

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Wicker Encouraged by Latest Job Numbers

Low Unemployment, Higher Wages Mark Summer Months

Optimism about our nation's economic strength is unmistakable. The monthly jobs update from the Department of Labor is exceeding expectations, with the latest report announcing that 10,000 more jobs were created in August than economists had projected. So far, there have been more than 3.5 million job gains over the first 19 months of the Trump Administration.

As the Wall Street Journal's editorial board recently noted, "Overall the August snapshot shows a labor market in excellent shape, with nearly everyone who wants a job able to get one." This outlook is no surprise. In July, jobless claims fell to their lowest level since 1969, and unemployment decreased to 3.9 percent, a rate not seen in nearly two decades. The unemployment rates for African Americans, Hispanics, and young people – which have been historically higher than the national rate – have all hit record lows this year.

Confidence Soars Among Consumers, Job Creators

Job creation is not the only promising finding by the Labor Department. Average wages have risen and are now 2.9 percent higher than a year ago. To put that annual figure into context, Americans' nominal wages have not grown by this much in almost a decade. Moreover, consumer confidence in the economy is at its highest level since 2000, accord-

ing to an August survey from the Conference Board, an independent business association. There is good reason to be optimistic: Americans' median household income set a record last year, rising to \$61,372.

Like consumers, our nation's greatest job creators – small businesses – are increasingly confident about the economy and the direction it is headed. For 45 years, the National Federation of Independent Business has conducted a survey measuring small business optimism. The results for August topped the previous record, which was set during the Reagan Administration.

These upbeat perceptions from consumers and job creators about the economy are appropriate, given the continual rise in gross domestic product (GDP). This important indicator of how much our economy grew reflected even better results for the second quarter of this year than had been initially reported. The Commerce Department revised its GDP estimate from 4.1 percent to 4.2 percent, giving the quarter the fastest economic growth in four years.

Real-Life Impact Underscores Policy Wins

All of these figures reaffirm the power of government policies that keep Washington out of the way and let job creators do what they do best – innovate, invest, and build the future prosperity



Planning and success

Dear Dave,

I'm stuck in a dead-end job, and I only have a high school diploma. I've never minded long hours and hard work, but I've begun to realize I need to have a better career, so I can spend more time with my kids. I feel like I'm missing out on their lives, because I work 65 to 70 hours every week. Do you have any advice on how to change my situation?

Tim

Dear Tim,

Asking questions and exploring your options like this is a much smarter move than simply walking away from an unsatisfying job situation — especially when you have a family to think about. I'm glad you're wise enough to take a thoughtful look at the situation, instead of making a rash decision that could have a negative impact on you and your family.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with wanting to improve yourself in terms of education or your career. But before you do any of that, you've got to have a definite direction in mind. You need an in-depth, detailed game plan for the next three or four years that's designed to put you where you want to be. It may involve going back to school for some classes, additional training in your field, or even getting a full-blown degree. If you identify your long-term goals in detail, it will lead you to some of the short-term goals that

of our nation. I am glad to be part of this Congress's enactment of historic tax cuts and major rollbacks of harmful, job-killing regulations. These policy successes have helped put more money back into the pockets of American families and workers. What may seem like small changes, such as additional take-home pay and lower energy bills, can make a big impact in Americans' daily lives. A thriving economy should produce these real-life results.

everything else to find it.

The value of things can get skewed. After all, there are so many parts of our lives; it's easy to raise one above the other. Priority is usually given to those things that are the most urgent or to those needs that are most numerous. Seldom is this the case when it comes to things of real value.

It seems to me, the most valuable things in life are those things that are rare and hidden among the ordinary things of life. Whether it is a gold nugget, a diamond, a special relationship, or a ginseng plant, these hold unique worth and it would do us all well, to spend more time searching for these things.

DURANT NEWS

by Rowena Hill

Rev. and Mrs. Billy Williams of Madison were welcomed Sunday morning when he preached at First Baptist Church, filling in for Rev. Lyn Nations, who attended homecoming at Oregon Memorial Church near Lexington. Bro. Lyn also serves as pastor there.

Prayers continue for Judy and Frankie Bledsoe as Judy is recovering from recent surgery. All are glad to see them feeling better.

Mr. and Mrs. Joey Hill and this writer attended a 40th birthday celebration in Clinton for James David Wells Saturday afternoon.

All are thankful William Henry Hathcock is feeling better after an extended illness and stay in a Jackson hospital. Hope to see them back in Durant soon.

Jodi and Derek May and

children spent Saturday night in Clinton and spoke at Shirley and Sammy Higginbotham's church Sunday. They also visited with them before returning home.

Mrs. Barbara Kinnebrew remains a patient in the Atlanta Baptist hospital in Kosciusko. Friends look forward to her return home shortly.

We sure miss seeing and bring with Plez White at church and pray that he will be feeling better soon and be back at church and activities.

Prayers and best wishes to Jean and Milton Hoover that they will feel well again soon and be back in church. May God bless and give healing to those friends and church family who aren't well.

Please call me at 601-519-5330 with items of interest for the paper. Leave a message if I fail to answer.

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My trail cameras are not showing me anything that I want to hunt right now, so I'm waiting on getting into the woods. My goal every year is not to get tired, burnt out, or behind, before the best days of deer hunting get here. For me, those days begin about November 1st and run through about the middle of January. It seems that everything fits me better during those times. But, like everyone else, I'm anxious to get outside.

The early mornings are comfortable and there are new opportunities waiting to be taken advantage of. One of those opportunities is finding Ginseng. So, last Saturday, three friends and I spent a few hours in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, dodging snakes and perusing the mountainsides for the wonderfully elusive plant that is also a valuable find.

I can remember how years ago an old logger taught me the nuances of this plant. But, since that time, I had forgotten

just about all of techniques of finding it. It was good to have one of our group give our Saturday gang a refresher course. It didn't take long until we all were digging up a few two and three prong plants. And once you find that first plant, it's like an obsession overtakes you, and you have to find just one more. I spent the last hour carefully uncovering about three plants that were side by side. I felt like an archeologist trying his best to brush away all the sediment around a new find. It really was exhilarating.

What I discovered through the process was how the best places to find Ginseng was where there were other plants that either hid it or acted as camouflage. Those places caused me to be more intent and focused on smaller areas to insure a hidden gem was not overlooked. But, no matter what else was there, nothing held more value than that one small, inconspicuous plant. And it was worth overlooking