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Houston home sales fall for third straight month



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Wary of shutdown, Trump inches toward support for funding deal

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday edged toward backing a deal in Congress on government funding that would not meet his demand for \$5.7 billion for a wall on the Mexican border but would avert a partial government shutdown.

Trump, widely blamed for a five-week shutdown that ended in January, said he did not want to see federal agencies close again because of fighting over funds for the wall, one of his signature campaign promises in the 2016 election.

Senator Graham says Trump is inclined to sign funding deal

Senator Graham says Trump is inclined to sign funding deal

Trump says will look for 'land mines' in funding bill

House to vote on government funding bill late Thursday: lawmaker

The Republican president did not commit himself to backing the government funding agreement struck between Democratic and Republican lawmakers this week. But two sources and a Republican senator close to the White House said he would likely sign off on it.

"I don't want to see a shutdown. A shutdown would be a terrible thing. I think a point was made with the last shutdown," Trump told reporters. "People realized how bad the border is, how unsafe the border is, and I think a lot of good points were made."

Trump said he would hold off on a decision until he sees actual legislation about the issue. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said Trump was "inclined to take the deal and move on."

Graham told reporters that Trump would then look elsewhere to find more money to build a wall along the U.S. southern border and was "very inclined" to declare a national emergency to secure the funds.

With a Friday night deadline looming before a shutdown, there is little time for the White House and the political parties in Congress to agree on funding.

U.S. President Donald Trump listens next to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross during a Cabinet meeting at the White House in Washington, U.S., February 12, 2019. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

Funding is due to expire for the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department and several other federal agencies.

LESS MONEY

The congressional agreement reached on Monday falls far short of giving Trump all the money he wants to help build the wall. Instead, congressional sources say, it includes \$1.37 billion for new barriers - about the same as last year - along 55 miles (90 km) of the border.

Details of the legislation were still being written, but the full bill could be made public as early as Wednesday evening, according to lawmakers and congressional aides.

The accord must be passed by the House of Representatives, dominated by Democrats, and the Republican-controlled Senate, then signed by Trump by midnight on Friday to prevent a shutdown.

The measure's fate in the House was far from certain given the risk that some conservatives and liberals will oppose the compromise for different reasons.

U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting at the White House in Washington, U.S., February 12, 2019.

Like Trump, congressional Republicans have little appetite for a repeat of the 35-day partial shutdown in December and January - the longest in U.S. history -



Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL) speaks to the media at the U.S. Capitol in Washington

Johnson & Johnson supplier seeks bankruptcy over talc lawsuits

W(Reuters) - A key supplier of talc used in Johnson & Johnson's baby powder filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Wednesday in the wake of multibillion-dollar lawsuits alleging its products caused ovarian cancer and asbestos-related mesothelioma.

Imerys Talc America, the U.S. unit of French group Imerys SA, said it filed for bankruptcy because it lacks the financial clout to defend against nearly 15,000 lawsuits over its talc mineral product.

Imerys said that while it continued to believe the lawsuits are without merit, the prospect of rising settlement and defense costs over the next few years prompted the decision to file for bankruptcy.

They also cite a multibillion-dollar verdict against Johnson & Johnson and the ensuing media attention as factors that led to the Chapter 11 filing.

In July, a Missouri jury ordered J&J to pay a record \$4.69 billion to 22 women who said asbestos in talc caused ovarian cancer. The healthcare conglomerate has said it is appealing that verdict.

Imerys settled for an undisclosed amount prior to the trial.

Imerys and J&J have repeatedly denied the allegations, saying numerous studies and tests by regulators worldwide have shown their talc to be safe.



Bottles of Johnson's baby powder and Johnson's baby shampoo are displayed in a store in New York



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Houston home sales fall for third straight month

By Nancy Sarnoff

Home sales fell for the third straight month in January, as buyers closed on 362 fewer homes than they did last year at the same time, according to a monthly report from the Houston Association of Realtors. The median price of a single-family home was \$222,000, up 1.4 percent from last year, the smallest year-over-year increase since October. "January appears to have delivered a perfect economic storm of sorts, with some consumers focused on paying off holiday credit card bills, others concerned about the recent bump in mortgage rates and still others that may have felt the squeeze from the partial government shutdown," Shannon Cobb Evans, the association's chair, said in a statement.

