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**Manufacturing index rises in August**

By Eileen Alt Powell  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**NEW YORK** — Manufacturing activity picked up strongly in August for a second straight month, suggesting the fragile industrial sector is in the midst of a turnaround despite a bleak job picture.

The Institute for Supply Management reported Tuesday that its manufacturing index rose to 54.7 last month from 51.8 in July. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while one below 50 indicates that manufacturing activity is slowing.

The index in August was at its highest level since last December and was stronger than analysts had been expecting.

"Though two months of growth do not establish a trend, there is strength in the various segments of this report that we have not seen for some time," Norbert J. Ore, who oversees the index for the ISM, said in a statement accompanying the report.

He noted that new orders and production have both had readings above 50 percent for four consecutive months, indicating that "the continuation of a second-half recovery appears on track."

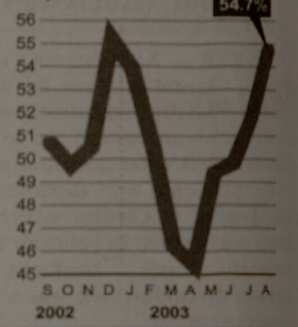
Still, employment continued to deteriorate.

The manufacturing sector has lost 2.7 million jobs since June 2000, and the Institute for Supply Management's index for employment fell to 45.9 in August from 46.1 in July.

"It's a disappointment that factory employment appears to have declined slightly faster in August than in July," said Patrick Fearon, an economist at A.G. Edwards & Sons Inc. in St. Louis. He blamed foreign competition in some industries and lack of strong capital spending in others.

**Purchasing**

Here is a look at the Purchasing Managers' Index, which tracks the overall business activity of more than 350 industrial companies.



SOURCE: Institute for Supply Mgmt. AP

**Drugs seized at border during holiday weekend**

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Inspectors seized more than 200 pounds of cocaine and more than 2,000 pounds of marijuana at three border crossing sites over the Labor Day weekend.

They also apprehended 27 wanted persons, identified two export violations, recovered a stolen vehicle and seized undeclared prescription medication and liquor.

The largest of the four cocaine seizures was Saturday, when 104.1 pounds in 42 packages was discovered in the floor of a

1999 GMC Denali at the Ysleta crossing. Perla Monica Torres, 29, and Myrna Araceli Grajeda, 30, both of El Paso, were arrested.

Also Saturday, Ysleta agents discovered 35.3 pounds of cocaine in 22 bundles in the dashboard of a 1999 Volkswagen Jetta and arrested the driver, Juan Luis Barrera, 27, of Juarez, Mexico.

Inspectors discovered 25 pounds of cocaine in 10 bundles in the quarter panels of a 2000 Chrysler Cirrus at the Paso Del Norte crossing on Friday and arrested Odille Cecilia Lujan Fernandez, 20, of

Chihuahua City, Mexico. At the same crossing on Saturday, inspectors discovered 35.8 pounds of cocaine in 15 bundles in the rocker panels of a 2000 Chevrolet Malibu and arrested Julio Cesar Rodriguez, 20, of El Paso.

The largest marijuana seizure occurred Friday at the Bridge of the Americas cargo lot. Inspectors detected an anomaly in the appearance of the sidewalls of a trailer during an X-ray scan and found 1,083 pounds of the drug in 953 bundles. No arrests were made, and inspectors are investigating.

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