

July 7, 2010, 9:28 AM ET

Secondary Sources: Better Jobs, Putting Idle Cash to Work, Benefits Extension

A roundup of economic news from around the Web.

–**Better Jobs:** **Richard Florida** writes that the U.S. can make its service jobs more appealing. “The blue-collar jobs we pine for were not always good jobs: we made them good jobs. When my father came back from the second world war, his poorly paid factory job had been transformed. He was able to buy a house, put his two sons through college and participate fully in the American dream. Some of this was due to the power of unions. Most of it was because of the enormous improvements in productivity wrought by improved technologies and management techniques. The same thing can and must happen in the service sector. It is starting already. Companies such as Wegmans, Whole Foods, the Container Store, Best Buy and Zappos already account for a fifth of the top 100 best places to work in America. A typical hourly worker at the Container Store earns about \$30,000 a year, not nearly as much as a GM factory worker but about 50 per cent more than the average for hourly-wage retail workers. Retail outlet Trader Joe’s mandates that full-time workers earn at least their community’s median household income, while its “store captains” can make six-figure salaries. These companies recognise that better conditions lead to better customer experiences – and an improved bottom line.”