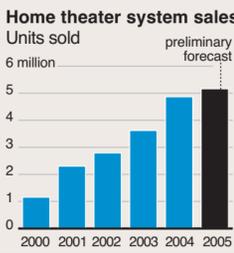


Homeward bound

Steady year-over-year growth in sales of home theater equipment has resulted in a growing demand for home theater furniture, according to some suppliers.



SOURCE: Consumer Electronics Association AP

WATERCOOLER TALK

Job surfing

The Internet's an easy time killer, from shopping, e-mail, all the sports sites, checking out new movie trailers, maybe even reading some news. And Americans hardly restrict all this Web activity to their personal time.

But how much do you think people spend each day on the job with non work-related Internet use?

A national staffing firm posed that question to 150 senior executives and got an average response of 56 minutes per day. And many employees forget that companies routinely monitor what you're sending and viewing on their computers.

Nearly a quarter, 23 percent, said their company monitors Internet activity "very closely," and 41 percent said "somewhat closely."

The data were compiled by Accountemps, a financial temp-staffing firm based in Menlo Park, Calif.

"Employees are representatives of their firms, and all communication—including e-mail and instant messaging—should be professional," said Max Messmer, Accountemps' chairman.

Hire well, make money

News to hiring managers: Good recruiting practices directly affect financial performance, according to a study that suggests diligent recruiting benefits company shareholders.

Companies that filled positions within two weeks provided total return to shareholders of 59 percent between 2002 and 2004 versus 11 percent at companies that required at least seven weeks to fill positions. And companies that typically fill a position after just one offer was made had a three-year shareholder return of 44 percent versus 32 percent for companies that had to make two or more offers to fill an opening.

The "human capital index" study was released Tuesday by Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a unit of Watson Wyatt & Co. Holdings.

"Companies that minimize the disruption and lost productivity caused by turnover create a significant advantage that allows them to outperform their competition financially," said Paul Platten, global director of human capital consulting at Watson Wyatt.

In other findings: ■ The companies with higher shareholder returns fill roughly half of their non entry-level positions internally.

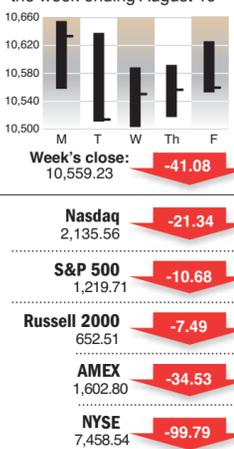
■ Too much and too little turnover is unhealthy for an organization. Firms with more moderate turnover (an average 15 percent) had a three-year shareholder return of 43 percent, outperforming those with higher and lower turnover by at least 9 percentage points.

—Associated Press

THE MARKET

The Dow last week

Daily high, low and close for the week ending August 19



AP

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High global energy demand sparks supply fears

Car sales, gas use soar in India, China

By Sudeep Reddy and Brendan M. Case Knight Ridder Tribune

Across China and India, millions of consumers are dumping their bicycles and buying cars like never before.

U.S. motorists are burning

more gasoline than ever, too. But the global kings of gas guzzling are facing major challenges from their Asian counterparts.

The shifting tide is launching a new era of competition across the oil sector. Rapidly developing nations are growing thirstier for petroleum while wealthier countries—especially the United States—do little to rein in their own demand.

For U.S. consumers, the grow-

ing battle means that higher prices at the pump may not go away anytime soon.

The threatening imbalance between supply and demand has already started a struggle that's smoldering from the Sea of Japan to Venezuela's Lake Maracaibo to the Caspian Sea in Central Asia.

The developments could reshape foreign policy in the coming century as energy-hungry nations increasingly forge alliances with

U.S. foes.

"China and India together are a third of humanity, and they don't want to ride bicycles anymore," said Anne Korin, the co-director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, a Washington think tank. "Their transportation demand, which is to say their oil consumption, is growing at a phenomenal rate."

