

Business

MARKETS

▼ 80.12 Dow 27,896.72
▲ 30.26 Nasdaq 11,042.50
▼ 6.92 S&P 500 3,373.43
▲ 0.04 10-yr. T-note 0.71%
▼ \$0.43 Oil \$42.24
▲ \$21.80 Gold \$1,956.70
▲ \$1.73 Silver \$27.69
Euro 0.8474 • Peso 22.1823

S&P 500 AGAIN FLIRTS WITH RECORD: Wall Street was left just shy of its record heights on Thursday, after the S&P 500 briefly crossed above its all-time closing high for the second straight day. Story, C2

BRIEFLY

GAMBLING IS HIT HARD: The coronavirus and efforts to fight it have hit U.S. casinos and legal gambling businesses hard, leading to a nearly 79 percent drop in commercial gambling revenue for the second quarter of 2020, the industry's trade association reported Thursday. Slot machines and table games revenue flattened, the report said, after casinos around the U.S. closed in March. But the association in June reported that 2019 had been a record year for revenue in the U.S. commercial gambling industry. "While April and May both experienced year-over-year (revenue) declines north of 90 percent, June saw nearly 300 commercial casinos reopen," said American Gaming Association President and CEO Bill Miller.

30-YEAR MORTGAGE RATES RISE: U.S. average rates on long-term mortgages rose this week but remained at historically low levels. The key 30-year loan stayed below 3 percent. Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported Thursday that the average rate on the 30-year home loan increased to 2.96 percent from 2.88 percent last week. By contrast, the rate averaged 3.60 percent a year ago.

AMC'S 15-CENT TICKET PROMOTION: AMC Theatres, the nation's largest movie theater chain, will reopen in many U.S. locations on Aug. 20 with retro ticket prices of 15 cents per movie. AMC Entertainment, which owns the chain, said Thursday that it expects to open the doors to more than 100 cinemas — or about a sixth of its nationwide locations — on Aug. 20 with throwback pricing for a day. AMC theaters have reopened in numerous international countries but have remained shuttered in the U.S. since March. The chain touted the reopening as "Movies in 2020 at 1920 Prices."

OIL DROPS WITH IEA OUTLOOK: Oil declined and settled at \$42.24 per barrel as investors assessed the International Energy Agency's reduced forecasts for global oil demand in part due to a slowdown in air travel. After closing at a five-month high on Wednesday, U.S. crude futures lost steam with the agency reducing its estimates for almost every quarter through to the end of next year. Air travel remained two-thirds lower than last year in July, normally a peak month because of holiday flying, it said in a monthly report.

DIGITS

4.5%

Mexico's prime interest rate, which the nation's central bank lowered by a half-point Thursday amid a sharp economic downturn and rising inflation due to the coronavirus pandemic.

U-T NEWS SERVICES

SAN DIEGO RENTS DOWN FOR FIRST TIME SINCE RECESSION

Prices are down about 0.3 percent, expected to drop more by December

BY PHILLIP MOLNAR

Rent in San Diego County is down for the first time since the Great Recession as the region is rocked by COVID-related job losses.

Average rent in San Diego County was about \$1,850 a month in the second quarter, a small reduction of 0.3 percent annually, said real estate tracker CoStar. It is notable because rent hasn't dropped in the county since the third quarter of 2010 and any talk of a reduction at the start of the year

was unthinkable.

Experts say the once-unstoppable rise in rents in San Diego County has been halted by large job losses, or income reductions, related to COVID-19 and a lack of people signing new leases in the region's most-recently opened luxury buildings.

Alan Nevin, real estate analyst at Xpera Group, said the actual rent price with special offers — sometimes called the "effective rent" — is probably a better way to look at what is happening. He said many of the luxury buildings are offering

one to two months of free rent. That way they don't have to lower rents and then be prevented from raising them substantially later under statewide rent control passed in 2019. CoStar said the effective rent was closer to \$1,830 a month in the second quarter.

"What they would rather do is have it free upfront so they can maintain their pro forma rents until things get better," Nevin said.

An example is the Shift building in East Village. Open in

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U.S. JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL BELOW 1 MILLION BUT REMAIN HIGH

BY CHRISTOPHER RUGABER

The number of Americans applying for unemployment dropped below 1 million last week for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak took hold in the U.S. five months ago, but layoffs are still running extraordinarily high.

The figures show that the crisis continues to throw people out of work just as the expiration of an extra \$600 a week in federal jobless benefits has deepened the hardship for many — and posed another threat to the U.S. economy.

