



Top News

U.S. Wins Case in Steel Dispute with China

In a recent decision, the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled that China illegally imposed anti-dumping and neutralizing duties on high-tech U.S steel exports. China did so due to an investigation indicating that "Buy America" principles of the U.S 2009 economic stimulus incorporated requirements that subsidized U.S steel exports. The U.S. questions the method in which China administered this investigation, arguing that the nation violated procedural and due process obligations, injuring the ability of the United States and American companies to protect their interests. Ultimately, the WTO dispute settlement panel considered that Chinese duties placed on grain-oriented flat-rolled electrical steel (GOES) failed to conform to global trade rules. [\(The Hill\)](#)

Implications

U.S manufacturers of GOES are mostly in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and the duties influence a great amount of United States trade. U.S trade officials said that China's actions mirror its use of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy laws as a trade policy instrument "without regard to international rules." The WTO ruling demonstrates that China's disregard for fair trade practices and its WTO commitments won't be tolerated. [\(The Hill\)](#)

Newsletter

Spotlight

- Increase to FedEx Shipping Rates
- Eurozone Banking Union?
- Manufacturing Training
- China-Russia Tourism

Business

Going Green Can Help Your Business

Attract Customers

A recent study posits that 82 percent of American adults claim to be well informed about companies and brands with a strong track record for sustainability. In addition, 80 percent of those customers let this claim influence their purchases. [\(Time\)](#)

Implications: Today, customers prefer a business that considers environmental implications when creating, advertising, and selling a product. There are many ways for companies to go green; a local energy provider can provide a company methods to lower its monthly energy bill through a scheduled energy audit; buying energy-efficient computers and electronics; taking advantage of energy management settings on computers; moving applications like email, data backup, and accounting onto cloud-based services to save on server and power costs. [\(Time\)](#)

Trade

Upcoming Rate Increase for FedEx Freight

As of July 9, 2012, there will be a 6.9% shipping rate increase for FedEx Freight. The rate increase applies to shipments:

- Within the U.S.
- Between the U.S. and Canada
- Within Canada
- Between the U.S. and Mexico

FedEx Freight's fuel surcharge, one of the lowest in the industry, will remain unchanged. [\(WT100\)](#)

Finance

Slouching Towards a Banking Union

As the economic situation in the eurozone continues to worsen, the eurozone's peripheral countries are trying to alleviate their ailing banks. For instance, Portugal and Cyprus are planning to recapitalize their own banking systems. However, their capital calls are resulting in funding markets freeze. Investors are losing confidence in banks as they reassure investors they are sufficiently capitalized, while at the same time asking for help. Furthermore, banks are losing confidence in each other. This loss of confidence has incited talks about the establishment of a banking union. Such a union would incorporate centralized powers and funding to regulate and supervise eurozone banks, as well as to recapitalize troubled ones. [\(The Economist\)](#)

Implications

The United States has a vested interest in the well-being of European banks. In fact, the Federal Reserve released a statement in April saying that distressed global financial markets threaten the U.S economic outlook. Bernanke declared that risks and the ambivalent situation in Europe are one reason the U.S central bank is planning on keeping the interest rate near zero through at least late 2014. Therefore, it may comfort the U.S to know that the European Commission is deliberating on combining "euro-zone resources" which "are essential to break the vicious spiral linking failing banks and over-indebted governments" [\(Bloomberg\)](#)

Law & Order

Puerto Rico Legal Services warns of limited help following \$5 million budget cut

The Legal Services Corporation in Washington says it is struggling to operate this year on a \$348 million budget, its lowest ever in inflation-adjusted dollars. As a result, Puerto Rico's Legal Services office faces \$5 million in federal budget cuts next year. Puerto Rico Legal Services provides free legal aid to low-income Puerto Ricans seeking help in civil cases ranging from domestic violence to evictions to veteran issues. Nearly half of Puerto Ricans live in poverty and live with a 15 percent unemployment rate. [\(The Washington Post\)](#)

Implications

Officials say that the cuts will force attorneys to drop thousands of civil cases in this U.S. territory where nearly half the people live in poverty. Attorneys will have to drop 7,000 cases as a result of the cuts, according to the executive director of Puerto Rico's Legal Services. Also, a San Juan lawyer worries that many female victims of domestic abuse will be left without an attorney [\(The Washington Post\)](#)

