebound in job growth after a hurricane-related decline in employment in September.”

Read more [here](#).



## New Simmons Foods Plant Expected To Benefit Other Processing Operations

Associated Industries of Arkansas Pinnacle Crown member Simmons Foods’ investment of \$300 million into a modern chicken slaughter and primary processing facility will increase internal supply to the





Van Buren and Fort Smith operations and other further processing plants.

Read more [here](#).

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## Robots Advancing in Capability

Robots are becoming easier to teach, more autonomous, flexible and affordable, write David Schatsky and Amanpreet Arora of Deloitte.

Read more [here](#).



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## \$200 Million Wood Pellet Mill in Pine Bluff on Schedule for Year-End Start

Despite recent setbacks for a project first announced in August 2014, the CEO at Boston-based Highland Pellet Inc. said Arkansas' first full-scale wood pellet mill is still on schedule to be commissioned and begin production by the end of 2017.

Read more [here](#).



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## Report Urges Greater Awareness of Cybersecurity Issues

Manufacturers should take cybersecurity seriously and look to be more informed through information-sharing and partnership, according to a report from MFOresight: The Alliance for Manufacturing Foresight, and the Computing Community Consortium.

Read more [here](#).



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## Shale Gas Boom “Fuels Manufacturing Renaissance”

In a column for Forbes, Robert Rapier discussed “the impact on the chemical manufacturing industry.” He wrote that “natural gas is used in chemical manufacture both as a raw material and as a source of fuel.”

Read more [here](#).



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## Borrowing for Equipment by U.S. Businesses Fell 7 Percent Year-On-Year in September

Reuters reports that the Equipment Leasing and Finance Association (ELFA) released data showing that US companies' “borrowing to spend on capital investment fell 7 percent in September from a year earlier.”

Read more [here](#).



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## Drivers of Manufacturing Success Changing, Diversifying

Manufacturing has become more personalized and customer-driven, says Diego Tamburini of Autodesk. Manufacturers must expand beyond production into services and become comfortable with the industrial internet of things to remain competitive, he says.

Read more [here](#).



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