Applications for jobless benefits declined to 963,000, the second straight drop, from 1.2 million the previous week, the government said Thursday. That signals layoffs are slow-

SEE JOBLESS • C4



JARROD VALLIERE U-T

LIFE, WORK AT STANDSTILL

Empty chairs and tables at Waterfront Park outside the San Diego County Administration Building signify live-event workers — organizers, stagehands, audio engineers, caterers, security guards and more — whose jobs have been at a standstill because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Empty Event Rally on Thursday was presented by the new San Diego Events Coalition.

DAYBREAK GAMES ACQUIRES COLD IRON STUDIOS

BY MIKE FREEMAN

Daybreak Games, the San Diego-based publisher of EverQuest and other multiplayer online video games, said this week that it has acquired Cold Iron Studios of San Jose for an undisclosed price.

Cold Iron, which is on its fourth owner in the past five years, is working to develop a set of computer and console games based on the well-known "Alien" universe movie and comic book franchise. The games will deliver "an action-packed, sci-fi shooter experience unlike any other game on the market," according to the studio. It did not provide a time frame for release of the games.

Run by Craig Zinkievich, Cold Iron employs more than 40 game developers. The studio was founded in 2015 by the creators of City of Heroes, Star Trek Online and Neverwinter.

"Daybreak and Cold Iron share the same passion and long history for delivering action-packed multiplayer games for audiences worldwide," said Zinkievich in a statement. "In combining our decades of experience developing and launching globally successful multiplayer titles, we're destined to make great games together."

A spokeswoman for Day-

SEE DAYBREAK • C4



DEVIN CASTANEDA

Jeune et Jolie owner John Resnick (left) with the Carlsbad restaurant's new executive chef, Eric Bost.

ACCLAIMED L.A. CHEF HIRED TO LEAD KITCHEN AT JEUNE ET JOLIE

Eric Bost's eatery Auburn, a victim of pandemic, earned accolades in 12-month run

BY PAM KRAGEN

In May, one of the fastest-rising young restaurants in Los Angeles, Auburn, announced its permanent closure due to the pandemic. But L.A.'s loss will soon be San Diego's gain.

Eric Bost, the chef and owner of Auburn, has been hired to lead the kitchen at one of San Diego County's most acclaimed young restaurants, Jeune et Jolie in Carlsbad. Bost replaces founding chef Andrew Bachelier, who stepped down in June because he wanted to find a job that allowed him more time at home with his growing family.

In the 12 months it was open on Melrose Avenue near Hollywood, Auburn

racked up a mountain of critical praise. It was named to GQ Magazine's Best New Restaurants in America 2020 list, and Eater LA named it to its Most Exciting New Restaurants list. It was also nominated for a 2020 James Beard Award in the category of restaurant design. During the pandemic, the tasting menu-only restaurant switched to a family meal-style menu, but Bost told Eater L.A. in April that he feared the high-end fine dining concept wouldn't succeed in a post-pandemic L.A. economy.

Jeune et Jolie, which opened in December 2018 at 2659 State St., has its own slate of honors. In November, it was named to Esquire Magazine's list of the 22 best new restaurants in America. And in December, it was named 2019 Restaurant of the Year by the San Diego Union-Tribune and Eater San Diego. Its 4-year-old sister restaurant in Carlsbad, Campfire, was also honored last year

SEE CHEF • C4

TIKTOK AND WORKERS PREPARE TO FIGHT TRUMP OVER BAN

BY MATT O'BRIEN

TikTok and its U.S. employees are planning to take President Donald Trump's administration to court over his sweeping order to ban the popular video app, according to a lawyer preparing one of the lawsuits.

The employees' legal challenge to Trump's executive order will be separate from a pending lawsuit from the company that owns the app, though both will argue that the order is unconstitutional, said Mike Godwin, an Internet policy lawyer representing the employees.

Trump last week ordered sweeping but vague bans on dealings with the Chinese owners of TikTok and messaging app WeChat, saying they are a threat to U.S. national security, foreign policy and the economy. The TikTok order would take effect in September, but it remains unclear what it will mean for the app's 100 million U.S. users, many of them teenagers or young adults who use it to post and watch short-form videos.

It's also unclear if it will make it illegal for TikTok to pay its roughly 1,500 workers in the U.S., which is why some of them came to Godwin for help, he said. The order would prohibit "any transaction by any person" with TikTok and its Chinese

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