

BUSINESS

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U.S. trade gap rises, but that's not all bad

Widening deficit shows commerce revival

BOB WILLIS
Bloomberg-News

The U.S. trade deficit widened in July and imports gained by a record 4.7 percent, signaling a revival of commerce as the global recession eased.

The gap between imports and exports grew 16 percent, the most in more than a decade, to \$32 billion from a revised \$27.5 billion in June that was larger than previously estimated, the Commerce Department said Thursday in Washington. In another sign the U.S. slump may be ending, a Labor Department report showed that jobless claims last week fell to the lowest level since July.

Imports outpaced a 2.2 percent gain in exports as businesses replenished stockpiles of goods including pharmaceuticals, toys and televisions in anticipation of rising consumer demand, while automakers boosted purchases of parts and machinery. The export gain reflected renewed demand for U.S.-made goods among trade partners such as Mexico and Japan.

"We've also seen a pretty solid pickup in export growth and that should continue as we see evidence the global economy is picking up steam," said Brian Bethune, chief financial economist at IHS Global Insight Inc. in Lexington, Mass. Referring to the government's auto trade-in program, he said, "Even before 'Cash for Clunkers' got into its sweet spot, automakers were already in the process of ramping up production."

The trade gap was projected to widen to \$27.3 billion, from an initially reported \$27 billion in June, according to the median forecast in a Bloomberg News survey of 74 economists. Deficit projections ranged from \$25 billion to \$30.3 billion.

Imports rose to \$159.6 billion after also increasing the prior month. The import figures reflected a rise in crude oil prices and demand for cars, goods such as computers and televisions and industrial supplies.

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New lawyers paid to delay start dates



Lori Welker, left, and Erin Simmons are taking a Legal Aid detour before starting at their law firm jobs.

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STILL EXPLORING

"I'm still exploring but I'm interested in education law. A lot of times it involves special education — parents working with school districts to find appropriate opportunities for their children."

Lori Welker, with Benesch

GIVING BACK

"This was an opportunity for me to give back to the community. If I can make any one person sort out, make better, their family relations, that to me is extremely valuable."

Erin Simmons, with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

Firms propose idea due to shaky economy

ALISON GRANT
Plain Dealer Reporter

Erin Simmons was on a fast upward trajectory.

The Kent native graduated with academic awards from Case Western Reserve University School of Law in the spring and landed a plum offer from the No. 1-grossing U.S. law firm, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom.

But instead of launching her career in September as a Skadden litigator in Manhattan, Simmons will

be handling family law cases at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

Simmons, 26, is one of hundreds of new U.S. lawyers affected by fallout from the wavering economy as firms postpone the start date of incoming associates. The law firms are paying "go-away" stipends to tide over school-debt-burdened hires until they begin work. And they are encouraging the postponed hires to take public interest jobs between law school graduation and their new start dates.

At Legal Aid, meanwhile, eco-

nomics hard times have triggered a flood of requests for unemployment- and foreclosure-related help. Yet the Cleveland society's budget, based on an interest-rate-sensitive fund, has shrunk by 20 percent since 2007.

No wonder the prospect of newly-minted lawyers available for pro bono work was an opportunity not to be missed.

Legal Aid in Cleveland decided to tap the pool of talent.

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The Ticker

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See our Moneywise stocks

	change	close
▲ DOW JONES INT	80.26	9,627.4
▲ NASDAQ	23.63	2,084.0
▲ NEW YORK STOCK	78.41	6,850.8
▲ STANDARD & PO	10.77	1,044.1

[-52-week low] d

No retreat; mark rally for fifth day

Stock market gains have in consecutive days even as a market is overdue for a yet Thursday followed the Lab report that jobless claims f expected. Momentum grew Treasury Secretary Timothy congressional panel that c were returning to the econ C3

NATION'S

Mortgage rates e

Rates for 30-year home loa the second-straight week, record lows reached over t average rate for a 30-year f 5.07 percent this week. D

More jobs cut: Monsanto biggest seed maker, says it deeper work force cuts tha announced, saying it will r about 8 percent to cut cost

Employer ordered to pa Court of Appeals has ruled must pay for weight-loss st employee to ensure the su operation for a back injury work. **Details, C4**

Claims against gift cert More than 1,100 claims se million in compensation h against Ohio gift certificat CertiFiChecks, which filed April. **Details, C2**

Showing off 1st Androi on Thursday gave a boost t announcing a new phone t Google's fledgling mobile I system. The phone is dubb scheduled to hit the marke with the Clig, Motorola w major brand cell phone ma release an Android-based States. **Details, C2**

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