

TODAY'S QUICK 'CAST
A mild, quiet end to the workweek.
TOMORROW
Chance of storms. High of 78 and low of 56.
Full forecast on Page B6



INSIDE TODAY
FACES OF OUR HOMELESS
Modeling gig part of local program



LIFE, C1
FAITH BEING PLUGGED IN
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TIMES-CALL

No. 170 FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2009 | LONGMONT, COLORADO 50 cents

IN THE NEWS

Jobless claims

Initial claims for unemployment benefits increased by 3,000 in the second week of June.

Weekly (seasonally adjusted):
700 thousand

608,000
Week ending June 13

SOURCE: Department of Labor AP

Jobless benefits post first dip since Jan.

WASHINGTON — For 21 consecutive weeks, the number of people collecting unemployment benefits from the government has grown. Finally, new data show, the streak has been broken.

Continuing claims for the week ending June 6 fell by 148,000 to 6.7 million, the Labor Department reported Thursday. While the overall level of claims remains extraordinarily high, the decline was the biggest in more than seven years.

Source: U.S. watches North Korean ship

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military is tracking a ship from North Korea, the first vessel monitored under tougher new United Nations rules meant to rein in and punish the communist government, officials said Thursday.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he has ordered additional protections for Hawaii just in case North Korea launches a long-range missile over the Pacific.



NASA's unmanned moon probes lift off

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA launched its first moon shot in a decade Thursday, sending up a pair of unmanned science probes that will help determine where astronauts could land and set up camp in years to come.

The crafts should reach the moon in four to five days.

Times-Call wire reports

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BUSINESS NEWS, C5-6

City: Can it

'Big, huge beer can' OK'd for entry point

By Rachel Carter
Longmont Times-Call

LONGMONT — Mmm ... beer.

Maybe that's what drivers heading into Longmont on the Diagonal Highway will think when they see a towering beer can at the new Oskar Blues restaurant.

The Longmont Planning & Zoning Commission gave the brewery the OK on Wednesday night to paint the silo at the restaurant to resemble one of the brewery's beer cans.

Oskar Blues will open a restaurant and tap house this summer in the former home of



The Longmont Planning & Zoning Commission gave the Oskar Blues Brewery the OK on Wednesday night to paint the silo at their future restaurant to resemble one of the brewery's beer cans.
Lewis Geyer/Times-Call

Please see CAN on A6

Health care's impact

By Linda A. Johnson
The Associated Press

In pushing for health care reform, President Barack Obama has said problems with the current health-care system are a big cause of our economic troubles.

Just how serious is the problem? How big a role does health care play in the nation's economy? Here are some questions and answers about the economic impact of health care:

Q: How big a part of the economy is health care?

A: It accounts for about one-sixth of the entire economy — more than any other industry. Spending on health care totals about \$2.5 trillion, 17.5 percent of our gross domestic product — a measure of the value of all goods and services produced in the United States.

Q: What's included in that spending?

A: It covers money paid to health-care providers. Also included are retail sales of prescription and nonprescription drugs, premiums paid to health insurers and revenues of makers of medical equipment. It also counts out-of-pocket payments by consumers for health insurance deductibles and co-payments, along with costs not covered by insurance and "medical sundries" like heating pads.

Q: Why does Obama say the health-care system must be fixed first to repair the economy, and is it true?

A: It's absolutely correct, for a host of reasons, experts say.

"Health care is the economy," and fixing it would free up money for other priorities, such as education and industrial innovation, said Meredith Rosenthal, a Harvard University professor of health economics and policy.

The health care system is dysfunctional and full of waste — as much as 30 percent of all spending, she said. Unlike most other markets, consumers rarely know which doctors, drugs or treatments are best for them, don't price shop and, if they're insured, Please see HEALTH CARE on A3

NOWHERE TO RIDE ... SAFELY



Lewis Geyer/Times-Call

A cyclist rides west Wednesday through the construction zone on Colo. Highway 66.

No road to share

Cyclists urged to avoid Colo. 66 during work

By George Plaven
Longmont Times-Call

LONGMONT — A maze of traffic cones, narrow shoulders and torn asphalt are

making Colo. Highway 66 between Lyons and Longmont an obstacle course for bicyclists.

As the Colorado Department of Transportation repaves the stretch of

highway with concrete this summer, it is encouraging cyclists to take routes less traveled.

CDOT spokeswoman Mindy Crane knows Colo. 66 is a popular route, but she said it will be safer for everyone if cyclists ride elsewhere until construction is done in September.

"We hope that, for their

safety, they would find an alternate route," Crane said. "They'll have more room, and they won't be right up against traffic."

The department can't technically close the road to bikes, but it is simply less safe than normal, Crane said.

"We have equipment Please see ROAD on A5

Sentencing in retrial echoes the original

By Pierrette J. Shields
Longmont Times-Call

FORT COLLINS — Thomas Lee Johnson was sentenced Thursday for the second time to life in prison without parole, just a day after a Larimer County jury convicted him — again — of murdering his girlfriend's best friend.



