



DOW +28.18 CLOSE 10,833.73	T-BONDS +0.02 CLOSE 4.68
S&P +3.17 CLOSE 1,262.79	NASDAQ +9.24 CLOSE 2,231.66

Business

Economy vibrant, might be slowing

Summer auto sales boost growth, hurricanes have less impact than expected

By Martin Crutsinger
Associated Press

WASHINGTON: The U.S. economy grew at the fastest pace in 1½ years in the summer as booming auto sales offset the adverse effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But the year is expected to end with slower growth.

The Commerce Department reported Wednesday that the gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic health, grew at a 4.1 percent annual rate from July through September.

That was down from a 4.3 percent estimate made a month ago but it was still the fastest pace since early 2004. The gain was even more remarkable considering that the country was hit by devastating hurricanes and gasoline prices that topped \$3 per gallon.

"The bottom line is that we had a very strong quarter of growth," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's in New York.

Wyss said he believed the hurricanes shaved a half-percentage point from growth, having less of an impact than economists had originally feared.

The Bush administration, which has been trying to highlight the economy's strengths as a way to bolster the president's approval ratings, said the 4.1 percent GDP growth rate was evidence of a vibrant economy.

Analysts estimate growth has slowed substantially in the current quarter to between 3 percent and 3.5 percent, reflecting slower increases in consumer spending. The slowdown includes a slump in auto sales reflecting falling popularity for sport utility vehicles with gas prices so much higher.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 28.18, or 0.26 percent, to 10,833.73. The Dow had been more than 94 points higher earlier in the session on the economic news.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index climbed 3.17, or 0.25 percent, to 1,262.79; the Nasdaq composite index added 9.24, or 0.42 percent, to 2,231.66.

Shipping gifts late is pricey

FedEx and UPS offering guaranteed Christmas Eve delivery – for a premium

By Harry R. Weber
Associated Press

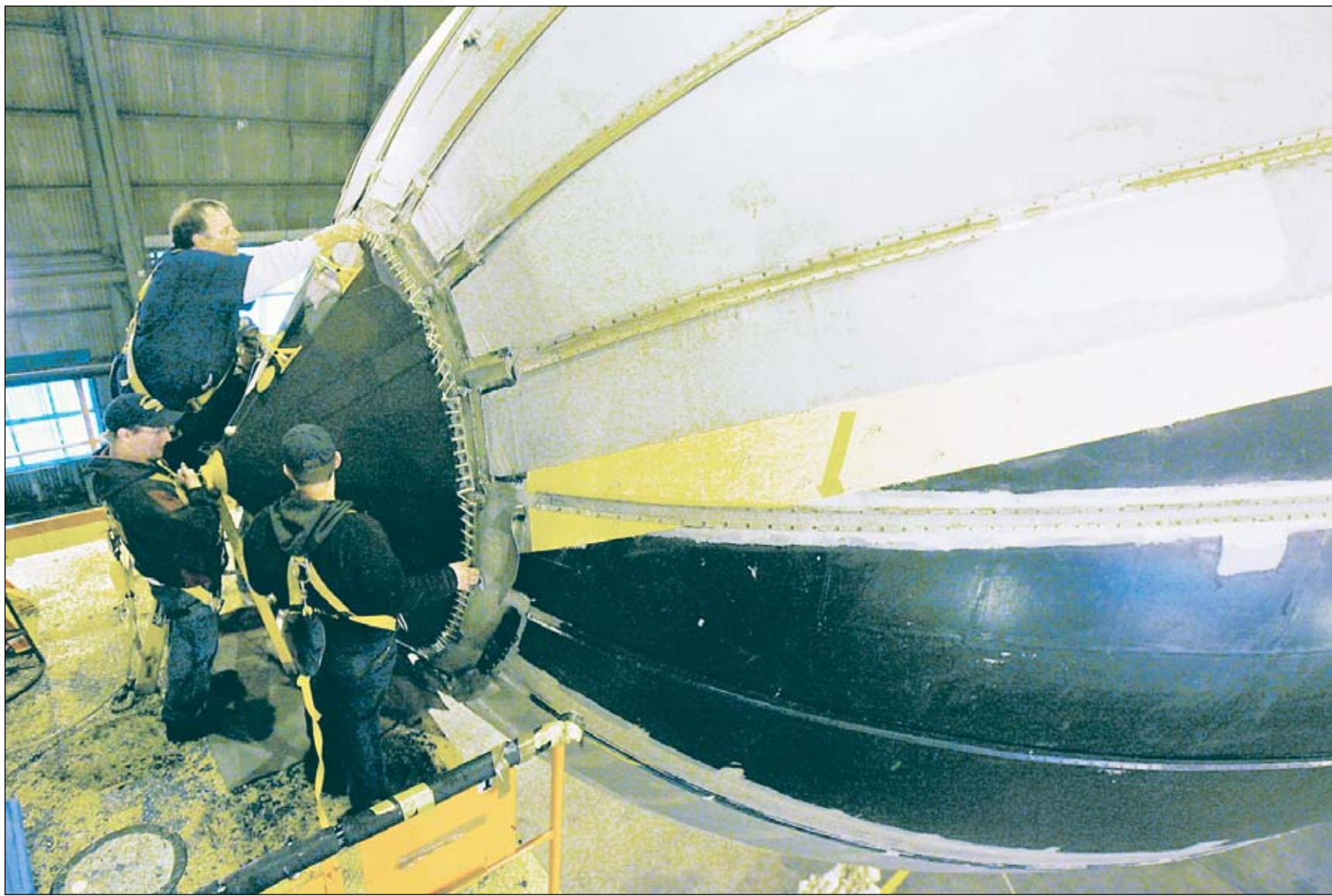
ATLANTA: It doesn't usually take this long for Ron Rodriguez to send his holiday gifts, but this year things just kind of got away from him.

