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VENTURA COUNTY STAR

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Report upbeat on Latino economy

Economic impact topped \$3 trillion in 2021

Tony Biasotti
Ventura County Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

The economic impact of Latinos in the United States has been growing at more than double the rate of the overall U.S. economy, according to the latest

Latino GDP report, released Wednesday by a team of researchers from California Lutheran University and UCLA.

Economists from CLU's Center for Economic Research and Forecasting have worked with researchers from UCLA on the report since 2019. Their work measures the economic contributions of Latinos in the U.S., an impact that totaled \$3.2 trillion in 2021, the last year for which data is available. It's the first time in the report's histo-

"The Latino economy is large, growing rapidly and very diverse. It's more diverse than the broader U.S. economy."

Matthew Fienuip
CLU CERF director

ry the figure has climbed above \$3 trillion. If Latinos in the U.S. were a nation, its economy would be the fifth largest in

the world, bigger than that of the United Kingdom, India or France.

And Latinos' economic contributions are growing fast. Between 2010 and 2021, Latino GDP grew by 3.5% per year, more than double the rate of the U.S. economy as a whole.

"The Latino economy is large, growing rapidly and very diverse," CLU CERF director Matthew Fienuip, one of the

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Eric German and his wife Erica German from Dairyville look at different varieties of watermelons at the National Heirloom Exposition at the Ventura County Fairgrounds on Tuesday. The expo runs through Thursday. JUAN CARLO/THE STAR

Cultivating a sense of history

National Heirloom Expo comes to Ventura County for 1st time

Isaiah Murtaugh
Ventura County Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

The 10th National Heirloom Exposition, a tribute to historic strains of crops, is holding its first-ever Ventura County edition as the event returns for its initial post-pandemic run.

The expo opened Tuesday at the Ventura County Fairgrounds and continues through Thursday.

Farmers, researchers and homesteaders joined the curious in browsing halls full of plants, produce and poultry on the opening day. In the expo's main hall, a dense cloud of melon fragrance rose from rows of tables lined with fruits and vegetables in every hue, size and shape.

The expo, which started in 2011 and was previously held at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa, celebrates heirloom crops: strains of fruits, vegetables and

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Heirloom poultry breeds are also on display as part of the expo.

ISAIAH MURTAUGH/THE STAR

VENTURA COUNTY

New COVID vaccines expected to arrive soon

Feds approve updated shots from 2 companies

Tom Kiskan
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USA TODAY NETWORK

As a COVID-19 wave continues, updated vaccines are expected at some Ventura County sites by Saturday.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday approved Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines that target newer variants. Almost immediately, California public health officials encouraged the shots for everyone 5 and older who have not received a COVID shot in at least two months. They also advocated the shots for children as young as 6 months.

CVS and Walgreens officials said people can immediately begin scheduling the vaccines on their websites with CVS saying all of their stores should have supplies by early next week. Rite Aid said it expects its scheduling website to be active as of Friday.

Others may wait a little longer for supplies. Ventura County Public Health clinics and many doctor's offices have been told by state officials to expect vaccine shipments sometime next week, said Rigoberto Vargas, county public health director.

State officials said the My Turn COVID scheduling website will be used for the new vaccines but the site did not appear to have been updated as of early Wednesday afternoon. They also encouraged people to contact their doctors or local pharmacies.

The vaccines target XBB.1.5, a variant that emerged in the spring, and also appear to offer protection against the even newer Pirola variant. The shots come on line as COVID transmission rises across the nation.

In Ventura County, an average 18% of people taking PCR tests came up positive over seven days, according to state data on Friday, compared to 5%

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Economy

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lead authors of the Latino GDP report, said during a presentation on the research at UCLA on Wednesday. “It’s more diverse than the broader U.S. economy.”

GDP stands for “gross domestic product” and represents the total value of all goods and services produced in a specific geographic region, or, in this case, by a specific group of people within a region. It’s the most common measure for the size of an economy, and GDP growth is the most common measure of the health of an economy, Fienup said.

“Increasing GDP, or economic growth, is highly correlated with things we care about deeply as a society,” he said. “It produces rising wages, higher standard of living and greater economic mobility.”

In many ways, Latinos have been holding up the U.S. economy, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020. Latinos showed 7.2% wage growth, adjusted for inflation, between 2019 and 2021, while the wages of non-Latinos shrank by 1.7%.

