

IN BRIEF

Fed leaves key rate unchanged at Yellen's final meeting

The Federal Reserve has left its benchmark interest rate unchanged but signaled that it expects to resume raising rates gradually to reflect a healthy job market and economy.

At Janet Yellen's final meeting as chair Wednesday, the Fed kept its key short-term rate in a still-low range of 1.25 percent to 1.5 percent. Yellen led a cautious approach to rate increases in four years as chair, and Jerome Powell, who will succeed her next week, has indicated he favors a similar approach.

The Fed raised its key rate three times in 2017, and most economists expect the Powell-led Fed to do so at least three additional times this year beginning in March. Powell has been a Yellen ally and among the Fed's consensus-builders in 5½ years on the central bank's board.

The unemployment rate is at a 17-year low of 4.1 percent, and the economy expanded at a solid 2.6 percent annual rate in the October-December quarter, helping lift growth for all of 2017 to a decent 2.3 percent.

Synchronized growth in major regions across the world has helped energize the U.S. economy. And the sweeping tax overhaul that Trump pushed through Congress last month is expected to further support U.S. growth.

The Fed's next scheduled policy meeting in March, when most economists foresee the next rate hike, is the first time that Powell is scheduled to hold one of the Fed chair's quarterly news conferences.

BRIEFCASE

Philip Tobias, a Boulder technical and marketing communicator (philip@tobias.com), is volunteering again in 2018 as the membership chairperson for the Boulder Writers Alliance which serves Boulder, Denver and Longmont communicators and employers.



Tobias

Boulder County



Lewis Geyer / S

Mitzi Babb, of Gunbarrel, bags her groceries at King Soopers in Longmont on Wednesday afternoon.

'Scan, bag, go'

King Soopers' new technology likely to launch in select local stores in March

By Lucas High
Staff writer

Boulder County King Soopers shoppers will soon have a new — and hopefully quicker and more convenient — way to buy groceries.

The company announced Wednesday plans to introduce Scan, Bag, Go technology this year in 34 Colorado stores with the first stores expected to come online in March.

While he could not confirm specifically which locations will get the technology in 2018, King Soopers and City Market

spokesman Adam Williamson said stores in Boulder and Longmont will be among the first 34 to roll out Scan, Bag, Go.

The technology allows customers to use a hand-held device to scan products as they shop. The total is calculated and shoppers pay at a self-checkout aisle.

Williamson said "eventually you will just be able to use your phone" to scan and pay for the items, making the shopping process even faster and convenient by complete bypassing checkout lines.

The Scan, Bag, Go technology will also give shoppers access to

digital coupons and sales advertisements.

"With every new product, service and technology integration, King Soopers (and) City Market is redefining the customer experience and re-imagining the store of the future," President Dennis Gibson said in a statement.

Becky Saltz, who was shopping Wednesday afternoon at Boulder's 30th Street King Soopers, said the new technology "might take some getting used to."

"But I'll try it if it actually makes (shopping) easier," she said.

Fellow shopper I said the Scan, Bag, "sounds very cool, might miss person with store staff if adopt the new tech

When the Scan, systems are intro pers will still be abl with a cashier or a the same way they

There are 142 locations in Colorado County, there a tions in Longmont der, one in Louisv Gunbarrel.

Centers for Disease Control

Director resigns over financial conflicts of interest

By Mike Stobbe
Associated Press

ment from the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the CDC. In ability to complete all of HHS Director" HHS spokesman