He stood in line Wednesday at a UPS Store in midtown Atlanta with a steady stream of customers. The total for sending the baby toys, kitchen utensils and Italian leather shaving kit by next-day air to relatives in Boston, Minneapolis and Washington: \$167.

"I'm working from home today. It's the only way I could get this done," said Rodriguez, 41, who does video-on-demand work for the cable industry. Of the bill, he said, "There's nothing you can do about it."

Last-minute shoppers needn't worry about getting their gifts to loved ones in time for the holidays with major shippers like UPS Inc. and FedEx

Please see **Ship, D2**



PAUL TOPLE/Akron Beacon Journal photos

Jared Haren (top), Tom McEwen and Brian Hershberger install the nose section on the new Goodyear blimp in its hangar at Wingfoot Lake on Wednesday.

Blimp nose cone? Check

Goodyear airship adds key piece; crew nears end of its 2005 work

By Jim Mackinnon
Beacon Journal business writer

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.'s new blimp got a bit longer Wednesday morning.

Actually, it grew by a nose – as in nose cone.



The Blimp Garage crew has been hard at work since moving the 192-foot-long airship last week from the back of the Wingfoot Lake hangar to the area nearest the hangar doors – in blimp-building parlance, it went from "Slot 2" to "Slot 1."

One big difference: Unlike the literally below-freezing-temperatures in the Slot 2 hangar space where the crew started assembling the blimp, Slot 1 is now curtained off and heated. Not only does that make the work more pleasant, but the warmth, somewhere in the high 60s to low 70s, also is needed so that decals and paint can be applied to the helium-filled envelope.

Please see **Blimp, D2**



Nose-cone battens

Nose-cone battens are long, curved metal tubes that attach to the nose cone and are laced onto the front part of the Goodyear blimp envelope. The battens – eight silver and eight blue – are a lightweight exoskeleton that supports the front of the blimp and helps the airship keep its shape while flying.



At left, Scott Babbo applies a decal stripe to the bottom of the new Goodyear blimp. Above, Jared Haren laces the nose section onto the envelope inflated with helium.

