

TIME CHANGE

Don't forget to adjust your clocks an hour on Sunday as we 'spring forward.'



RENTALS

Denver looks to landlords about using vacant properties as immigrant housing. **A5**

AVALANCHE

Nichushkin returns to lineup after receiving care from assistance program. **D1**

The Denver Gazette

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MOSTLY SUNNY • HIGH 54; LOW 21

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2024



SAY HELLO TO SKI THORNTON

JONATHAN INGRAHAM, THE DENVER GAZETTE

State and local dignitaries watched Friday as pro skiers Bode Miller, right, and Chris Anthony "ski-cut" the ribbon to officially open Snöbahn Thornton. With its revolving slopes, Snöbahn has the ability to train approximately 8,000 skiers and snowboarders annually. **Story, C1**

Are car theft laws cause of downward trend?

BY THELMA GRIMES
The Denver Gazette

Colorado found itself atop most lists of states with the highest car thefts and associated crimes in the last several years — record-breaking numbers that had been accumulating since 2020 and which put pressure on the governor and legislators to respond.

Notably, lawmakers, upon the urging of the governor,

passed a law that made all car thefts a felony, decoupling the severity of the crime from the value of the car and tying it instead to behavior so that the penalty becomes more severe with repeat offenders.

But lawmakers haven't introduced a lot of bills devoted to auto theft this year.

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DNA work puts 1,000 cases 'in question'

BY CHRISTOPHER OSHER
AND CAROL MCKINLEY
The Denver Gazette

DNA findings in more than 1,000 criminal cases in Colorado are now "in question" due to data manipulation by former Colorado Bureau of Investigation DNA scientist Yvonne "Missy" Woods, state officials announced Friday when they unveiled the findings of an internal investigative report into Woods' work.

The internal CBI investigative found that Woods deviated from standard protocols in her work and tampered with DNA results, omitting material facts in official criminal justice records.

The CBI issued a news release summarizing the internal investigative findings into the work of the 29-year veteran of the CBI crime lab but still has not released the actual internal investigative report. Officials there cited an ongoing criminal investigation into Woods as the reason why they will release no further information to the public.

The South Dakota's Division of Criminal Investigation is conducting the

SEE DNA • PAGE 13

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DAILY DATA

THE DAY ON WALL STREET

| | | |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| DOW JONES | 38,722.69 | -68.66 |
| NASDAQ | 16,085.11 | -188.26 |
| S&P 500 | 5,123.69 | -33.67 |
| GOLD | \$2,185.50 | +\$20.30 |
| OIL | \$78.01 | -\$0.92 |

Bloomberg Business

For the current market data, go to [bloomberg.com/markets](https://www.bloomberg.com/markets).

Markets slip back after touching record high

NEW YORK • The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq lost ground on Friday after touching record highs, with high-flying chip stocks going into reverse and a labor market report that showed more new jobs than expected while the unemployment rate also unexpectedly rose.

The S&P and Nasdaq briefly hit intraday record highs but started to lose steam late morning. The Philadelphia Semiconductor Index rose to an intraday record and then retreated to lead declines.

BRIEFLY

UnitedHealth expects claims service to be restored soon

UnitedHealth expects to restore disrupted services for medical claims and payments platforms by mid-March, the company said late Thursday, as it grapples with the fallout of a hack that crippled its Change Healthcare tech unit late last month. The disruptions also impacted electronic pharmacy refills.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Snöbahn Thornton now open

Snowsports stars Bode Miller, Chris Anthony on hand for grand opening

BY JONATHAN INGRAHAM
The Denver Gazette

Pro skiers Bode Miller and Chris Anthony “ski-cut” the ribbon to officially open Snöbahn Thornton on Friday.

Around 75 other people, including Founder and CEO/Owner of Snöbahn Sadler Merrill, Thornton Mayor Pro-Tem Karen Bigelow and Thornton Mayor Jan Kulmann, braced cold temperatures and snow to witness the ceremony.

And the energy in the building buzzed, especially after the ribbon was cut and a few skiers stepped onto the revolving ski slopes, including Miller and Anthony.

“This has been eight years in the making, yet this isn’t where we started but it is what we always dreamed of,” Merrill said to start the ceremony inside the 40,000 square-foot facility. “We always dreamed of making action sports, initially skiing and snowboarding, more accessible, more approachable for everyone.”

Mayor Kulmann thanked the Thornton community and several others saying in part, “On a day like today when you look outside and it’s snowing, I remember taking my kids out to the mountains and wishing there was something closer that I could bring my kids to so I didn’t have to put them in all of the big snow gear and drive out in the snow.”

Snöbahn’s ability to train approximately 8,000 skiers and snowboarders annually with the new facility will help grow participation, Kulmann said, and expand the economic impact of winter sports across Colorado.



JONATHAN INGRAHAM, THE DENVER GAZETTE

Snöbahn CEO Sadler Merrill, right, and pro skiers Bode Miller, second from the left, and Chris Anthony, left, listen to Merrill speak during the Snöbahn Thornton grand opening ceremony Friday in Thornton.

March 8 will be known in Thornton as “Winter Sports Appreciation Day.”

When all was said and done, Anthony and Miller put on their skis, took to the slope for a demonstration and some skiing fun.

5 takeaways from Anthony and Miller
1. One hour of skiing or snowboarding on the revolving slopes is equivalent to skiing or riding 20,000 verti-

cal feet.

“I did the Everest challenge slope one time, the 29,000 foot peak in Nepal, and it took me like two hours to do,” Anthony said of skiing on the revolving slopes previously at the Centennial, Colorado, facility.