Latinos are more likely than other Americans to work or be seeking work; Latinos are responsible for 63% of the growth in the U.S. labor force since 2010, far more than their 19% share of the U.S. population, Fienup said.

Latinos are also, on average, younger than other Americans, and their rates of homeownership and college graduation have been growing faster than those of other Americans.

And Latinos are healthier than other Americans, though they suffered more



Matthew Fienup, executive director of the California Lutheran University Center for Economic Research and Forecasting, discusses his latest findings on Latinos’ contributions to the U.S. economy, at UCLA on Wednesday. TONY BIASOTTI/THE STAR

than most from COVID-19.

Before the pandemic, Latinos had significantly lower death rates than other Americans from all the leading causes of death, including cancer and heart disease. In 2019, Latinos’ life expectancy was three years greater than that of non-Latino whites, according to the Latino GDP report.

But in 2021, COVID-19 was the third-leading cause of death in the U.S., and the age-adjusted death rate from COVID was 62% higher for Latinos than for whites. Latinos still had a higher life expectancy than whites, but the gap shrank to half a year in 2020 and a little

more than a year in 2021.

“Latinos were working in front-line jobs, holding the economy up in the early days of the pandemic and catching COVID and taking it home to their families,” Fienup said.

At Wednesday’s launch event at UCLA, Fienup presented an overview of the data and then David Hayes-Bautista, a co-author of the report and the director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at the UCLA School of Medicine, gave a history lesson on Latinos in the U.S. economy.

Latinos have been active participants in the economy of what became

the United States for more than 500 years, Hayes-Bautista said. Throughout the 1800s, the U.S. expanded into the western half of the continent, and the Latino economy became part of the U.S. economy.

“This is not a unique phenomenon, and it’s not recent,” Hayes-Bautista said. “This is a very old tale. It’s not that immigrants came to the U.S. economy — the U.S. economy came to Latinos and Latinos made it stronger, and we’ve been doing it for centuries.”

In recent decades, the Latino population has shifted from immigrants to their U.S.-born children and grandchildren. The new generations are more educated and are building more wealth, powering the fast-growing Latino GDP.

Antonio Villaraigosa, who in 2005 became the first Latino mayor of Los Angeles in more than 130 years, is an example of that shift. Villaraigosa sat on a panel that discussed the Latino GDP report at UCLA on Wednesday, and he said the picture painted by the data is “counterintuitive to what most people think we are,” which is still an immigrant-dominated population.

Education is the key to upward mobility, Villaraigosa said, just as it was when he was growing up.

“All four of us went to college in the early 1970s, and we did it because my mother said to us at a very young age that education was something they couldn’t take from us,” he said.

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Vaccines

Continued from Page 1A

on July 1. Hospitalizations remain low, reflecting illnesses that doctors say bring less severe symptoms than earlier in the pandemic.

Vargas expects demand for the new vaccine will rise, partly because of the uptick in infections, but said he’s not

sure how much. State data shows only about 1 in 5 county residents are up-to-date on their vaccinations.

“As we enter the winter season, it is crucial that all individuals remain up to date with vaccinations when they’re eligible, including flu, COVID-19 and RSV,” said Dr. Tomás Aragón, state public health officer, in a news release.

Flu is beginning to emerge in some Ventura County emergency rooms. An adult vaccine has been approved for res-

piratory syncytial virus, known as RSV, and is available to people 60 and older with the recommendation they confer with a doctor.

All three shots can be delivered at once but could bring discomfort.

Some doctors recommend people get each vaccine separately.

People with insurance will continue to get the shots for free. Programs aimed at providing free vaccines for people who have no or little insurance, like the

federal Bridges Access Program, continue though state officials said supplies may be limited.

Vargas said the approval of the updated COVID vaccines mean sites have stopped administering older lines of vaccines and are waiting for the new shots to arrive.

Tom Kiskien covers health care and other news for the Ventura County Star. Reach him at tom.kiskien@vcstar.com or 805-437-0255.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Barrymore dropped as National Book Awards host

Drew Barrymore has been dropped as host of the upcoming National Book Awards ceremony, a day after her talk show taped its first episode since the Hollywood writers strike began.

