

Inflation

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pickup in core inflation. Auto insurance rates increased 1.2% and are up 16.3% the past year. Car repair costs rose 1%. Medical care services rose 0.7%. And airfares increased 3.2% following a 3.9% rise the previous month. On the other

hand, hotel rates dipped 1.9%.

Meanwhile, some goods prices that had been softening rose last month. Used car prices increased 0.3%; apparel, 1.1%; and furniture, 1.7%.

The latest pullback likely should still keep the Federal Reserve on track to lower interest rates by a measured one-quarter percentage point next month after its half-point reduction in September juiced the stock market.

Fed officials signaled they'll likely lower the rate by a quarter-point at each of their final two meetings this year as long as inflation continues to soften. That would reduce the rate from about 4.8% to about 4.3%.

With inflation seemingly headed to the Fed's 2% target, it likely would take an unusually weak or strong labor market to alter that blueprint, Bank of America wrote in a note to clients. U.S.

employers unexpectedly added a booming 254,000 jobs in September, calming fears of substantially weakening employment growth and possible recession.

Thursday's slightly hotter-than-expected inflation report likely still keeps the Fed on course to reduce rates by a quarter-point next month, some economists said, but it virtually rules out another half-point cut.

Milton

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Jane Castor said during an early morning news conference.

Reported tornadoes tore through parts of southwest Florida on Wednesday, including in Collier County and Lee County, causing extensive damage across Fort Myers and Cape Coral, local authorities said.

In downtown Tampa early Thursday, fierce winds downed traffic lights, ripped signs out of the ground and sent construction barricades scudding across the wet pavement. Milton's winds also shredded plywood meant to keep the storm out, and a portion of a downtown building's brick facade collapsed, partially blocking a road.

The high speed winds blowing off Hurricane Milton and whipping into tornadoes were keeping first responders off the roads and unable to attempt any rescues when the storm hit.

Florida authorities had been warning that although people can call 911 for help over the phone, they would effectively be on their own until Milton passed over. The warning came after 911 centers received a number of calls at the height of Hurricane Helene that authorities could not answer.

"None of us want to sit on our thumbs not being able to do what we want to do," said Nick Pachota, a veteran first responder and mayor of Venice, Florida. "But unfortunately if one of us gets hurt there's no one to rescue the rescuer."

Winds damage roof of Tropicana Field

Milton's race across the state left Melbourne Orlando International Airport with a 30-by-40-foot hole in the roof. A large part of the airport's ceiling came down about 2 a.m., according to Greg Donovan, executive director of the airport about an hour east of Orlando.

The airport was closed at the time and no injuries were reported. Donovan said he was mobilizing crews to patch the roof and limit water damage.

Officials reported late Wednesday that a crane collapsed near a building construction site in downtown St. Petersburg. According to the Tampa Bay Times, the crane left a gaping hole in an office building that houses several businesses, including the newspaper. No injuries were immediately reported.

Officials also confirmed that destructive winds damaged the roof at Tropicana Field, home of the Tampa Bay Rays. The ballpark was repurposed as a base camp for thousands of emergency responders as Florida braced for Milton. Footage from local television stations and photos shared on social media showed part of the stadium's roof torn off amid high winds.

Milton's powerful assault comes two weeks after Hurricane Helene slammed into the Florida coast on its way to devastate



Rescuers evacuate residents of an apartment complex in Clearwater, Fla., that was flooded during Hurricane Milton.

BRYAN R. SMITH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



The roof of Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Fla., home of the Tampa Bay Rays, was torn open as Hurricane Milton passed over the region. The ballpark was repurposed as a base camp for thousands of emergency responders as the state braced for the hurricane. BRYAN R. SMITH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ating communities across seven states.

Milton made landfall at about 8:30 p.m. EDT Wednesday on the state's western coast, a Category 3 hurricane with 120 mph sustained winds amid a flurry of tornadoes it spawned. The eye of the storm made landfall in Siesta Key, a barrier island off Sarasota about

50 miles south of Tampa.

The system was exiting the state early Thursday near Cape Canaveral, but the Space Coast was still being lashed by strong, gusty winds and heavy rainfall, the National Hurricane Center said.

A flash flood emergency was in effect for Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater, the hurricane center said, after parts of the area were blasted with more than 16 inches of rain. Additional rainfall amounts of 2 to 4 inches are expected across portions of the east-central to northeast Florida coast through Thursday morning, the hurricane center said in its morning update.

"This rainfall will continue to bring the risk of considerable flash and urban flooding, along with moderate to major river flooding," the updated warned.

St. Pete Beach resident not allowed to return home yet

David Green, who sheltered at a loved one's home in Valrico, Florida, just east of Tampa, said Hurricane Milton's winds were some of the worst he's experienced. Green, 62, - whose house in St. Pete Beach had to be completely emp-

tied after it was flooded by Helene - took to the interior hallways and closets as Milton bore down. He, his family and several dogs huddled as they listened to what sounded like branches crash on the roof.

"Streets are flooded here. Lots of trees down," he texted to USA TODAY. "Lots of vinyl and wood fences down in the neighborhood."

Eager to see whether there was any damage at his home, Green hopes he will soon be able to drive into St. Pete Beach. The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office announced early Thursday that all roads into the county, which encompasses St. Pete Beach and the city of St. Petersburg, will be "closed until further notice due to hazardous conditions." Rescue efforts were underway in the county, the sheriff's office said in social media posts Thursday.

'It wasn't too bad': Lt. Dan survives storm on 22-foot sailboat

Meanwhile, Joe Malinowski, who became known as "Lt. Dan" for riding out Milton on his 22-foot sailboat, said he had no problems during the storm, raising his arm in triumph as the sun rose over Tampa Bay on Thursday morning.

Malinowski, 54, had been live-streaming his adventures aboard the Seashell for several days, catching media attention for his plan to stay moored in the harbor as Milton passed.

"The hand of God was over Tampa," Malinowski declared Friday morning. "It wasn't too bad."

Thursday morning, a growing stream of Tampa residents made their way to Bayshore Boulevard to check on Malinowski, whose "Lt. Dan" nickname refers to a "Forrest Gump" movie character. Malinowski is missing his lower left leg.

"You made it! I'm so glad you're safe," Tampa resident Monet Rahall, 28, called down to Malinowski.

Rahall said she had to come check on Malinowski for herself, after watching his videos while she rode out the storm at her nearby home.

"He's an icon," she said. "I saw him on the internet and wanted to see him for myself."

Contributing: Eric Lagatta, Michael Loria and Christopher Cann, USA TODAY; Jeffrey Meesey and Jennifer Sangalang, Florida Today; Kate Cimini, Fort Myers News-Press; Reuters



A woman walks along a flooded street in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton in Osprey, Fla. The hurricane made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane in the Siesta Key area. SEAN RAYFORD/GETTY IMAGES

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