The slower pace of deals comes on the heels of a record year for the local housing market when home sales shattered sales and price records. Sales volumes fell in all segments of the market, from entry-level to luxury, which saw its first decline in 12 months, according to the association, which tracks sales handled through the Multiple Listing Service primarily in Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery counties. Buyers closed on 4,100 single-family homes in January, an 8.1 percent drop over last year. Sales of townhomes and condominiums also fell in January, declining for the fifth consecutive month. Rental activity, however, rose dramatically for both single-family homes and townhomes and condominiums, spiking 16.5 and 16.4 percent, respectively -- volumes not seen since November 2017.




Nearly one-third of Americans have more credit card debt than savings


Despite a thriving economy with historic low unemployment, an increasing number of Americans – 74 million, or nearly one-third of the population – have more credit card debt than savings. The number of American households with more emergency savings than credit card debt, 44 percent, is the lowest since 2011 when an annual survey of financial health by Bankrate.com began. The survey found that 29 percent of Americans have more credit card debt than emergency savings, the highest in the history of the survey. Of those surveyed, 18 percent have neither credit card debt nor emergency savings, up sharply from 12 percent last year. The deterioration in American households'


emergency savings relative to credit card debt extends across both genders; all age, education, and income brackets; and political party affiliations. Forty-one percent of Americans are focused on paying down debt. But there was a notable decline in those focused on boosting emergency savings, from 53 percent to 43 percent. "Now is the time – with unemployment low and wages rising – to right-size the equation by paying off high cost credit card debt and adding to emergency savings. Sadly, it looks like we're collectively moving in the wrong direction," says Greg McBride, chief financial analyst for Bankrate.com.





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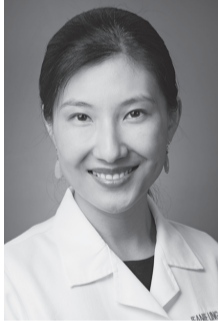
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Editor's Choice



Demonstrators attend a protest against the increase of public rates, in Buenos Aires



A demonstrator holds a sign during a protest against recent utility rate hikes in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires



Demonstrators burn paper bills during a protest against recent utility rate hikes in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires



A demonstrator burns paper bills during a protest against recent utility rate hikes in front of the National Congress in Buenos Aires



Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge attends 100 Women in Finance Gala Dinner in London



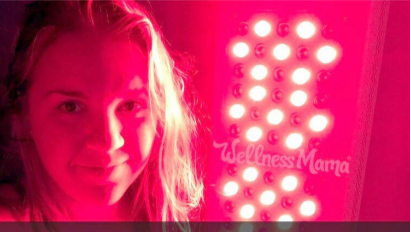
A Chevrolet Impala vehicle with a sign reading “Made in Canada”, is seen on display at the Canadian International AutoShow in Toronto



FILE PHOTO: Opening of the new Alphabet's Google Berlin office in Germany



A demonstrator waves an Argentinian flag during a protest against the increase of public rates, in Buenos Aires



THE BENEFITS OF RED LIGHT THERAPY (PHOTOBIOMODULATION)

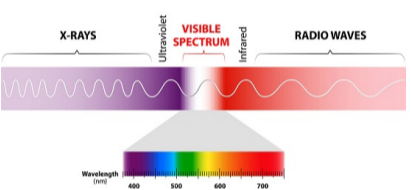
What is Red Therapy Light?
Red light therapy is also known as photobiomodulation (PBM), low level light therapy (LLLT), biostimulation, photonic stimulation or light box therapy. Light affects many aspects of our biology. Certain wavelengths of red light increase mitochondria function in the body. Studies have shown that different wavelengths affect the body in different ways. The most effective wavelengths of red light seem to be in the ranges of 630-670 and 810-880.

How Does Red Light Therapy Work?
These specific wavelengths of red light create a biochemical affect in our cells that serves to increase mitochondrial function. This improves ATP (adenosine triphosphate) production in the body.

Why is this important?
ATP is the source of energy for every cell in the body. Without it, we don't function at all. Without enough of it, we don't function well.

It's wavelengths range between 630-880nm and are used to treat the skin's surface. Red therapy light penetrates about 8-10 millimeters into the skin. Depending on which area of the body the red light is used, this can easily affect all skin layers, reaching into blood vessels, lymph pathways, nerves, and hair follicles.

VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE LIGHT



Red Therapy Light vs. Sauna Therapy
Many people wonder if RLT is similar to sauna therapy or the benefits of sunlight. All of these therapies are beneficial, but they are different and provide different results. I've been a big fan of sauna use for years, but I've also added red light therapy to my daily practice for different reasons. The purpose of a sauna is to raise the

Your Health: Red Light Therapy Gaining Popularity

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

temperature of the body. This can be accomplished through simple heat exposure by raising the temperature of the air, as is popular in Finland and other parts of Europe. It can also be accomplished through infrared exposure. This heats the body from the inside out in a sense and is said to provide more beneficial effects in less time and at lower heat. Both sauna methods increase heart rate, perspiration, heat shock proteins and improve the body in other ways. Unlike red light therapy, infrared light from a sauna is invisible, and penetrates much deeper into the body with wavelengths at 700-1200 nanometers. Red therapy light or photobiomodulation is not designed to increase perspiration or improve cardiovascular function. It impacts cells on the cellular level and increases mitochondrial function and ATP production. It essentially "feeds" your cells to increase energy. Both have their uses, depending on the desired results.



Infrared light sauna

The History of Red Therapy Light Use
Red light therapy has been around the block. In 1903 physician Niels Ryberg Finsen won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his successful treatment of smallpox and lupus with red light. Russia uses low level laser therapy in their standard medical care (and they have since the 1970s). The Russians also published hundreds of studies over the decades on the benefits of red therapy light. Unfortunately, very few of these studies have been translated into English. Red light therapy has largely been ignored by the US and western Europe until recently. However it's been used in a clinical setting since the 1980s in Japan, China,

Canada, Northern Ireland, Vietnam, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

The Benefits of Red Therapy Light
Even though the western world is behind the times with red therapy light, strong evidence supports its health benefits. It is FDA approved for chronic joint pain, slow to heal wounds, wrinkles, hair loss and acne. Many others have used it successfully for other issues, like psoriasis, improved circulation and better immune function.

Here's a partial list of the evidence based uses of red therapy light:

- It helps rejuvenate facial skin and smooths skin tone.
- Red light builds collagen in the skin to reduce wrinkles.
- It helps to repair sun damage.
- Red light activates the lymphatic system for potentially improved detoxification.
- Decreases inflammation in the skin.
- Helps fade scars and stretch marks.
- Improves hair growth to reverse balding.
- Stimulates slow healing wounds.
- Can prevent recurring cold sores, or herpes simplex.
- Helpful in the short term for carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Beneficial for skin to reduce eczema, rosacea and acne.

1. Better Circulation and Collagen Production
When the light penetrates through the epidermal and dermal skin layers, it increases circulation to help form new capillaries. It also increases collagen production and fibroblasts. Red therapy light improves collagen levels naturally by triggering the body to produce more of its own. Since collagen comprises about 70% of the protein in our skin, it's a big deal!

Increased collagen doesn't just give the skin a wrinkle free glow, but its ability to improve joint health makes it great for arthritis sufferers. It can be helpful for those with a variety of painful musculoskeletal issues. The increased

circulation and anti-inflammatory effects that red therapy light provides also help reduce pain and heal the body.

2. Wound Healing with Red Light Therapy
Fibroblasts in our skin synthesize collagen, maintain connective tissue and are integral to wound healing. Red therapy light stimulates fibroblasts to do their job, and increases circulation for faster wound repair time. People have also used this therapy for burns, amputation injuries, skin grafts and infected wounds. It's been successfully used for skin damage caused by cancer treatments, including those in the mouth and mucus membranes. In a 2014 study, researchers found that red light therapy significantly improved colitis symptoms in mice. The light therapy aided in their mucosal healing. Dentists have also successfully used red therapy lights to heal sores and abrasions in the mucus membranes of the mouth. It's also been found to prevent recurring cold sores that occur along the mouth.

3. A Remedy for Hair Loss

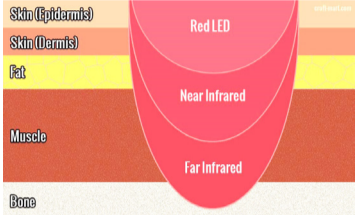


A 24-week study demonstrated that red therapy light significantly improved hair density and hair thickness without any serious reactions. Participants wore a helmet that emitted red therapy light to achieve this effect.

4. Recover Faster from Injury and Illness
Red light therapy increases circulation and ATP production throughout the body which may help speed healing during times of illness. It also stimulates lymph system activity and phagocytosis, the process of cells cleaning house. Although red therapy light helps to modulate the immune system, a 2006 study with mice found that over treatment actually resulted in immune suppression. Since not a

lot of research has been done in this area, it's unclear just how beneficial it is for the immune system.