“ ”

China and India together are a third of humanity, and they don't want to ride bicycles anymore.

Anne Korin, co-director, Institute for the Analysis of Global Security

Turn to ENERGY on Page 2C

LET it RIDE

Love of cycling drives woman to open store, hotel

By Danielle Letenyei dletenyei@gazetteextra.com

BRODHEAD

As a child, Sharon Kaminecki spent a lot of time on a bike. But it wasn't until about five years ago, as an adult and mother, that she got in the sport again.

Now, it's become her passion. Sharon has turned that passion into her own business—Earth Rider Cycling Shop in downtown Brodhead. The store specializes in the sale, service and rental of bicycles for the amateur or professional trail or tour riders.

Conveniently, it's located a block away from the start of the Sugar River Trail.

Above the bike shop, Sharon has opened a Tour de France-themed hotel.

Each of the five elegantly decorated rooms is named for a five-time Tour de France winner—one for Eddy Merckx, one for Miguel Indurain, one for Bernard Hinault, one for Jacques Anquetil and, of course, one for Lance Armstrong. The Lance Armstrong room is the largest one in the hotel, she said.

"Lance has won seven times, but that's okay," Sharon said. The hotel also has a "Yellow Jersey Sunroom" for guests to enjoy.

Sharon said she got interested in cycling again through her son, Matt, who is now the chief mechanic at the shop. She was concerned about his safety riding to



Photos by AJ Maclean/ajmaclean@gazetteextra.com Matt Kaminecki works on a wheel frame at Earth Rider Cycling in Brodhead. Kaminecki's mother, Sharon, opened the store in May after two years of preparation.

classes at Marquette University, so she took a course in bicycle safety.

"It was empowering," she said. "I have no problem riding anywhere now."

The Kaminecki family was living in the Chicago area at the time. They had a second home in Brodhead that they had been going to for about 13 years. Sharon was working for IBM, where she had been for 30 years.

"I wanted something different," she said.

She spent two years getting ready to open a bike shop. She became a League Certified Instructor, a certified bicycle mechanic and certified in bicycle safety.

Sharon bought the historic Brodhead building and spent about seven months completely renovating it.

"I pushed really hard to move in here by January," she said.

Earth Rider Cycling officially opened its doors in May. The hotel

Turn to BICYCLE on Page 3C



Sharon Kaminecki gestures to a row of hybrid bikes at her shop in Brodhead. Kaminecki says the hybrids—which can be used on trails or roads—are her best-selling bikes.

The Yellow Jersey Lounge is part of the Earth Rider Hotel, which is located directly above the bicycle shop. The hotel has five themed rooms.



Question about future should be history

Interviewers show 'lack of creativity' with typical query

Eric Mathiasen, a software engineer in Chicago, says that asking someone in a job interview, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" is "just a dumb question. It tells the candidate far more about the lack of creativity of the interviewer than it tells the interviewer about the candidate."

The engineer says when he is asked that hypothetical question his reaction is that there is "no right answer, it can't be verified and it has no direct relevance to the position I'm interviewing for."

Mathiasen adds that he has "yet to have a five-year period in my life where much of anything ... happened that I planned. ... Every time I've made plans, something bigger has come along to disrupt them—usually for the better."

In fact, he says, actually setting strict goals "would have set my career back a good five years by now."

He says the question should not be part of a job interview. "I don't think I'd hire someone who told me they had an immutable plan, because they'd be too inflexible to handle the constant change modern business drives."

Instead, he suggests, it would be "far better that a job candidate be open to opportunity and ready for unseen challenges."

At least for the next five years. ■ Emotional IQ: "People with good emotional intelligence are in charge of their emotions, rather than having their emotions in charge of them—and they make better employees," observed Audrey Brodt, a licensed psychologist with a consulting practice in Littleton, Colo.