2. Skiing on the revolving slopes is similar to but different than snow.

SEE SKIERS • PAGE 2

Burst of hiring shows resilience of job market

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON • America’s employers delivered another healthy month of hiring in February, adding a surprising 275,000 jobs and again showcasing the U.S. economy’s resilience in the face of high interest rates.

Last month’s job growth marked an increase from a revised gain of 229,000 jobs in January. At the same time, the un-

employment rate ticked up two-tenths of a point in February to 3.9%. Though that was the highest rate in two years, it is still low by historic standards. And it marked the 25th straight month in which joblessness has remained below 4% — the longest such streak since the 1960s.

Yet despite sharply lower inflation, a healthy job market and a record-high stock market, many Americans say they

are unhappy with the state of the economy — a sentiment that is sure to weigh on President Joe Biden’s bid for reelection. Many voters blame Biden for the surge in consumer prices that began in 2021. Though inflationary pressures have significantly eased, average prices remain about 17% above where they stood three

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SKIERS

FROM PAGE 1

“The kind of skiing you’ll do on these slopes will work out and use muscles you don’t normally work out doing other fitness. Skiing on (these) slopes gives massive benefits to ski muscle memory and lower extremities control,” Miller said of what a first-time skier or rider can expect when stepping onto the slope.

3. Getting more confident and comfortable with your skiing or snowboarding is just a reflection away.

“So what they did was they installed these mirrors at the bottom of the slope so you can watch yourself skiing. The mirrors help show what you are doing so you can see if you are doing good or bad things and get more comfortable on the slopes,” Anthony said.

4. If you are worried about prices, Snöbahn is an answer.

“When you first get on it it’s kind of scary, but even if you’ve never skied before these slopes are great for beginners all the way through experts. You can enjoy skiing for the first time, getting even the equivalent of a private full day lesson without paying \$700 for an instructor,” Miller said.

5. Features of the revolving slope.

“Since you are not moving down hill, skiing or riding on the slope is a lateral movement mostly. Skiing in the wedge position but stationary is how most do it at first, but since the slope revolves underneath you, it is just an infinite descent,” Anthony said of how the feeling is underfoot and what your body will experience when skiing or riding.

“So the slope has tracking lights fea-



JONATHAN INGRAHAM, THE DENVER GAZETTE

Pro skiers Bode Miller, right, and Chris Anthony “ski-cut” the grand opening ribbon at Snöbahn Thornton on Friday.

ture (a slalom line, with a light pattern that can change between circles, trees and snowmen) illuminated on the slope that you can follow to imitate skiing a course. It is such an exercise,” Anthony said.

Other facts

Snöbahn Thornton also has two other sections in the facility.

A trampoline zone for tumbling and

parkour exercises, and a skate park zone complete with a street skate line with rails and boxes for BMX, skateboards and scooters, a jump line for BMX, skateboards and scooters and a big air line with an air bag landing zone which can be skied or ridden using skis or snowboards with wheels attached to the bottoms.

“A lot of athletes can come here to train for freestyle comps or with their

freestyle comp team when they can’t make the drive up to the mountains to ski on the snow,” Snöbahn spokesperson Sean Billisitz said.

Along with the four revolving slopes, Snöbahn Thornton also has an upstairs mezzanine where spectators or parents can relax, or watch from, while participants use the facility. It also has a bar and café area underneath the mezzanine.

MARKET

FROM PAGE 1

years ago.

Friday’s report gave the inflation fighters at the Federal Reserve some encouraging news: Average hourly wages rose just 0.1% from January, the smallest monthly gain in more than two years, and 4.3% from a year earlier, less than expected. Average pay growth has been exceeding inflation for more than a year, but when it rises too fast it can feed inflation.

The latest figures reflected the job market’s sustained ability to withstand the 11 rate hikes the Fed imposed in its drive against inflation, which made borrowing much costlier for households and businesses. Employers have

continued to hire briskly to meet steady demand from consumers across the economy.

The February figures will likely make Fed officials more comfortable about cutting rates sometime in the coming months. With December and January job gains revised sharply down, wage growth easing and the unemployment rate up, the Fed’s policymakers aren’t likely to worry about an overheating economy. Most economists and Wall Street traders expect the first rate cut to come in June. The Fed stopped raising rates in July and has signaled that it envisions three rate cuts this year.

The unemployment rate rose last month in part because more people began looking for a job and didn’t immediately find one. The Fed could be reassured by the influx of job seekers, which typically makes it easier for businesses to fill jobs without having to sig-

nificantly raise pay.

Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial Services, said he was impressed by the breadth of hiring last month: Among industries, health care companies added 67,000 jobs, government at all levels 52,000, restaurants and bars 42,000, construction companies 23,000 and retailers 19,000.

When the Fed began aggressively raising rates in March 2022 to fight the worst bout of inflation in four decades, a painful recession was widely predicted, with waves of layoffs and high unemployment. The Fed boosted its benchmark rate to the highest level in more than two decades.

Inflation has eased, more or less steadily, in response: Consumer prices in January were up just 3.1% from a year earlier — way down from a year-over-year peak of 9.1% in 2022 and edging closer to the Fed’s 2% target. Unem-

ployment is still low. And no recession is in sight.

The combination of easing inflation and sturdy hiring is raising hopes that the Fed can achieve a so-called “soft landing” by taming inflation without causing a recession — a scenario consistent with Friday’s numbers.

Faucher said he expects average monthly job growth to decelerate to around 150,000 and for the unemployment rate to rise to slightly above 4% by year’s end. A cooling labor market, he suggested, will allow the Fed to start cutting rates this spring.

Even though the Labor Department’s revisions shaved 167,000 jobs from its previous estimate of December and January hiring, acting Labor Secretary Julie Su noted Friday that even counting those downward revisions, job growth has averaged an impressive 265,000 over the past three months.