

BUSINESS

Editor: Gregory J. Gilligan
(804) 649-6379
ggilligan@timesdispatch.com

Oprah signs deal with Apple streaming service

Apple says it has reached a multiyear deal with Oprah Winfrey to create original programs for its streaming service. Apple said Friday that the programs will be released worldwide as part of a lineup of original content. Apple has yet to launch its service, whose major competitors will include Amazon and Netflix. Winfrey's content for Apple will be solely for the streaming service.

VIRGINIA

Discovery Inc. plans to expand hub in Loudoun

Media company **Discovery Inc.**, which owns Discovery Channel, HGTV, Food Network and other cable channels, plans to invest \$16 million to expand its global technology and operations hub in Loudoun County.

Virginia successfully competed against Maryland and New York for the project, which will create 240 new jobs, Gov. Ralph Northam's office announced.

Northam has approved a \$500,000 state grant to assist the county with the Discovery expansion project. The Loudoun Board of Supervisors will vote at an upcoming meeting on whether to approve a \$500,000 local matching grant.

Keiter partner, COO gets accounting recognition

Julie H. Gustavsson, a partner and chief operating officer at the Henrico County-based Keiter accounting firm,



Gustavsson

was named among the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and CPA Practice Advisor's **2018 Most Powerful Women in Accounting.**

Women in Accounting.

The award recognizes women who are making an outstanding impact on the accounting profession as a whole. Gustavsson was one of 25 women from across the U.S. recognized at AICPA's conference in Las Vegas this week.

Henrico's GPM makes third acquisition of 2018

GPM Investments LLC, the parent company of the **Fas Mart** convenience store chain, acquired 11 1-Stop convenience stores with fuel stations in Michigan.

The deal marks Henrico-based GPM's third acquisition in 2018. The company said it further develops GPM's existing portfolio in the Midwest. It now operates about 1,400 stores.

The 1-Stop stores were sold by DMJ Corp.

NATIONAL

◆ Federal prosecutors have indicted **Elizabeth Holmes** on criminal fraud charges for allegedly defrauding investors, doctors and the public as the head of the once-heralded blood-testing startup **Theranos**. Holmes and Ramesh Balwani, her former chief operating officer, are charged with two counts of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and nine counts of wire fraud. If convicted, they could face life behind bars and total fines of \$2.75 million each.

◆ **AAA Club Alliance**, the nation's third-largest AAA club that oversees AAA Mid-Atlantic in Virginia, has named **Thomas C. Wiedemann** as its new CEO, effective June 1. Wiedemann, who replaces Bernhard "Berni" Koch, began his career with AAA in 1989.

— From staff and wire reports

Va.'s jobless rate dips to Oct. 2007 level

BY JOHN REID BLACKWELL
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Virginia's unemployment rate dropped one-tenth of a percent from April to May to 3.2 percent, its lowest point since October 2007 when it was also 3.2 percent.

The jobless rate was down from 3.8 percent in May 2017, the Virginia Employment Commission reported on Friday.

The rates have been adjusted for seasonal factors that might temporarily influence employment.

The number of people counted as unemployed in the state declined by 3,893 to 140,065 in May,

and Virginia's jobless rate remained below the national rate, which was down one-tenth of a percent to 3.8 percent.

"This is actually a pretty good report for Virginia," said Sonya Ravindranath Waddell, director of regional economics for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

In 2018, Virginia has gained an average of about 9,300 jobs per month, which is stronger than the average of 2,700 jobs gained per month in the first five months of 2017, and the 1,700 jobs per month gained on average for all of 2017.

"It is worth noting that 2017

was not a particularly strong year in terms of employment in Virginia," compared with 2015 and 2016, Waddell said. "Nonetheless, we are seeing some pick up in 2018 over 2017," she said.

The decline in unemployment came as the state's labor force expanded for the fourth straight month, reaching a new high of nearly 4.34 million. The labor force participation rate also has ticked up slightly this year to 65.2 percent in May from 65 percent at the start of the year, Waddell said.

