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Shutdown costs pegged at \$3 billion as government reopens

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. economy was expected to lose \$3 billion from the partial federal government shutdown over President Donald Trump's demand for border wall funding, congressional researchers said on Monday as 800,000 federal employees returned to work after a 35-day unpaid furlough.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) said the cost of the shutdown will make the U.S. economy 0.02 percent smaller than expected in 2019. More significant effects will be felt by individual businesses and workers, particularly those who went without pay.

Overall, the U.S. economy lost about \$11 billion during the five-week period, CBO said. However, CBO expects \$8 billion to be recovered as the government reopens and employees receive back pay.

The longest shutdown in U.S. history ended on Friday when Trump and Congress agreed to temporary government funding - without money for his wall - as the effects of the shutdown intensified across the country. Republican Trump had demanded that legislation to fund the government contain \$5.7 billion for his long-promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. He says it is necessary to stop illegal immigration, human trafficking and drug smuggling, while Democrats call it costly, inefficient and immoral. A committee of lawmakers from both major parties hold their first open meeting on Wednesday as they try to negotiate a compromise on border security before the Feb. 15 deadline.

The CBO estimated the shutdown reduced gross domestic product in the last quarter of 2018 by \$3 billion.

It said that in the first quarter of 2019, the level of real GDP is estimated to be \$8 billion lower than it would have been, citing "an effect reflecting both the five-week partial shutdown and the resumption in economic activity once funding resumed."

Trump said he would be willing to shut down the government again if lawmakers do not reach a deal he finds acceptable on border security. On Sunday, he expressed skepticism such a deal could be made, putting the odds at 50-50.

Trump has also said he might declare a national emergency to get money for the border wall. Democrats would likely challenge that in court. The CBO report serves as a stark warning to Trump against another shutdown, Democratic lawmakers said.

"Families across the nation are still trying to recover from a month of missing paychecks and overdue bills, but the President is already threatening a second shutdown if he doesn't get his way," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Most employees should be paid by Thursday for back pay, which one study estimated at \$6 billion for all those furloughed. Contractors and businesses that relied on federal workers' business, however, face huge losses, although some lawmakers are pushing legislation to pay contractors back as well. Federal workers poured off of commuter buses and subway escalators on a block of downtown Washington on Monday. Federal Communications Commission chairman Ajit Pai greeted employees in the lobby, while the Securities and Exchange Commission offered doughnuts, fruit and coffee. "I'm ready to go. I'm rested and I'm ready. I'm energized," Gary Hardy, a manager in the Employee Assistance Program at the Department of Homeland Security.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration was reviewing five weeks of auto safety recalls that had been submitted by automakers, but has not yet begun posting them publicly. The Federal Aviation Administration said it would assess and prioritize immediate post-shutdown needs, a process which requires consensus among member states. As a result, the court is running out of judges, and will be unable to issue binding rulings in disputes.

While the United States was among the signatory countries of the e-commerce agreement, it did not participate in a separate informal WTO gathering chaired by Switzerland.

U.S., China 'miles and miles' from trade deal - Ross

Azevedo said Washington's absence was "totally and solely driven by domestic considerations" and unrelated to the country's suspicions over the multilateral trading system.



Commuters exit Federal Triangle Metro station after U.S. government reopened following 35-day shutdown in Washington

U.S. to announce criminal charges related to China's Huawei:

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Department of Justice is set to announce criminal charges related to Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei Technologies Co Ltd on Monday, four sources told Reuters.

The U.S. government has been expected to announce charges against Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer, as part of an effort to extradite her from Canada, where she was arrested in December at the request of the United States.

U.S. authorities have accused Meng of misleading a global bank about Huawei's links to a company that the United States claims operated as an unofficial subsidiary to conduct business in Iran in violation of sanctions against Tehran, Canadian court documents. There have also been reports that the Justice Department was nearing an indictment related to allegations that Huawei stole robotic technology from carrier T-Mobile US Inc to test smartphones' durability.

Huawei is the world's biggest telecommunications equipment maker.



A staff member demonstrates a Huawei mobile payment system during a product presentation in Beijing

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County Judge Lina Hidalgo questions Astrodome redevelopment costs

By Nancy Sarnoff

As work continues on the initial stages of preparing the Astrodome for its new life as a parking and events venue, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo raised questions last week about the costs associated with redeveloping the former sports stadium.