Building the blimp

This is the latest installment of Blimp Garage, an occasional series chronicling the people and milestones involved in

building Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.'s new blimp at Wingfoot Lake.

Dec. 4: Crew finishes patching the 192-foot-long envelope.

Dec. 8: The envelope is inflated with helium for the first time.

Dec. 9: The gondola, or car, is attached to the underneath of the envelope.

Dec. 11: Meet the people who are building the blimp.

Dec. 13: The blimp is moved within the hangar.

Today: Workers add the nose cone.

Ohio.com: See previous articles, videos and photos from "Blimp Garage" on the Newsroom Projects page.

Some big rigs rolling with fewer tires

Truckers converting to expanded treads to reap fuel, weight savings

By Jim Davenport
Associated Press

GREENVILLE, S.C.: Take a closer look at some of the 18-wheelers rolling down the nation's roads lately and you might notice something miss-

ing: eight wheels.

Some truckers are converting to wider tires that let them replace dual tires with single tires, turning their rigs into 10-wheelers to reap fuel and weight savings.

The new tires are wide enough to make a hot-rodder happy. And they're drawing stares on and off the highway.

People ask Jim Smith questions about the expensive, hulk-sized tires all the time at

his showroom at Exit 11 Truck Tire Service Inc. near Interstates 80 and 77 in Richfield.

"I tell them it's the future," Smith said. "It seems to be where truck tires are heading."

Each tire alone weighs close to 200 pounds. That future isn't cheap. Mounted on

an aluminum rim, the tires can run \$1,250 or more, Smith said. That's twice a traditional tire's cost.

It's worth the expense, said Luc Minguet, chief operating officer of Michelin America's truck tire unit. The tires, made

Please see **Tires, D2**

BOTTOMLINE

Daimler settles defect complaint

DaimlerChrysler AG reached a \$94 million settlement with the government to repair defective emission controls on nearly 1.5 million Jeep and Dodge vehicles.

The Justice Department and Environmental Protection Agency said the agreement involved

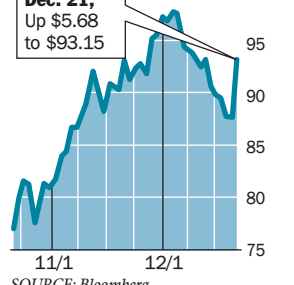
vehicles from the 1996 to 2001 model years. It settles allegations the automaker violated the Clean Air Act.

DaimlerChrysler will recall about 494,000 vehicles to fix a separate defect in the onboard diagnostic system installed on the vehicles and check the catalytic converters.

About 1 million vehicle owners will be notified of warranty extensions because of the settlement.

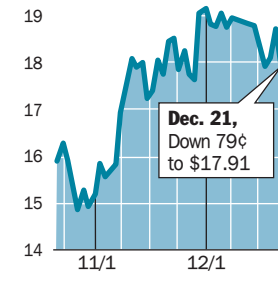
Northeast Ohio stocks

Featured winner
Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.
Shares in the Cleveland iron-ore pellet maker rose 6.5 percent to \$93.15.



SOURCE: Bloomberg

Featured loser
Agilysys Inc.
Shares in the Mayfield Heights seller of computers and software fell 4.2 percent to \$17.91.



IRS tightens rules on vehicles donated to charities

Internal Revenue Service officials say the IRS will not recognize certain deductions that taxpayers may be claiming relating to donated vehicles sold at auction.

IRS officials took this step after becoming aware of questionable practices that have surfaced recently. Some charities have sold donated vehicles at auction and claimed that the sales

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

are to needy individuals at prices significantly below fair market value.

By doing so, these charities have claimed that the sales trigger an exception to the general rule that the deduction allowed to the donor is limited to the proceeds

from the charity's sale. The IRS' position is that vehicles sold at auction are not sold at prices significantly below fair market value.

In such cases, the donor may claim a deduction of more than \$500 only to the extent that the gross proceeds from the sale exceed that amount and the donor gets an acknowledgment from the charity.