



DOW +23.45 CLOSE 10,712.22	T-BONDS +0.04 CLOSE 4.57
S&P +3.04 CLOSE 1,266.86	NASDAQ +16.78 CLOSE 2,265.25

Business



Disney has co-financed and distributed Pixar's animated films, such as the blockbuster *Finding Nemo*, for the past 12 years, splitting the profits. That deal, however, expires in June.

Disney will buy Pixar

Company to pay \$7.4 billion in stocks for animation partner

By Gary Gentile
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES: The Walt Disney Co. said Tuesday it is buying longtime partner Pixar Animation Studios Inc. for \$7.4 billion in a deal that could restore Disney's clout in animation while vaulting Pixar Chief Executive Steve Jobs into a powerful role at the media conglomerate.

Ohio.com: Read movie critic George M. Thomas' thoughts on the buyout of the Movie Spotlight blog. Will Pixar's quirky genius be encouraged or smothered by the corporate oversight of the giant Mouse House?

Disney will buy the maker of the blockbuster films *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo* in an all-stock transaction that makes Jobs Disney's largest shareholder.

Jobs, who controls more than half of Pixar's stock and heads

Apple Computer Inc., will join Disney's board.

"With this transaction, we welcome and embrace Pixar's unique culture, which for two decades has fostered some of the most innovative and successful

films in history," Disney Chief Executive Robert Iger said.

Disney has co-financed and distributed Pixar's animated films for the past 12 years, splitting the profits.

But that deal expires in June, after Pixar delivers *Cars*.

Disney, the owner of theme parks, ABC and ESPN, has been talking with Pixar for months about a new relationship.

Please see **Disney, D2**

Every job is important Blimp is in the details

Big changes get attention, but small jobs make the new airship

By Jim Mackinnon
Beacon Journal business writer

When you build a big blimp, you need to sweat the small stuff.

The biggest, most obvious work at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.'s Wingfoot Lake hangar gets the most public notice - things like inflating the 192-foot-long envelope, attaching the gondola where the pilot and passengers ride and applying the glossy blue, silver and yellow paint.



ONE OF A SERIES
Getting the small stuff right

Ohio.com: Read previous articles, watch videos and see photos from the "Blimp Garage" on the **Newsroom Projects** page.

But there's lots of other critical work going on inside Blimp Garage to get Goodyear's latest airship ready to fly.

"There are no unimportant small jobs," said Ed Ogden, airship spokesman.

Those small jobs involve things like carefully taking masking tape off decals and nose-cone battens. Like touch-up painting. And sanding and finishing the pilot's wooden elevator wheel.

And then there's assembling the light-emitting diode, or LED, light sign on the blimp. That's small stuff made big.

Taken as a whole, the light sign takes up a majority of the left, or port, side of the blimp - and it is put together piece-by-small-piece by the Blimp Garage gang. Their work involves snapping into place 3,780 individual circuit boards onto the exterior of the envelope. Depending on where the boards are supposed to go - and there are three different designs used - each small rectangular board has either 12 blue, red and green LEDs or more than 30.

Tuesday afternoon, Josh Miller and Robert Peacock rode a Sizzor lift up inside the Wingfoot Lake hangar until they were at the blimp's mid-section.

Please see **Blimp, D2**



PAUL TOPLE/Akron Beacon Journal photos



Above, Scott Babbo (left) and Charles Shankle remove tape covering the Goodyear logo on the freshly painted blimp being constructed at the Wingfoot Lake hangar Thursday.

At left, Tim Hopkins refinishes one of the elevator wheels, which will be attached to the pilot's seat, Thursday.

Dominion says it will cut rates for natural gas

6 percent drop reflects unusually mild weather; average residential bill for February will be \$260

By Betty Lin-Fisher
Beacon Journal business writer

Dominion East Ohio is reducing its gas rates another 6 percent, reflecting the mild weather in much of the country.

On Tuesday, Dominion said the gas cost recovery rate charged to people who have not chosen another supplier would be \$12.50 per thousand cubic feet (mcf) starting Feb. 7.

That rate is 78 cents lower than December's adjusted rate of \$13.28/mcf, but still 37.6 percent or \$3.42/mcf higher than last February.

