Manufacturers’ Outlook Survey Shows Sector’s “Economic Health at Record Highs”

The National Association of Manufacturers’ Outlook Survey for the first quarter of 2018 shows many key indicators for the sector’s economic health at record highs following enactment of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Read more here.

Trump Announces Memorandum on National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Reuters reports that President Trump announced he was signing “a memorandum...ordering the Environmental Protection Agency to cut more regulations on manufacturers.” Read more here.

Labor Department: U.S. Unemployment Claims Fall, Showing “Sustained Labor Market Strength”

Reuters reports, “New applications for U.S. unemployment benefits fell, pointing to sustained labor market strength despite a sharp slowdown in job growth in March.” Read more here.

Nucor Opens Cold Mill on Steel Mill Campus in Hickman; Will Add 100
Talk Business & Politics reports that Nucor Corp., an Associated Industries of Arkansas Pinnacle Peak member, recently opened its $230 million cold mill on its campus in Hickman, just outside of Blytheville.

Read more here.

EY Report Says Manufacturers Will Benefit from Tax Reform

The Washington Post reports that “the construction and manufacturing industries will be the biggest initial winners of the Republican tax law,” according to a new analysis from the consulting firm EY.

Read more here.

Stephens Inc., Economics Arkansas Partnering in Free Enterprise Education Program

Talk Business & Politics reports that Arkansas State Chamber members Stephens Inc. and Economics Arkansas have partnered to create an education program for Pre K-12 students across the state, beginning in the 2018-19 school year.

Read more here.

Consumer Price Index Rises; Inflation Shows Signs of Increase

Bloomberg News reports that U.S. inflation “is finally about to get the pickup that the Federal Reserve has been waiting for. A closer look at the math shows why it’s still too soon to declare mission accomplished.”

Read more here.

U.S. Agencies Pledge Speeding Up Infrastructure Project Review Process

Fourteen federal agencies, including the Energy, Interior and Transportation departments, recently signed a memo committing to a two-year target for environmental review and permitting processes on major infrastructure projects.

Read more here.
Company Apprenticeship Programs Gaining Popularity Among Employers, Employees

The Boston Business Journal reports that "apprenticeship programs are gaining popularity among employers and potential employees across the country, driven by a tight labor market, aging baby boomers and demand for new technical skills."

Read more here.

U.S. Saw Record Natural Gas Production in 2017

The Houston Chronicle reported that U.S. natural gas gross withdrawals climbed to an all-time high of 90.9 billion cubic feet per day in 2017, while marketed natural gas production also hit a record of 78.9 billion cubic feet per day, according to the Energy Department.

Read more here.

Labor Department: Manufacturers Added “Robust” 22,000 Jobs in March

Reuters reported that the Labor Department recently announced that the U.S. economy added 103,000 jobs in March, adding that the job numbers were accompanied by wage growth that, many economists believe, underscores the case for the Federal Reserve to increase interest rates this year.

Read more here.

U.S. Shale Boom Still Fueling Petrochemical Manufacturing Industry Expansion

Politico features a column by the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers on the renaissance happening in the U.S. petrochemical manufacturing industry thanks to shale development and the "plentiful U.S. supply of cheap natural gas."

Read more here.

Commerce Department: U.S. Trade Deficit Rose in February

Reuters reports that the Commerce Department recently announced that the "U.S. trade deficit increased to a near 9-1/2-year high in February, with both imports and exports rising to record highs in a sign of strong domestic and global demand."
NAM, DOE Announce Sustainability in Manufacturing Partnership

In a press release, the Department of Energy said that "the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) have announced the Sustainability in Manufacturing partnership."

Read more here.

Clean, Line, DOE Terminate Controversial $2.5 Billion Wind Project Across Arkansas

Talk Business & Politics reported that Clean Line Energy and the Department of Energy (DOE) recently agreed to terminate the controversial $2.5 billion high-voltage wind power project across Arkansas.

Read more here.