5. Help for the Thyroid
There are several compelling studies that look at the benefits of red light and near infrared therapy for thyroid health. One randomized, placebo-controlled clinical study from 2013 looked at the benefits of light therapy on chronic autoimmune thyroiditis. This study showed an overall improvement in thyroid health from near infrared and light therapy. Many participants were able to reduce or eliminate their thyroid medication. In fact, a startling 47 percent of the participants no longer needed medication during the entire nine-month follow-up after the light therapy treatment. This is shocking as most people are told that they will need thyroid medication for the rest of their lives.



When looking at Hashimoto's (autoimmune thyroid problems) specifically, the study found a reduction in thyroid peroxidase (TPOAb) antibodies. These antibodies indicate the presence of an autoimmune thyroid condition.

Other studies have shown:

- a 2010 study from Russia found that red light therapy helped 38% of participants reduce thyroid medication dosage (17% stopped medication completely)
- A 2003 study on postsurgical thyroid patients found that red light therapy reduced the need for medication by up to 75%

6. A Promising Therapy for Psoriasis
A small scale study published in the journal of Photomedicine and Laser Surgery found benefits for psoriasis sufferers. Skin plaques improved by 60-100% when treated with both red therapy light and infrared light, like that used in a sauna. The infrared light helped to calm inflammation, while the shorter red wavelengths helped heal the skins surface.

7. Help for Acne, Rosacea and Eczema
The collagen and ATP stimulating benefits of red light therapy make it a promising solution for skin problems like acne, rosacea and eczema. Benefits include reduction of stretch marks and wrinkles as well as new hair growth. (Courtesy <https://wellnessmama.com>.)

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Billionaire Musk Releases All Tesla Patents To Help Save The Earth

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



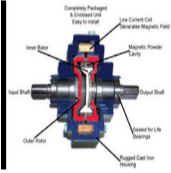
Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Shanghai’s Mayor Ying Yong attend the Tesla Shanghai Gigafactory groundbreaking ceremony in Shanghai, China Jan. 7, 2019. Aly Song, Reuters

SAN FRANCISCO - Elon Musk announced Thursday he had released all of the electric carmaker Tesla’s patents, as part of an effort to fight climate change.

In a blog post, the colorful billionaire founder of Tesla promised the company “will not initiate patent lawsuits against anyone who, in good faith, wants to use our technology.”

“Tesla Motors was created to accelerate the advent of sustainable transport,” Musk said. “If we clear a path to the creation of compelling electric vehicles, but then lay intellectual property landmines behind us to inhibit others, we are acting in a manner contrary to that goal.”

In fact Musk said he was now skeptical of patents which too often only served “to stifle progress” and helped enrich giant corporations and lawyers rather than inventors.



He said he had earlier felt compelled to file patents for Tesla to prevent big car companies from copying the technology and using the

huge marketing and sales apparatus to take over the market.

“We couldn’t have been more wrong. The unfortunate reality is the opposite,” he said, noting that electric or clean-fuel cars “at the major manufacturers are small to non-existent.”

But with car production continuing at 100 million a year “it is impossible for Tesla to build electric cars fast enough to address the carbon crisis,” Musk said.

Have other companies making electric cars and the world would benefit from rapid advances in technology.

“We believe that applying the open-source philosophy to our patents will strengthen rather than diminish Tesla’s position,” and ability to attract talented engineers, he said.

Shares of Tesla declined again Thursday after dropping Wednesday following mixed results for 2018. (Courtesy <https://news.abc-cbn.com>)

Related
Why Elon Musk reminded the world about Tesla’s patents being available for good use Overview

Elon Musk released Tesla’s patents four years ago for the world to speed up electric vehicle technology. Last week, he reiterated that mankind should be able to share knowledge and not hide it behind the walls of large corporations. There was a reason he

came out on social media about protecting the environment.



Tesla Founder and CEO Elon Musk. (Image: Flickr)

This past week, the polar vortex saw temperatures plummet across the northern hemisphere. Several parts of the US were reportedly colder than Antarctica. Eight people were killed as a result and flights across northern and western America were cancelled. It prompted Tesla Founder Elon Musk to tweet a reminder about the need to look hard at sustainable energy in a bid to save the planet.