The average residential customers' bill for February will be \$260.12, up \$62.40 or 31.6 percent from last February, according to Dominion.

The warmer-than-usual weather also helped last month's rate. In late December, Dominion revised its January rate from \$14.88/mcf to \$13.28/mcf.

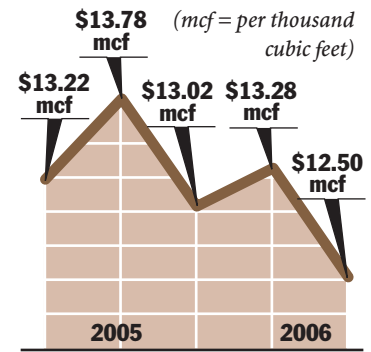
Dominion spokesman Neil Durbin said the lower GCR reflects decreases in national market gas prices after warmer weather, which has allowed for increased storage of natural gas.

But natural gas prices are still volatile and weather sensitive.

The change is only for people who buy gas directly from

Dominion GCR prices

Dominion East Ohio gas cost recovery rates and dates they are effective



SOURCE: Dominion East Ohio
Akron Beacon Journal

Ohio.com: For previous articles about natural gas suppliers and costs, go to the **Newsroom Projects** page.

the regulated utility, Dominion East Ohio.

People who have contracts with other suppliers under the Energy Choice program pay a different rate.

Forty-two percent of Dominion's 1.2 million customers pay the GCR. The other 58 percent have other contracts.

Please see **Gas, D2**

Ford changes may be too little

U.S. automakers face rough road in effort to restructure, grow

By Dee-Ann Durbin
Associated Press

DETROIT: "Change or die" is the mantra of Mark Fields, the Ford Motor Co. president who crafted the automaker's latest restructuring plan.

But with Asian competitors seemingly a step ahead in introducing models that consumers want and a powerful union that will fight to protect jobs and benefits, some question how much Ford and other U.S. automakers can really change.

Ford announced a plan Monday to cut as many as 30,000 jobs and close 14 plants



Mark Fields

in North America by 2012.

The plan echoed General Motors Corp.'s restructuring effort announced in November, which will cut 30,000 jobs and close 12 North American plants by 2008.

GM's shares fell after analysts said its plan didn't go far enough. Ford's shares rose, but several analysts were unconvinced the plan will make the company's North American division profitable by 2008, as promised.

Please see **Ford, D2**

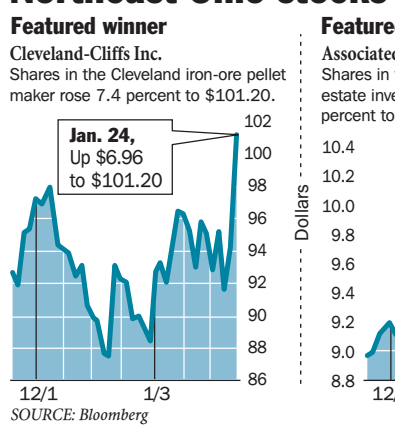
BOTTOMLINE

Business center at Urban League

The Akron Urban League, in partnership with the city of Akron, the Knight Foundation and the Minority Contractors Business Assistance Program, will open a Minority Business Development Center today at the Urban League office, 250 E. Market St.

The center will seek the "formation, development and preservation of competitive minority-owned firms" and will provide "development strategies, including loan packaging for capital needs, management assistance and business education and training." The opening will include information about the Akron school building projects.

Northeast Ohio stocks



30-year bonds to be issued for first time in 5 years

The U.S. Treasury will issue 30-year bonds for the first time in five years, and that may push mortgage rates higher. Bankrate.com financial analyst Greg McBride expects 4.5 percent interest on the bonds, about the same as a 10-year Treasury. If pension funds and insurance companies start snapping up the 30-year bond in place of 10-year T-notes, that could spell



trouble for mortgage rates. Banks often package their mortgages in investment pools and sell them as bonds called mortgage-backed securities. They trade like 10-year bonds because the underlying securities - the mortgages - are typically

paid off in no more than 10 years as people refinance their homes or move. Sales of the 30-year bonds may cause falling prices for the 10-year bonds. McBride says mortgage rates already face upward pressure because of worries about inflation and the strength of the dollar. Taken together, he thinks the time is right to lock in a long-term fixed rate.