Harris County's new judge, who recently toured the property with officials from NRG Park, said she learned that the \$105 million the county allocated to the redevelopment project did not include air conditioning.

"I'm looking to make sure the current plan is fiscally responsible and that it will get us to a point where the Astrodome is self-sustaining," she said in an interview on Houston Public Media's "Houston Matters."

Hidalgo declined to comment further, but current and former county officials said the renovation costs were never meant to include traditional air conditioning. Rather, the climate inside would be maintained by a mechanical forced-air ventilation and convection-based system designed to keep the inside of the building more temperate when it is hot or cold outside.

PRIOR COVERAGE: \$105 million isn't enough for AC? "The thought process was that further phases would bring in air conditioning," said County Engineer John Blount, who is managing the project.

Early last year, Harris County Commissioners Court voted unanimously to move forward with the \$105 million project, which includes raising the stadium's subterranean first floor to ground level and creating 1,400 parking spaces underneath.

About a third of the cost would come from the county's property tax-supported general fund. The remainder would be funded by hotel occupancy taxes and parking revenues.

Work to prepare the Dome for redevelopment began in October with asbestos removal, a process that has taken several months.

Future alterations need to be approved by the Texas Historical Commission, which in 2016 designated the Dome a state antiquities landmark, giving it special protections against demolition and requiring that the commission sign off on the building's renovations.

Some of the early construction work has been approved, Blount said, but plans to submit an application for the next set of changes has been delayed until April in order to get the new administration up to speed.

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The stadium, once was home to the Oilers and Astros, has not housed a professional sports team since the Astros moved to Minute Maid Park in 2000. NRG Stadium opened in the Dome complex two years later to serve as the home of the NFL's Texans. The Houston fire marshal's office declared the massive building unfit for occupancy in 2009.

The idea behind the Astrodome redevelopment project was to help provide a source of revenue by renting the covered space for music festivals, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and other events.

The rental income would help pay for maintenance and upgrades to the other buildings in NRG Park, including NRG Stadium.

For Ed Emmett, Hidalgo's predecessor, the Astrodome project was never about nostalgia, but to keep the integrity of the NRG complex intact. The county has a contract with the rodeo and the Texans to maintain NRG Stadium in first-class condition.

"Those tenants are going to start coming to the county saying we need this or that upgrade. There's no revenue source to provide those upgrades without the Dome," Emmet said.

As far as the air conditioning, he said the idea was to make the space usable, "but not necessarily at 72 degrees."

"My purpose from day one was to create nine acres of indoor space protected from the weather, where it would be preferable than being outside," Emmett said.



"Reliant Park and Harris County officials on Thursday announced the launch of a campaign to garner voter support for a plan to redevelop the Astrodome, with Harris County Judge Ed Emmett and Precinct 1 Commissioner El Franco Lee each pledging \$5,000 to the effort. A referendum to fund the project will appear on the ballot this November. If approved, the county would issue up to \$217 million in bonds to turn the now-vacant stadium into "The New Dome Experience," an energy-efficient event center flanked by an "inviting" outdoor green space." - September 13, 2013

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Editor's Choice



Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaidó speaks during a rally with members of the Venezuela's National Assembly regarding an amnesty law project for members of the military, in Caracas



French police apprehend a protester during a demonstration of the "yellow vests" movement in Nantes



ISU European Figure Skating Championships - Minsk-Arena Multifunctional Complex, Minsk, Belarus - January 26, 2019 France's Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron during the Ice Dance REUTERS/Vasily Fedosenko



Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaidó speaks to the media during a rally with members of the Venezuela's National Assembly regarding an amnesty law project for members of the military, in Caracas



Opposition supporters attend a rally with members of the Venezuela's National Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela



A youth breaks a window of an insurance agency during a demonstration of the "yellow vests" movement in Nantes



People hold signs during a protest by anti-Brexit campaigners, Borders Against Brexit in Carrickcarnan, Ireland, January 26, 2019. REUTERS/Clodagh Kilcoyne



Supporters of Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaidó attend a rally with members of the Venezuela's National Assembly regarding an amnesty law project for members of the military, in Caracas

Millennials May Claim Another Victim: Harley Davidson And The Classic American Motorcycle



