

## **Initial jobless claims fall in U.S.**

WASHINGTON, March 14 (Xinhua) -- The number of Americans initially applying for unemployment aid continued to fall last week, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims for jobless benefits was 332,000 in the week ending March 9, down from the previous week's revised figure of 342,000.

Meanwhile, the four-week moving average, which helps smooth out week-to-week volatility, edged down to 346,750, the lowest since March 2008. Fewer than 375,000 claims generally indicates a sustained drop in the unemployment rate.

The advance figure for seasonally adjusted insured unemployment during the week ending March 2 stood at 3.024 million, a decrease of 89,000 from the prior week.

The decreasing claims for jobless benefits suggest a steady improvement in the labor market. But some economists say there may be more people applying for unemployment aid in the next few months due to the roughly 85 billion U.S. dollars of government spending cuts starting on March 1.

In February, the U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 7.7 percent with the private sector creating 246,000 jobs.