US hiring at blistering pace, defying trends

WASHINGTON (AP) — American employers added a robust 272,000 jobs in December, suggesting that the U.S. economy is so far defying global weakness and growing at a solid pace.

The strong hiring underscores the resilience of the United States at a time of financial turmoil stemming from China's slowing economy and plummeting stock market. Most economists expect U.S. consumer spending to continue to offset overseas weakness, though many foresee only modest U.S. growth.

In its monthly jobs report Friday, the Labor Department said the unemployment rate was 5 percent in December, the same for the third straight month. Most Americans started finding work in December.

The government also said employers added a combined 50,000 more jobs in October and November than it had previously estimated. For the July-September quarter, the job-growth rate was 2.2 percent.

Inadequate

Police dept: Gunman said he shot Philadelphia cop in Islam’s name

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A man using a gun stolen from police said he was acting in the name of Islam when he ambushed an officer sitting at his marked cruiser at an intersection, firing shots at point-blank range, authorities said Friday.

Both the officer and suspect were injured during the barrage of gunfire.

Inadequate

Drug lord ‘El Chapo’ Guzman arrested

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto announced Friday that fugitive drug lord “El Chapo” Guzman was recaptured seven months after he escaped from a maximum security prison.

An official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to be quoted by name said Guzman was apprehended after a shootout with Mexican marines.

Hat Day Fundraiser

— On the Wednesday before winter break, students at the Athol-Royalston Middle School were involved in a hat day fundraiser to benefit the drama club. Shown are some students and staff members who participated in the activity.