Employers in Virginia added a net total of about 53,000 jobs to their payrolls from May 2017 to May 2018, a 1.3 percent job

growth rate that was slower than the national job growth rate of 1.6 percent.

The biggest gains were private education and health services, and professional and business services.

In the Richmond area, employers added a net of about 8,000 jobs during the same time period, for a job growth rate of 1.2 percent.

Virginia had the 13th-lowest unemployment rate among the states in May, along with Indiana, said Ann Lang, senior economist for the commission.

jblackwell@timesdispatch.com
(804) 775-8123



U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va. (center), gestured during a meeting with representatives of Richmond-area craft brewers and suppliers at Hardywood Park Craft Brewery in Richmond on Friday. Warner said President Donald Trump's decision to impose tariffs could hurt America's craft beer industry.

Warner discusses tariffs, tax policy and more with local craft beer makers

BY JOHN REID BLACKWELL
Richmond Times-Dispatch

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner stopped at Hardywood Park Craft Brewery in Richmond on Friday, using the visit to criticize President Donald Trump's decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, which Warner said could hurt the craft beer industry.

Warner, a Democrat, had an informal chat over beers with representatives of several Richmond-area craft brewers and suppliers.

Tensions rise between U.S. and China

Trump announces tariffs; Beijing to retaliate. **Page B1**

The conversation started with tariffs but roamed into tax policy, agriculture and the overall state of the craft beverage industry in Virginia.

"There are places where we have real serious trade challenges — folks who don't play by the rules — China in particular," said Warner, adding that he thought it was

"bizarre" that Trump used an obscure provision of U.S. trade law to impose tariffs on Mexico, Canada and the European Union.

"To me, it was more than a little bit bizarre that the president comes out with this charge that Canada, Mexico, the EU — Canada in particular — are suddenly our enemies and that they are being slapped with trade enforcement actions under this national security provision," he said.

jblackwell@timesdispatch.com
(804) 775-8123

Nelson craft cider maker looking for site in Richmond

BY JOHN REID BLACKWELL
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Another craft cider maker is looking to plant roots in the Richmond area.

Jerry Thornton, owner of the cider-making operation called Bryant's Cider, said he is planning to open a tasting room in the Richmond area.

Over Memorial Day weekend, Thornton opened a tasting area in the Roseland community in Nelson County on the farm that has been in his family for several generations. He said he has been making cider for about two years.

"Right now, it is an outdoor

tasting area, while we work on a barn there" as an indoor tasting room, Thornton said.

"It is a small operation," he said. The farm has a 40-acre orchard where Thornton is growing apples, which he uses to make a natural dry cider without added sugar.

Thornton said he attended Virginia Commonwealth University and George Mason University and lives in Richmond. He previously had a career in corporate finance in Northern Virginia before moving back to Richmond and deciding to make cider on the family farm.

He is now starting to distribute bottles of his cider at retail



Thornton

shops in the Richmond area, with its first sales location being the Once Upon a Vine store on MacArthur Avenue in North Richmond.

Thornton said he is hoping to open a tasting room in the Richmond area by September and is particularly interested in the Fan District.

While Richmond has seen an explosion of craft beer makers, Thornton said the region has a lot of room for growth for cider. Other cider makers in the area include Buskey Cider and Blue

Bee Cider, both in the Scott's Addition area of Richmond.

Bryant's Cider brands include its flagship dry cider named Brite Good; a dry cider infused with rose hip and hibiscus called Unicorn Fuel; and Chaider, a cider infused with a blend of chai spices.

"There are not a lot of options in terms of dry ciders" on the market, Thornton said. "Most of what people get is very sweet. Most people only think of cider as a very sweet product. I think the challenge for us is to communicate to people and educate them that not all ciders are sweet."

jblackwell@timesdispatch.com
(804) 775-8123



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