



Milwaukee Bucks can use the 2026-27 salary cap to fuel rebuild

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Economist: Wages fall short of inflation

Ricardo Torres
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

The U.S. economy remains strong, partly because of artificial intelligence investments, even as workers wages fail to keep pace with inflated prices.

That’s according to Ira Kalish, chief global economist for accounting and consulting firm Deloitte. He was keynote speaker at Deloitte’s annual Wisconsin 75 event, which celebrates the state’s 75 largest privately held companies.

“The U.S. economy is surprisingly strong right now,” Kalish said during his Oct. 1 speech at Marquette University.

“It’s kind of an odd growth though because more than half of the growth in the economy comes from investment in AI, all those data centers,” he said.

Here are highlights from Kalish’s talk and the Wisconsin 75 event:

Unemployment is low but that could change

Unemployment is low, both nationally and in Wisconsin. The U.S. Department of Labor reported Oct. 2 a

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El Niño may help more insects survive winter in Wisconsin

Blaise Mesa
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

Wisconsin is gearing up for a warmer-than-normal winter.

A historic El Niño is expected to affect winter weather across much of the United States, including Wisconsin, where forecasters are predicting warmer temperatures and less snow. With that in mind, the Journal Sentinel asked climate and environment experts: What happens during an unseasonably warm winter in Wisconsin?

They raise a variety of concerns, including a longer allergy season, the ongoing threat of severe weather and struggling native plants. But one of the most common responses had to do with insects.

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Nicotine is the primary driver of tobacco addiction in the form of cigarettes, vapes and most other forms of commercial tobacco. The greatest health risks arise when tobacco is burned, which generates thousands of toxic substances.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Movement touts addictive drug as beneficial, but dangers persist

Hasmeena Kathuria
University of Wisconsin-Madison
THE CONVERSATION

An ironic development emerging alongside the “Make America Healthy Again” movement is the portrayal of nicotine as a wellness and performance-enhancing product. Across social media, podcasts, wellness communities and tech startups, prominent wellness personalities and other influencers are portraying nicotine as a misunderstood compound whose potential benefits have been overshadowed by its negative association with cigarette smoking.

As a result, nicotine is being repositioned from an addictive substance linked to tobacco use to a natural product that can be used for everything from improving focus to protecting against cognitive decline. This trend includes use of nicotine alone in noncombustible products such as nicotine pouches, or in combination with caffeine and nootropics, which are substances marketed to enhance cognition.

As a pulmonary physician-scientist who studies nicotine addiction and the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine products, I am concerned about claims that nicotine can enhance wellness, productivity and cognitive performance.

Distinguishing between nicotine and tobacco

Some of these claims stem from the observation that nicotine is a naturally occurring plant compound found primarily in tobacco and in nightshade vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes and eggplant in trace amounts. Proponents of nicotine use also draw on studies suggesting that nicotine can affect certain aspects of cognition and brain function.

However, extending these findings to broad claims about productivity, brain health, longevity or wellness goes well beyond what has been shown in human studies.

Nicotine is the primary driver of tobacco addiction



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tion in the form of cigarettes, vapes and most other forms of commercial tobacco.

The greatest health risks arise when tobacco is burned, which generates thousands of toxic substances, including carcinogens, carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter. Repeated exposure to these combustion products can cause cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease and numerous other smoking-related illnesses.

While many smoking-related diseases result from exposure to combustion products, nicotine itself has well-known negative effects on the brain and body. Nicotine activates the sympathetic nervous system – the body’s “fight or flight” response – which increases heart rate and blood pressure and disrupts sleep. Repeated stimulation of this system can place additional strain on the heart.

Nicotine exposure is of particular concern during critical phases of development. Prenatal

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