Technology

Stress Testing: Bringing the latest kit to the toughest places

A recent U.S. training exercise was conducted in Texas and New Mexico in which about 3,800 soldiers and several thousand military and civilian personnel were taking part in this Spring's Network Integration Evaluation (NIE). This is the third round of a new twice-yearly series of exercises. One of the items tested last week was the Nett Warrior, a rugged smartphone. An earlier version of the device had been on order last year, but was postponed when officials realized that it was much heavier, more expensive and not noticeably better than something that could be bought off the shelf. [\(The Economist\)](#)

The Network Integration Evaluation is part of the army's new testing process. The purpose of the NIE is to test how well new mapping and messaging system technologies endure the stresses of conflict in harsh conditions. The idea is to bring in these new technologies from the private sector so that soldiers can test them. If a technology is no better than the old technology, the army will discontinue its use or retool it. The reason behind all the testing is the military's new initiative to make quicker, fewer, and wiser acquisitions of technology to help save money and make the military more efficient. [\(The Economist\)](#)

Manufacturing

Training the Manufacturing Workforce: Don't Go It Alone

Manufacturing companies are teaming up with community colleges, manufacturing organizations, training providers, and government resources to overcome the shortage of available skilled workers. Innovative training programs are being developed across the country to fast-track worker education, resulting in ready-to-work operators at the end of programs which range from 24 weeks to two-and-a-half years. [\(Industry Week\)](#)

Implications

These new training programs echo a job training movement by Volkswagens and a dozen other companies. These companies are combining German-style apprenticeships and U.S.-style vocational schools. This movement seems to be in response to the paradox of an unemployment rate of over 8% [\(WSJ\)](#)

Tourism

Bilateral Ties Between China and Russia to Boost Up Tourism

Dalian Wanda Group Corporation--a Chinese company that has a reputation of developing several luxury hotels, film screens, commercial properties, cultural industries and several chain stores in their country--has decided to invest \$3 billion for the development of Russia's North Caucasus Resorts. Northern Caucasus resorts are responsible for region's tourist cluster; therefore, the \$3 billion will go towards the new Russian government project to create opportunities for tourism in the region of Northern Caucasus. This project includes construction of five latest resorts of world class standards offering technical level compatibility and services which also includes few of the sport resorts. The overall area of five resorts is nearly twenty five hundred square kilometers and the hotels will be able to accommodate eighty three thousand tourists. [\(Tourism-Review\)](#)

Implications

This is a strong step taken by both countries to strengthen their bilateral ties in the area of travel and tourism. In an effort to boost one another's tourism industry, China and Russia have signed a bilateral agreement to develop each other's infrastructure. In light of past similar agreements, Russia received more than 800,000 Chinese tourists and China saw a 7% growth in its tourism industry. [\(Tourism-Review\)](#)

Land

UC San Diego Shake Test Studies Non-Structural Components, Systems

UC San Diego performed the first of a series of seismic shake-table tests in April on a five-story simulated hospital. The building was tested with a replica of the 2010 magnitude-8.8 San Pedro earthquake in Chile, and was found to protect both structural and non-structural components and systems. This test marked the first time in the U.S. that a base-isolation system was interrogated under a full-scale building on a shake table. [\(ENR California\)](#)

Education

Florida education news: Charter schools, budget cuts, superintendent election and more

The following are updates on education in Florida: (1) critics have suggested that Florida's limited oversight of charter schools allows for problematic schools to survive longer than they should; (2) the Pasco school district administration proposes eliminating two district-level jobs; (3) a candidate for Hernando School Board suggests the district return to an elected superintendent; (4) St. Petersburg College makes all of its budget documents public one year after criticism that its methods were too opaque; (5) Duval's School Board chairwoman owes the state Ethics Commission for an unpaid, decade-old fine; (6) a Polk state lawmaker questions the Polk district's need to set up new charter schools for at-risk students; (7) improving revenue allows the Monroe school district to reduce its projected layoffs and other cuts. [\(Tampa Bay Times\)](#)

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