



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

WHILE Black Friday foot traffic is expected to stay flat, online spending could rise up to 15%. Above, Costa Mesa's South Coast Plaza.

Black Friday fans kick off holiday season: 'I like hands-on shopping'

Caution about high prices competes with optimism about the economy

BY CAROLINE PETROW-COHEN AND REBECCA ELLIS

Bustling crowds and early-morning lines were back as this year's Black Friday weekend kicked off — a hopeful sign for retailers as they head into the crucial holiday shopping season with consumers still grappling with inflation and economic uncertainty.

Shoppers plan to spend an average of \$650 during the four-day consumer sprint from Black Friday through Cyber Monday, according to a Deloitte survey, up 15% from last year. Eight out of 10 people said they planned to do some sort of

shopping during that stretch, when retailers try to jump-start holiday sales with deals, the survey found.

The National Retail Federation also made encouraging projections, saying it expects as much as \$989 billion in sales during the holiday shopping season, which would mark a 3.5% jump over last year's total.

Although that would be a slower pace of growth compared with holiday shopping in previous years, NRF Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz said, "We remain optimistic about the pace of economic activity and growth projected in the second half of the year."

[See Shopping, A8]



WILLIAM LIANG For The Times

SHOPPERS REST at the Citadel Outlets in City of Commerce on Friday. Millennials could spend the most this year, a survey says.

BIRD FLU WORRIES HALT RAW DAIRY

California suspends product distribution by raw milk producer Raw Farm after test results for the virus.

BY SUSANNE RUST

State agriculture officials on Thursday banned Fresno-based Raw Farm from distributing its raw dairy products to retailers amid ongoing concerns about possible bird flu infections among its cattle.

However, with the exception of two limited recalls announced in the last few days, products from the farm that are already on store shelves can remain available for sale.

The ban on distribution was issued as a clearer picture emerged regarding whether H5N1, the virus that causes bird flu, had infected cows at Raw Farm. After several days of contradictory test results, in which county public health departments found positive samples in bottled raw milk on store shelves and state agriculture officials did not detect the virus in bulk milk tests, Raw Farm owner Mark McAfee said a new round of tests conducted at the farm Wednesday turned up positive.

[See Raw milk, A10]

Business as usual despite H5N1

Virus has hit 400 California dairy farms, but few operations have adjusted.

BY SUSANNE RUST AND MELISSA GOMEZ

TIPTON, Calif. — It was a late fall morning and hundreds of cows — black and white splattered Holsteins and cappuccino-colored Jerseys — milled about a San Joaquin Valley dairy farm in the largest milk-producing state in the nation.

Nearby, workers herded some of the animals onto a rotating platform within the farm's milking parlor and quickly attached pumping equipment. The machines buzzed and whirled as the cows were carried in a lazy arc to the parlor's exit, where they were detached from milk hoses and sent on their way.

The scene seemed utterly unremarkable — except for the fact that five days earlier, the H5N1 bird flu virus that has ravaged California's dairy herds for the last three months had been confirmed on the farm. Although dozens of cows were sick, and their owner expected that number to climb, none of the farm's workers wore personal protective equipment and vehicles from off site were let in and out with nary a hint of concern.

The farm was just one of

[See Dairy, A10]



BRIAN VANDER BRUG Los Angeles Times

JIM McDONNELL, seated beside Mayor Karen Bass, left, is sworn in as chief of the Los Angeles Police Department after a search that was far from transparent.

Inside the LAPD chief search: Secretive meetings, leaked names

BY LIBOR JANY

Some candidates for Los Angeles police chief campaigned openly for the job, enlisting influential friends to put in a good word with the mayor.

Others tried to avoid the spotlight, including one re-

ported contender who denied even applying when asked about it by her hometown newspaper.

And then there was former LAPD Assistant Chief Alfred "Al" Labrada, who interviewed despite facing termination over accusations he tracked a former romantic partner with an

AirTag.

Mayor Karen Bass ended up choosing former L.A. County Sheriff Jim McDonnell to lead the LAPD, but the lead-up to her decision has largely remained cloaked in secrecy.

Through interviews with the candidates, LAPD re-

[See LAPD, A6]

Nominees straight from Project 2025

Trump disavowed the right-wing plan during campaign. Now he's hiring those behind it.

BY KEVIN RECTOR

Russell Vought, one of the chief architects of Project 2025 — a conservative blueprint for the next presidency — is no fan of the federal government that Presi-

dent-elect Donald Trump will soon lead.

He believes "woke" civil servants and "so-called expert authorities" deep within federal agencies wield illegitimate power to block conservative White House directives, and wants Trump to "bend or break" that bureaucracy to his will, he wrote in the second chapter of the Project 2025 playbook.

Vought is a vocal proponent of a plan known as

[See Trump, A6]

A rivalry on ice renewed

There is not much love lost between the Kings and Ducks, as was shown again Friday. **SPORTS, B12**

Notre Dame returns, revived

Five years after devastating fire, famed cathedral unveils a new interior. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

Weather

Partly sunny, warm. L.A. Basin: 80/56. **B8**

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Trump is asked for Olympics help

L.A. officials roll out the superlatives in seeking \$3.2 billion for transit projects. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

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