Elon Musk ✓ @elonmusk

Our true competition is not the small trickle of non-Tesla electric cars being produced, but rather the enormous flood of gasoline cars pouring out of the world’s factories every day. All our patent are belong to you! <https://www.tesla.com/blog/all-our-patent-are-belong-to-you> ... pic.twitter.com/t99rioFeCI

3:07 PM - Jan 31, 2019

All of this has a back story. Musk warned everyone of the changes happening thanks to gasoline cars way back in 2014. Back then he only wanted to ensure that the world understands the value of sharing patents and why the world could be a better place if one opened up patents that were otherwise locked in corporate vaults for years.

Now here is why only Elon Musk can make the world think of how to make our planet a better place. Tesla finished 2018 with an 83 percent share of the U.S. battery-electric vehicle market, Musk told reporters this week. The last time this happened was when the Ford Model T was launched 100 years ago.

Elon Musk ✓ @elonmusk

Exciting to see all the new electric vehicles coming to market! We created Tesla to accelerate a sustainable future & it’s happening! <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/31/automakers-flood-market-with-electric-vehicles--potentially-creating-pile-up-of-epic-proportions.html> ...

34.8K 2:56 PM - Jan 31, 2019



Tesla’s new profit range up production – as competitors, food makers & electric. Tesla’s new profit range up production – as competitors, food makers & electric. Tesla’s new profit range up production – as competitors, food makers & electric.

Tesla now plans to increase production of the Model 3 and also plan the launch of three new product lines in 2019. However there are serious contenders. Automaker like Zotye and Acura are plugging into electric vehicles, with industry analysts expecting to see nearly a dozen new all-electric vehicles in U.S. showrooms by the end of 2019, with dozens more coming to market in 2020. Jaguar, Mercedes and Volkswagen are working on cars that can give Tesla a real run for their money.

But for Musk, market share is secondary. He wants the world to use his technology and build solutions that can save the planet. To know more **one must go back to the blog he put out in 2014**, where he said:

“Yesterday, there was a wall of Tesla patents in the lobby of our Palo Alto headquarters. That is no longer the case. They have been removed, in the spirit of the open source movement, for the advancement of electric vehicle technology.”

His blog post also said, “Tesla Motors was created to accelerate the advent of sustainable transport. If we clear a path to the creation of compelling electric vehicles, but then lay intellectual property landmines behind us to inhibit others, we are acting in a manner contrary to that goal. Tesla will not initiate patent lawsuits against anyone who, in good faith, wants to use our technology.”

In an age where technology is patented as soon as it is invented, Elon Musk’s philosophy seems formidable – and thought provoking.

He had said that when he started out with his first company, Zip2, he thought patents were a good thing and worked hard to obtain them. “And maybe they were good long ago, but too often these days they serve merely to stifle progress, entrench the positions of giant corporations, and enrich those in the legal profession, rather than the

actual inventors. After Zip2, when I realized that receiving a patent really just meant that you bought a lottery ticket to a lawsuit, I avoided them whenever possible,” he wrote. In fact, the early Tesla was all about patents as Musk went after them to protect himself from large corporations.

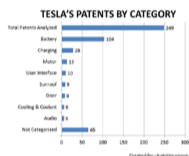
“At Tesla, we felt compelled to create patents out of concern that big car companies would copy our technology and then use their massive manufacturing, sales, and marketing power to overwhelm Tesla. We couldn’t have been more wrong. The unfortunate reality is the opposite; electric car programmes (or programmes for any vehicle that doesn’t burn hydrocarbons) at major manufacturers are small to non-existent, constituting an average of far less than 1 percent of their total vehicle sales,” he added on the blog.

Musk took a dig at conventional automakers for producing electric cars with limited range and volume. The electric vehicle technology and business is huge. Unfortunately, pointed out Musk, with annual new vehicle production at 100 million per year, “it is impossible for Tesla to build electric cars fast enough to address the carbon crisis”.

“We believe that Tesla, other companies making electric cars, and the world would all benefit from a common, rapidly-evolving technology platform,” Musk had written.



Clearly, to Musk, life is about making big changes around us. “Technology leadership is not defined by patents, which history has repeatedly shown to be small protection indeed against a determined competitor, but rather by the ability of a company to attract and motivate the world’s most talented engineers. We believe that applying the open-source philosophy to our patents will strengthen rather than diminish Tesla’s position in this regard,” he stated on his blog. The serial entrepreneur has set a precedent, but will others follow suit and change the way companies function? (Courtesy your-story.com)



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