Harley Davidson motorbike drivers riding down St. Martins Lane in London. (Photo/Getty Images)

OVERVIEW

Younger buyers and older buyers have different reasons for buying motorcycles. Older buyers seem to buy bikes for hobby or recreation. Younger buyers are more interested in ease of transportation. This has potentially profound implications for struggling companies such as Harley-Davidson.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The supposed millennial penchant for "killing" industries gets thrown around a lot, but it could really be happening to one American icon: the Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Data suggest a considerable generational divide in attitudes toward heavyweight motorcycles, the sort of bikes sold by brands such as Harley and Polaris' Indian brand, said UBS analyst Robin Farley in a note published Friday.

It turns out that younger people do consider buying motorcycles, but for entirely different reasons than older customers, and that has potentially profound implications for companies such as Harley-Davidson, which has been struggling with declining sales and an aging demographic.

Shares of the motorcycle maker have fallen 32 percent in the last 12 months.

The survey's most significant finding is that 21- to 34-year-olds consider buying a bike for "ease of transportation," whereas older buyers purchase bikes "as a hobby" or because "motorcycles are cool."

This distinction is important, since the average Harley-Davidson customer is a married man in his early 50s, with a household income at or above \$90,000. These are the customers buying motorcycles out of a passion for the product or lifestyle.



Younger buyers appear to be more motivated to consider motorcycles for practical reasons, which means it is likely they will be more interested in less expensive bikes that bring in lower margins for manufacturers. "We believe this significant divergence in incentives to buy a new bike could be what is partly behind Harley's and broader heavyweight motorcycle industry's challenge to tap into a new segment of younger riders to drive growth," Farley said. "So unless there is a generational shift among younger riders to see motorcycling as a hobby vs. means of transportation, the outlook for the heavyweight industry could continue to be more dependent on an aging demographic."

It might not be all bad, though. "Perhaps one hopeful sign for the industry is that younger potential buyers cited the second most common reason to buy a motorcycle is that it 'goes with their self-image,'" Farley said.

Harley-Davidson has initiated an ambitious plan to lure 2 million more riders to the brand in 10 years. Among other things, the company is setting up riding schools around the country, and it is releasing an

electric motorcycle called the "Livewire." The company also previewed two electric concept bikes earlier in January.



Officials at Polaris weren't immediately available to comment. Harley-Davidson told CNBC the company has been aware of the demographic trend and it has been informing the company's strategy. "There's nothing new here," Harley-Davidson told CNBC in a statement. "Our advanced analytic capabilities allow us to deeply understand rider migration trends. In fact, our knowledge of riders informed our strategy to build the next generation of Harley-Davidson riders globally, which we launched in early 2017." The survey polled 2,100 adults in the U.S. over the age of 21 from Sept. 1, 2018, to Sept. 21, 2018.

Related
Is Harley-Davidson's Vision for the Future Realistic?

Harley-Davidson (NYSE:HOG) released its "More Roads to Harley-Davidson" strategic roadmap in July, and though there are a number of interesting paths the company plans on taking, it ought to leave investors wondering just how realistic its goals are.

While the multipoint plan is supposed to help the motorcycle maker achieve its vision of bringing two million new riders to the brand, increasing international sales to half of its total volume, and introducing 100 new models in 10 years, a lot of it looks like a rehash of what has come before from Harley-Davidson.

Sure, the plan had a few bits of flash, such as a pedal-assisted electric bicycle that will follow the introduction of its LiveWire electric motorcycle next year, and its entry into the adventure touring and streetfighter markets, but a lot of its efforts still seem centered on heavyweight motorcycles.



Electric bikes, big and small
Harley is trying to create a high-power electric motorcycle market out of whole

cloth. The roadmap acknowledges that less than 1,000 such bikes were sold in the U.S. and Europe last year, but that's where it is directing its initial efforts, even though it's a completely off-brand bike that will be a tough sell. Beyond concerns about battery range, its core customers likely won't buy into an electric bike, and the eco-conscious millennial riders that the bike is geared toward might not see Harley as one of their own.

The scooters and pedal-assist electrics that Harley envisions aren't scheduled for a few years yet, and they're primarily going to be targeted to foreign markets where buyers are more accustomed to them. That's not a bad move, but it's one that still presents its own problems.