“The National Book Awards is an evening dedicated to celebrating the power of literature, and the incomparable contributions of writers to our culture,” the National Book Foundation, which presents the award, said in a statement Tuesday. “In light of the announcement that ‘The Drew Barrymore Show’ will resume production, the National Book Foundation has rescinded Ms. Barrymore’s invitation to host the 74th National Book Awards Ceremony.”

The awards event, sometimes referred to as the Academy Awards of the publishing world, is scheduled for Nov. 15.

Barrymore’s resumption of her CBS talk show doesn’t inherently cause is-

ssues with the actors guild, which is also on strike, as daytime talk shows are governed by a different Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists contract that was renewed and ratified last year. But Barrymore’s show employs at least three writers who are members of the writers guild, which has been on strike since early May.

Barrymore drew criticism from members of both guilds for crossing the picket line, and from Colson Whitehead, Alexander Chee and other authors who questioned whether she should remain as host of the National Book Awards.

Ill. court hears arguments on Smollett request to toss convictions

Jussie Smollett’s lawyers told an Illinois appellate court Tuesday it should toss the former “Empire” actor’s convictions for staging a racist, homophobic attack against himself in 2019 and then lying about it to Chicago police, arguing that anger over the case led to properly dismissed charges being improperly restored.

Smollett, foregoing his usual three-piece suits in favor of a casual beige jacket and blue jeans, slipped into court for the hourlong oral arguments Tuesday and sat on spectator benches. He seemed to listen intently, leaning forward to follow the debate before the three-judge panel.

Smollett, 41, didn’t speak to reporters after the hearing.

“Public outrage against the defendant cannot overrule the rule of law,” one of his lawyers, Nenyé Uche, told the panel — referring to how public perception of Smollett turned after police said he created a crime and wasn’t a victim of one.

If the appeal before the Chicago-based First District Appellate Court fails, Smollett will have to finish a 150-day stint in jail that his trial judge ordered during his 2022 sentencing. Smollett spent just six days in jail before his release pending the outcome of the appeal. A ruling is expected to take several weeks.



Barrymore



Smollett

Parton ‘learned a lot about’ herself in rock album

Dolly Parton, the country music legend, had a few moments of trepidation when she decided to become a full-blown rock star — for one album, at least.

“I learned a lot about myself, and I worked hard at it. I would hear all the stuff and I’d wonder if I could hit that note,” Parton told Knox News.

“I thought, well, I’m just going to go for it. If it turns out great, great. And if it don’t, I’ll say ‘Erase that right now!’” Parton said with a laugh. “But I squalled at it. I mean, I hit it. I got in there.”

Parton’s first rock and roll album, appropriately titled “Rockstar,” comes out Nov. 17.

Parton said she was hesitant to try a different musical style because she has such a recognizable tone, but rose to the occasion. “I really was proud of myself,” Parton said.

Parton already has released four singles from the album. “World on Fire,” a song she wrote, earned the country artist her first appearance on a rock-themed Billboard chart. It topped the rock digital song sales chart.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, Sept. 14, the 257th day of 2023. There are 108 days left in the year. On this date in:

1814: Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the poem “Defence of Fort McHenry” (later “The Star-Spangled Banner”) after witnessing the American flag flying over the Maryland fort following a night of British naval bombardment during the War of 1812.

1847: During the Mexican-American War, U.S. forces under Gen. Winfield Scott took control of Mexico City.

1861: The first naval engagement of the

Civil War took place as the USS Colorado attacked and sank the Confederate private schooner Judah off Pensacola, Florida.

1867: The first volume of “Das Kapital” by Karl Marx was published in Hamburg, Germany.

1901: President William McKinley died in Buffalo, New York, of gunshot wounds inflicted by an assassin; Vice President Theodore Roosevelt succeeded him.

1927: Modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan died in Nice, France, when her

scarf became entangled in a wheel of the sports car she was riding in.

1982: Princess Grace of Monaco, formerly film star Grace Kelly, died at age 52 of injuries from a car crash the day before; Lebanon’s president-elect, Bashir Gemayel, was killed by a bomb.

1991: The government of South Africa, the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party signed a national peace pact.

2009: Death claimed “Dirty Dancing” star Patrick Swayze at 57.

CORRECTION

A story on page 1A in Wednesday’s edition contained an error. The time death was declared for most victims of the mass shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill was 12:20 a.m. on Nov. 8, 2018, the day after the shooting.



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