Knowledgeable hiring officers

Turn to KLEIMAN on Page 3C



CAROL KLEIMAN

It's better for wurst: Johnsonville brats enjoy plump popularity

By Ryan Nakashima Associated Press

JOHNSONVILLE, WIS.

Johnsonville Sausage Co. CEO Ralph Stayer gets a real bang out of making bratwurst better.

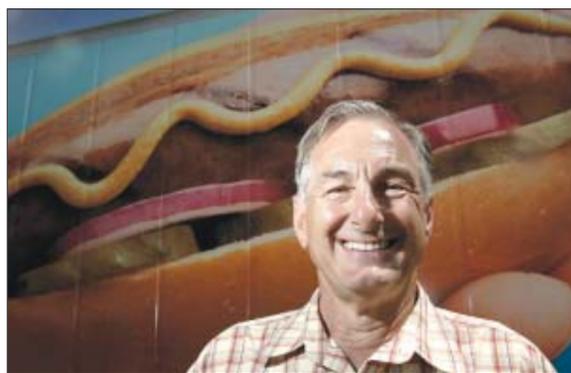
Last month, following tradition, he lit a firecracker in his office waste basket to celebrate a change to the company's "Heat & Serve" precooked sausage that made it taste as good as a fresh-grilled brat.

"I've gone through quite a few waste baskets," said Stayer, 62. "We celebrate innovation here."

With this year's barbecue season sizzling and the Atkins diet on the ropes, Stayer lit into how the company his father began on Oct. 1, 1945, helped turn the bratwurst from a little-known spiced pork sausage into the nation's "fastest-growing protein" among grillers.

"There's a thousand little things that go into making a great-tasting sausage," Stayer said. "It's just attention to detail, every darn one."

Like other regional flavors that have spread across the country,



Associated Press

Johnsonville Sausage Co. CEO Ralph Stayer has been all smiles lately. Last year, led by bratwurst sales, Johnsonville became the nation's largest sausage brand by revenue, and its brats are now sold at some 4,000 McDonald's nationwide, in 16 NFL stadiums and in 38 countries outside the United States.

such as Chicago-style pizza and Tex-Mex cuisine, the bratwurst's popularity has become a source of local pride in Wisconsin—alongside beer, cheese and Green Bay Packers football.

"We introduced bratwurst to

America," said Johnsonville group vice president David Finch.

But Johnsonville, unlike other food makers that sold out to conglomerates—despite a brief minority ownership by Sara Lee Corp.—has stayed owned by the family

that founded it.

Last year, led by bratwurst sales, Johnsonville became the nation's largest sausage brand by revenue, and its brats are now sold seasonally at some 4,000 McDonald's nationwide, in 16 NFL football stadiums and in stores in 38 countries outside the United States.

Johnsonville claims brats' popularity among U.S. grillers grew faster than other sausages, pork, fish and hot dogs in the four years through 2003 while steak, chicken and hamburgers shrank. According to ACNielsen, prepackaged and measured bratwurst accounted for about \$260 million in domestic annual sales until mid-July. That's up 31 percent from four years ago, compared to 10 percent growth for all packaged meats.

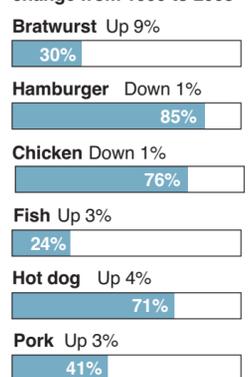
Johnsonville total sales this year through May grew 19 percent to \$440 million, making it bigger than Sara Lee's Hillshire Farms at \$369 million. Johnsonville claims about 60 percent of its sales come from brats.

Turn to BRATS on Page 3C

Bratwurst sales sizzle

Johnsonville Sausage Co. claims bratwurst's popularity among U.S. grillers grew a fast 9 percent from 1999 to 2003 although it remains well below more traditional fare.

What people are grilling and change from 1999 to 2003



SOURCE: Johnsonville Sausage Co.

AP