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# WASHINGTON WATCH



February 2019

## Payrolls Surge by 304,000, Smashing Estimates Despite Government Shutdown

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that total non-farm payroll employment increased by 304,000 in January, while the unemployment rate edged up to 4.0 percent.

Read more [here](#).



## Fed Adopts 'Patient' Rate Stance with Balance-Sheet Flexibility

The Federal Reserve signaled it's done raising interest rates for at least a while and will be flexible in reducing its bond holdings, a sweeping pivot from its most recent monetary policy.

Read more [here](#).



## Small Business Owners Fear Recession May Hit Soon

In the wake of the recent federal government shutdown, seven out of every 10 small business owners recently surveyed now fear a recession is coming.

Read more [here](#).



## Consumer Confidence Index Decreased in January

U.S. Consumer Confidence Index decreased in January as a partial shutdown of the government

and financial market turmoil left households nervous about the economy.

Read more [here](#).



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## White House Prioritizes Opioid Abuse in First National Drug Control Strategy

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy outlined its top priorities for combating illicit drug abuse and distribution in the U.S.

Read more [here](#).



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## Trump Calls Wall Talks 'Waste of Time' and Dismisses Investigations

A defiant President Trump recently declared that he has all but given up negotiating with Congress over his border wall and will build it on his own.

Read more [here](#).



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## NAM Encouraged by Talks with China

With trade talks resuming between the U.S. and China, NAM President and CEO Jay Timmons released a statement and negotiating objectives for an agreement.

Read more [here](#).

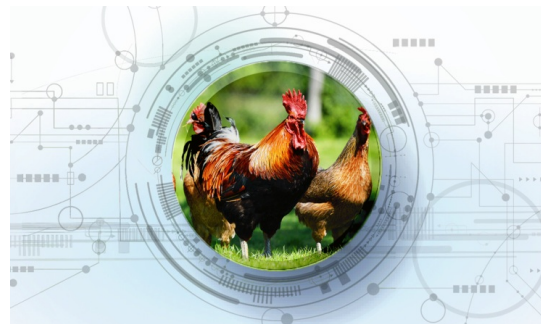


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## Tyson Foods Harnesses Ag Tech for Sustainable Food Production

Tyson Foods, a Pinnacle Summit member of the Associated Industries of Arkansas, recently announced a new initiative to accelerate sustainable food production.

Read more [here](#).



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## Slowing U.S. Gasoline Demand Weighs on Oil Market

U.S. gasoline consumption fell in the first 10 months of 2018 contributing to a supply buildup that triggered the oil price slump in late 2018.

Read more [here](#).



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## Congress Shows Its Hand on Drug Prices

A key Senate panel, the Finance Committee, focused on some bipartisan ideas to cut federal spending on prescription drugs.

Read more [here](#).



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## On North Korea and Iran, Intelligence Chiefs Contradict Trump

An American intelligence assessment has concluded North Korea is unlikely to give up its nuclear stockpiles and Iran is not taking steps necessary to making a bomb.

Read more [here](#).



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## Corporations' Hunger for Clean Power Has Never Been Bigger

Companies and government agencies last year signed contracts to buy 13.4 gigawatts of clean power, surpassing the prior record of 6.1 gigawatts in 2017.

Read more [here](#).



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## Tariffs Enable Nucor To Build New Billion-Dollar Plant, Says CEO

The U.S. tariffs on steel imports are improving business at steelmaker Nucor, an Associated Industries of Arkansas Pinnacle Summit member.

Read more [here](#).



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## U.S. Auto Sales Decline in January

U.S. auto sales in January declined about 1

percent from the same month in 2018, partly due to uncertainty around the government shutdown.

Read more [here](#).



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## U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Venezuela's State-Owned Oil Firm

The Trump Administration unveiled sweeping sanctions against Venezuela's state-owned oil company that would curb that country's crude exports to the U.S. and block U.S. exports there.

Read more [here](#).



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