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Mount St. Helens erupts, dusts towns in Oregon

United Press International VANCOUVER, Wash. — Mount St. Helens erupted Thursday, releasing an ash plume rising to about 23,000 feet which dusted communities in Oregon 45 miles away.

The eruption sent superheated rocks cascading down the side of its lava dome as the mountain rocked with earthquakes.

Ash was reported about 45 miles south and southeast of the volcano in areas east of Portland, Ore., U.S. Geological Survey spokesman Steve Brantley said.

Scientists who initially announced that lava was oozing to the surface of the 80-story-high dome were not able to see a new lava lobe when they entered the crater.

Instead of an "external" dome-building eruption, the mountain might be undergoing an "internal" eruption in which the lava dome swells from within, they theorized.

Earthquake activity beneath the mountain remains at very high levels, Brantley said.

"Presumably, that indicates we're still in a period of very

rapid internal dome growth," he said.

The National Weather Service said that about five hours after the eruption, a plume reported an ash cloud at an altitude between 21,000 and 23,000 feet drifting from Troutdale, Ore., southeast toward the volcano. Three hours after a report was received of the falling in the small town of Astoria, Ore.

"Any eruptions in the hours or so would send ash to the south and southeast of the mountain," the weather service said in a midday statement.

FDA blames copycats for cookie tampering

United Press International WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration Thursday blamed copycats who "want to do something crazy" for a rash of tampering with

Girl Scout cookies from Maine to California.

Federal and local officials said foreign objects — including pins, needles and shards of glass — have been discovered in the fund-raising staples in at least 16 states.

"What we have here is a me-too copycat situation," FDA spokesman Emil Corwin said. "They learn about the incidents in the media and they want to do something crazy. They want to hurt people."

"The number of incidents is 27, but no one has been injured seriously. The last few days it has become a real problem. Yesterday, we received an

alanche of calls."

The FBI joined the investigation after state and local authorities reported discoveries of foreign objects and pinholes in rectangular, double-stamped cookie boxes. No arrests have been announced.

The first tampering was reported in St. Louis about three weeks ago and since then similar events have occurred in Colorado, Virginia, Nebraska, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey, Minnesota, Maryland, Maine, Pennsylvania, New York, Georgia, California.

Deficit reaches a record high

United Press International WASHINGTON — The economy is growing at a slower rate, housing sales are still strong and the trade deficit hit a record \$10.1 billion in February, the government reported Thursday.

The three reports taken together should ease fears that the economy is overheating with rising inflation, officials said.

Although the economy has been growing at a strong 7.2 percent annual rate, Commerce Department economist Robert Ortner said, "This trade deficit figure takes some of the wind out of the sails."

But Ortner said that, contrary to normal economic patterns, the slowdown may not be accompanied by a decline in interest rates.

"I think the prospects are that interest rates are going to remain high," he said.

The reports showed these economic developments: • Housing sales remain strong, growing 7.8 percent in February. The average price of a new house increased \$2,100 to \$94,500 in February, the Commerce Department said.

• The composite index leading economic indicators rose 0.7 percent last month, compared with a 1 percent increase in January. It was the 18th consecutive month the overall index has increased, but the index rose, four fell and one was unchanged.

• The \$10.1 billion trade deficit in February was the second consecutive month the merchandise trade deficit set a new record. Commerce Department trade economist David Lund said there was a \$110 billion shortfall in this year, money lost by American firms and their employees.

While developing countries have had to cut their purchases of U.S. products, America has been buying more — \$27.3 billion in February, compared with only \$26.2 billion in January.

"The major cause of the year's increase in the trade deficit — somewhat more than — is due to the 50 percent in the real value of the dollar that has occurred since 1980," Martin Feldstein said.

Feldstein, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, told a congressional subcommittee that the main solution to reduce federal budget deficits which would hold down government borrowing and keep both lower interest rates and lower international value of the dollar.

The White House called leading indicators further proof of "a very impressive record of sustained growth."

"I think it's a fairly weak report," said economist Mark Evans, head of the Evans Economics forecast firm. "The important indicators went up, and the unimportant indicators went up."

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WEEKNIGHTS 5:00 7:30 10:00 SAT: 2:20 5:00 (SNEAK 7:30) 10:00

SUN: 2:20 5:00 7:30 10:00 Rachel Ward - Jeff Bridges **AGAINST ALL ODDS** (PG) (COLUMBIA PICTURES)

WEEKNIGHTS 5:10 7:15 9:30 SAT/SUN: 2:40 5:10 7:15 9:30 GENE HACKMAN **My Sister Sam** (PG) (MGM/UA)

WEEKNIGHTS 5:15 7:35 9:45 SAT/SUN: 2:30 5:15 7:35 9:45 SEAN PENN - ELIZABETH MACGOWEN **Racing with the Moon** (PG) (A PARAMOUNT PICTURE)

CINEMA 3 315 College North 846-6714

WEEKNIGHTS 5:15 7:35 9:45 SAT/SUN: 2:30 5:15 7:35 9:45 **Romancing the Stone** (PG)

WEEKNIGHTS 5:00 7:30 9:45 SAT/SUN: 2:55 5:30 7:50 10:00 **JAMES GARNER** A UNIVERSAL RELEASE (PG)

WEEKNIGHTS 5:30 7:50 10:00 SAT/SUN: 2:55 5:30 7:50 10:00 KEN WAHL - CHERYL LADD **PURPLE HEARTS** (PG)

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