For example, the small electrics are aimed at India, a market Royal Enfield virtually owns, selling over 700,000 bikes annually, or about the combined sales of Harley-Davidson, KTM, BMW, Triumph, and Ducati. Harley plans on moving into other emerging Asian markets afterwards, but there's no reason to think buyers will turn to Harley for their electric bike needs. As the roadmap points out, millions of small and mid-size electrics are sold there already.



(Photo/Harley Davidson)
Not easy markets to break into
Similar problems exist with its two new adventure touring bikes, motorcycles designed for performance on road or off.

First, Harley is marketing them as middleweight bikes, but only in Harley's worldview is a motorcycle with engine displacements of 975 cubic centimeters and 1,250 cubic centimeters a middleweight bike. Harley's Pan America is also going to find it difficult to break into a field that is currently dominated by BMW and KTM. Just because the bar-and-shield has been slapped onto the tank doesn't mean customers will suddenly buy it. Again, it's a market Harley has little experience with and can't be expected to lead, not when it has competitors like Royal Enfield, whose 410 cc Himalayan is a true mid-weight adventure touring bike.



(Photo/Harley Davidson)
The streetfighter market -- streetfighter bikes are typically stripped-down,

aggressively styled sports bikes -- presents the same issues for Harley, which lacks credibility in the space. It failed miserably when it owned the MV Agusta and Buell sports bike brands.

Yet it is bringing to market as many as nine new bikes with displacements between 500 ccs and 1,250 ccs, along with five custom motorcycles with similar displacements. Harley says it also plans to develop small-displacement bikes of 250 cc to 500 cc through "a planned strategic alliance with a manufacturer in Asia."

A payoff that might not materialize
Certainly, the fact that Harley is paying attention to the lower end of the market at all is a welcome departure from tradition. It shows there's an inkling of understanding that buyers are looking for options other than its hulking heavyweights, but there are other problems with the plan that make the company's expectations for generating as much as \$1.5 billion in incremental revenues and \$250 million in operating profits impractical.

Pricing is one of them. Although Harley-Davidson didn't say what any of its new bikes would cost, the bike maker is known to protect its profit margins with big markups, and that's why it typically refuses to engage in discounting. With its dealers hurting from the four-year sales slide, they'll find it hard to accept cheap bikes that give them little margin room to play with. And if Harley's motorcycles aren't priced right, they're not going to bring in the next generation of bikers that will be essential for its future success.

Harley-Davidson is to be commended for finally thinking beyond its big, chromed-out motorcycles. But its latest roadmap might not be a realistic blueprint for its future prosperity, and investors may not see it as a clear pathway to growth.

10 stocks we like better than Harley-Davidson

When investing geniuses David and Tom Gardner have a stock tip, it can pay to listen. After all, the newsletter they have run for over a decade, Motley Fool Stock Advisor, has quadrupled the market.*

David and Tom just revealed what they believe are the **ten best stocks** for investors to buy right now... and Harley-Davidson wasn't one of them! That's right -- they think these 10 stocks are even better buys. (Courtesy fool.com)

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Measles Cases Have Risen 30 Percent Worldwide Per UN

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Measles cases worldwide jumped more than 30 percent last year compared to 2016, with increases recorded in wealthy European countries like Germany where vaccination coverage has historically been high, the UN said last Thursday. The World Health Organization said the worrying trend of resurgent measles cases was a near global phenomenon, but the causes varied among regions. In Europe, experts blamed the problem in part on complacency and misinformation about a vaccine proven to be both effective and safe. Martin Friede, WHO's director of immunisation, vaccines and biologicals told reporters that "supposed experts making accusations against the vaccine without any evidence" has had an impact on parents' decisions.



Measles vaccine.

He specifically cited medically baseless claims linking the measles vaccine to autism, which have been spread in part on social media by members of the so-called "anti-vax" movement. But cases have also spiked in Latin America, partly due to "a collapsing health system in Venezuela," the head of the vaccine alliance Gavi, Seth Berkley, said in a statement. A crippling political and economic crisis in Venezuela has triggered massive inflation, with hospitals struggling to maintain stocks. "What is more worrying than the increase in the cases reported is that we are seeing sustained measles transmission in countries that had previously not seen



The overall global fight against measles had made big strides since 2000, which makes the recent setbacks frustrating for WHO.

measles transmission for many years," Friede said. "This suggests we are actually regressing."



