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Brock: Central Landing a \$90 million project

Posted: October 12, 2013 - 6:27pm

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COALITION TO PROTECT AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE

SPEAK OUT

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Landing at the Conway airport will soon take on a new meaning as Alabama-based Jim Wilson and Associates and the Conway Development Corp. announced a new \$90 million upscale regional shopping center, "Central Landing." On Thursday, Will Wilson, CEO of Jim Wilson and Associates, announced the 150-acre project that will take the soon-to-be-decommissioned airport property and redevelop it to include restaurant, retail, medical, office and multi-family use spaces. Wilson also said that plans could include two hotels and space available for economic development projects being recruited to Conway.

Natural gas leader

says it's time for demand to increase

Marty Durbin, CEO of America's Natural Gas Alliance, says it is time to accelerate natural gas usage and dependency in the U.S.

"I think the opportunity we have here in the country with natural gas, and as an industry, is we have moved past the question of whether we're going to be producing natural gas," he said. "No question there are critics out there that would like to see restrictions, but we're past that. I think across the political and ideological spectrum everyone understands this is a benefit — economically, environmentally, from an energy security and natural security standpoint."

Durbin sees the biggest potential for natural gas usage to grow in the energy production field. As coal comes under fire in electricity generation, he said that natural gas can offer a cleaner energy alternative.

Investment director warns 'confidence' at risk with shutdown

Chris Harkins, senior vice president and managing director at Delta Trust Investments, says investors' skins are "getting a little thicker" but he is worried that a protracted congressional battle over the budget and looming debt ceiling debate could spook investors to leave the stock market in a big fashion.

Harkins said a two-week to month-long shutdown will "get into the system" and play out in the U.S. and global economy in a negative way far beyond Wall Street.

"If investors globally and domestically here in the U.S., if they feel this lack of confidence that we can't get our act together, we can't pay our bills, they will begin to sell government bonds. That raises interest rates and the stock market will be skittish — it's already skittish to begin with — you'll see pressure to sell at that point,"

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Harkins said.

Wal-Mart to split with Indian partners

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and its partner, Bharti Enterprises, will split and pursue their own operations in India, according to a joint statement from the two parties. Wal-Mart has struggled to gain a foothold in India and its efforts in that country have come under scrutiny from regulators and government officials related to charges of corruption.

"Given the circumstances, our decision to operate independently will be beneficial to both parties," Scott Price, president and chief executive of Wal-Mart Asia, said in the statement.

Wal-Mart supplier locates in Rogers

Redman & Associates, a leading manufacturer of ride-on toys, and Wal-Mart announced that Redman will open a new manufacturing and distribution facility in Rogers that will produce battery-powered ride-on toys exclusively for Wal-Mart. Redman, based in Bentonville, will invest \$6.5 million in the facility, which will employ 74 people. Wal-Mart has been enticing manufacturers to expand in the U.S. as part of an effort to bring more jobs back to America.

Kiva's micro-financing model comes

to Little Rock

Kiva's co-founder and current CEO, Matt Flannery, spoke at the Clinton School of Public Service Tuesday as part of a conference on social entrepreneurship hosted by the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute. Flannery and his then-wife, Jessica Jackley, conceived of their microfinancing nonprofit in 2004 and then launched it in 2005. Under their original model, partner organizations in Third World countries loaned money, often just a few hundred dollars, to local entrepreneurs who otherwise did not have access to credit.

The recipients' stories were posted on Kiva's website. American donors could then fund these loans with small donations, and once the loan was paid back, recirculate the money to another entrepreneur. Flannery laid out goals for Kiva's future growth plans in his Clinton School talk.

St. Louis fed chairman to speak at Walton College conference

The University of Arkansas Walton College Center for Business and Economic Research announced that James Bullard, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, will speak at its Quarterly Business Analysis program in November. Bullard will discuss recent economic trends from his view at the Federal Reserve and as a member of the Federal Open Market Committee.

The event will be held at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, at the John Q. Hammons Convention Center in Rogers.

Roby Brock, a freelance journalist based in Little Rock, writes weekly for the Arkansas News Bureau. His weekly television program airs at 10 p.m. Sundays in Central and Northwest Arkansas. His e-mail address is roby@talkbusiness.net; his website address is www.talkbusiness.net.

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