Johnson

Johnson, who graduated from Longmont High School in 1988, in 2006 Please see RETRIAL on A6

Web of terror

Militants exploit Internet, look for recruits

By Lolita C. Baldor
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Terrorist groups that have long used the Internet to spread propaganda are increasingly tapping the Web to teach Islamic extremists how to be hackers, recruit techies for cyberwarfare and raise money through online fraud, U.S. officials say.

A senior defense official said intelligence reports indicate ex-

tremist groups are seeking computer experts, including those capable of breaching government or other sensitive network systems.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence reports about the recruiting, said the extent and success of those recruiting efforts are unclear.

But jihadists' interest in hacking is evident in forums across Please see TERROR on A3

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RETRIAL:

From A1
won a retrial on his 2001 conviction because of a faulty jury instruction. The conviction and sentence were just two of many echoes from Johnson's first trial.

According to police and prosecutors, Johnson traveled to Lori Bases' Steamboat Springs home in May 2000 to kill her to prevent her from meddling in his relationship with her best friend.

Larimer District Judge Daniel Kaup handed down the sentence after Bases' family and supporters spoke and screened a slide show of photos of the former Longmont woman — of her as a baby, as a girl playing on bicycles and snowmobiles, and as a woman mugging at a camera with friends — set to Sarah McLachlan's song "Angel." Apparently, it was the same one screened during Johnson's first sentencing.

Johnson leaned forward in his chair at the defense table to watch the images as they flashed on the screen.

Bob Mesecher, Bases' stepfather, thanked the judge, prosecutors and the Steamboat Springs police for their work. He also thanked both juries that found Johnson guilty.

Facing the judge — because family and friends were warned that they could not address Johnson — Mesecher made it plain how he felt about Johnson.

"I think you are a predator and a coward and you deserve whatever you get for the rest of your life," he said.

Bases' mother, Sherry Mesecher, also echoed the comments she made during Johnson's first sentencing.

"My life's greatest

tragedy was hearing the words, 'Your daughter is dead,' and then the words 'Someone murdered her,'" she said.

She recalled the pain she felt when she went to her daughter's home to collect her belongings and was confronted with blood stains in the apartment.

Johnson read his own statement at the hearing, which included his first apology for Bases' death, but he also told the judge he was upset that he was not allowed to represent himself after he studied for nine years in prison to do so and believed he would have done a better job than his attorneys.

Kaup scolded Johnson for his comments, after telling him it was good to hear him take responsibility for the murder.

"That was an initial step," Kaup said. But "it was still all about Thomas Lee Johnson — didn't like the way this trial went, didn't like your attorneys."

Kaup said Johnson's attorneys did a fine job.

"This isn't about the people who represented you in the past and in this trial," Kaup said. The verdict was a result of "the physical evidence, the nature of it. That is what you can't overcome."

Pierrette J. Shields can be reached at 303-684-5273 or pshields@times-call.com.

CAN: Silo

From A1
the Silo Restaurant & Sports Bar, a 6,400-square-foot building on the southwest corner of Hover Street and Colo. Highway 119.

The highly visible silo there is 39 feet tall, although the sign itself will be 10 feet wide and 16 feet high and will partially wrap around the top half of the silo.

Commission members hope the big beer can will be unique, fun, artistic and iconic — not tacky, chairman Jon Van Benthem said Thursday.

"While the idea of a big, huge beer can on the way in from Boulder may not be

exactly what we're looking for, there is something to be said about the iconography of it," Van Benthem said.

Oskar Blues is a well-known company with a good reputation, he said. The commission discussed how its new site — complete with a big beer can — fits into the larger vision for the area surrounding Twin Peaks Mall, an area that city officials hope one day will redevelop, he said.

"This seemed to sort of fit because Oskar Blues is becoming a national brand," Van Benthem said. "There would be a lot of pull to that site because it's becoming something iconic."

He compared the beer can sign to other roadside

Americana, like a can of Carnation evaporated milk painted on the side of a silo, or True Grit, the 26-foot-tall fiberglass cowboy holding a pitchfork on Colo. Highway 66 between Longmont and Lyons.

Oskar Blues owners originally wanted to paint the silo as a big can of Dale's Pale Ale, the brewery's flagship beer. But city code bans permanent signs that advertise a name-brand product or product line sold within a business, city planner Ben Ortiz said.

Instead, the silo sign will still resemble a beer can but wear the restaurant's name, not that of the brew.

Oskar Blues spokesman Marty Jones said the new

restaurant should open in late July.

Oskar Blues moved most of its brewing operations to Longmont from Lyons in April 2008, and opened The Tasty Weasel, a new tasting room, at the brewery in February.

Owner Dale Katechis first opened Oskar Blues in Lyons in April 1997 with one signature beer: Dale's Pale Ale.

The brewing business took off when Oskar Blues began putting its brews in cans in 2002, the first micro-brewer to do so. Oskar Blues now distributes its beers to more than 20 states.

Rachel Carter can be reached at 303-684-5216 or rcarter@times-call.com.

Wolverine in Colo. the first since 1919

The Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado has its first wild wolverine in 90 years.

The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society said Thursday that a wolverine its researchers have been tracking since early April has crossed into northern Colorado.

It's the first known wolverine in Colorado since 1919.

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