Multiple countries -- notably Germany, Russia and Venezuela -- have had their measles elimination certificate withdrawn over the last 12 months. A country loses its measles elimination status when "the same type of virus has been circulating for more than 12 continuous months," according to WHO.

'Not Rocket Science' WHO stressed that the overall global fight against measles had shown impressive results this century. In 2000, there were more than 850,000 cases reported worldwide, compared to 173,000 last year. That progress made the recent setbacks all the more frustrating, said WHO immunisation expert Ann Lindstrand. "We have a safe and effective vaccine," she told reporters. "This is not rocket science, we know what to do." According to WHO guidelines, preventing measles outbreaks requires 95 percent coverage of the first dose of the vaccine.



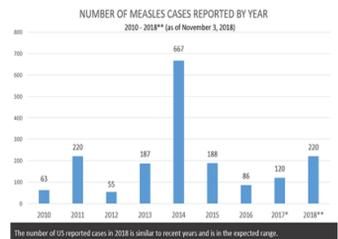
Global coverage has stalled at 85 percent for several years, but the figure is lower in poorer regions like Africa, which had a coverage rate of 70 percent in 2017. Measles is a highly contagious disease, which can cause severe diarrhoea, pneumonia and vision loss and can be fatal in some cases. (Courtesy <https://sg.news.yahoo.com>)

Related

Measles Cases and Outbreaks Measles Cases in 2018

As of November 3, 2018, 220 individual cases of measles have been confirmed in 26 states and the District of Columbia. The states that have reported cases to

CDC are Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.



*Cases as of December 30, 2017. Case count is preliminary and subject to change.

**Cases as of November 3, 2018. Case count is preliminary and subject to change. Data are updated monthly.

Source: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), Notifiable Diseases and Mortality Tables Measles Outbreaks

A total of 15 outbreaks (defined as 3 or more linked cases) have been reported so far in 2018.

Outbreaks in countries to which Americans often travel can directly contribute to an increase in measles cases in the U.S.

Spread of Measles

- The majority of people who got measles were unvaccinated.
- Measles is still common in many parts of the world including some countries in Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa.
- Travelers with measles continue to bring the disease into the U.S.
- Measles can spread when it reaches a community in the U.S. where groups of people are unvaccinated. (Courtesy <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>)

美南廣播電視台 看電視聽廣播

美南國際電視STV15.3為方便觀眾收看，「電視廣播合為一體」不需任何付費，觀眾可24小時直接收看及收聽該頻道，行車間也可方便收聽，輕鬆獲取美南電視節目以及各類國際、社區重大資訊。

操作指南如下，讓觀眾24小時收看收聽：

1. 掃二維碼(QR code)：

觀眾只要掃描報上的二維碼，就可連結到美南國際電視，直接在手機上觀看STV15.3。



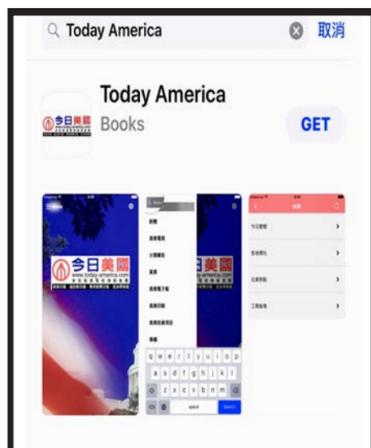
2. 今日美南公眾號直播：

觀眾可在「今日美南」公眾號上，點選「美南視頻」裡的「美南國際電視直播」就可輕鬆連接至STV15.3。



3. 下載Apps收看：

可在蘋果商店搜尋「Today America」，下載Apps，除了可用手機讀報更方便，也可以在Apps裡收看STV15.3 電視直播。



4. Google搜尋：觀眾只要在Google網站搜尋「Southern TV- STV15.3 Houston」

Southern TV-STV15.3 Houston

或輸入該平台網址

「<http://media.maqtv.com/?1497381&proc=1>」

就可直接連結美南國際電視直播平台。

<http://media.maqtv.com/?1497381&proc=1>

如需開車時收聽廣播，請鏈接到車載音響設備(數據線/藍牙設備)，效果更佳。