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L.A. 11TH COSTLIEST AMONG U.S. CITIES

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Los Angeles ranked as the nation's 11th most expensive city, according to the 2004 Cost of Doing Business Survey whose results were released Monday by the Kosmont-**Rose Institute**.

The annual survey, a joint project of Los Angeles-based Kosmont Cos. and **Rose Institute** of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College, also found Los Angeles to be the most expensive city in the county to conduct business. Santa Clarita was among the cheapest in the county, while Palmdale ranked among the most pricey.

Kohl's will open two more stores

Kohl's will open stores March 5 in Newbury Park and Palmdale, the Menomonee Falls, Wis.-based retailer announced Monday.

The Newbury Park store is located at 1960 Newbury Park Road. Palmdale's store is at 39850 Tint St. West.

The two stores, which between them will employ 300 workers, will join 28 Southern California stores that opened last March.

Beverages & More expanding in area

CANOGA PARK - Beverages & More will add two additional spirits and snack shops on Saturday, with openings in Canoga Park and Van Nuys. The San Francisco-based wine, beer and liquor merchant selected spots at 6520 Canoga Ave. and 5820 N. Sepulveda Blvd. to add to its local presence, now limited to a Thousand Oaks store.

Wingstop chain to grow in region

Wingstop, a chicken-wing restaurant chain, announced plans Monday to open 10 stores in Los Angeles and Orange counties within the next three years.

Including restaurants already open in Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego counties, the chain will have two dozen outlets in Southern California within the next three years.

The chain currently has 158 restaurants in operation and more than 180 under development in 23 states.

Attorney Daniel Sonenshine has formed Far West Restaurant Group LLC to develop the brand in Los Angeles and Orange counties, and his real estate brokerage firm, Cohen and Kuhn, has begun the site-selection process.

The company will primarily look for locations with about 1,300 to 1,700 square feet in centers that are anchored by 24-hour grocery stores or mass merchants, Sonenshine said.

Short-term T-bills draw higher rates

WASHINGTON - Interest on short-term Treasury bills **rose** in Monday's auction with rates on three-month bills hitting the highest level since mid-November.

The Treasury Department auctioned \$19 billion in three-month bills at a discount rate of 0.930 percent and \$17 billion in six-month bills at a discount rate of 0.995 percent.

The three-month rate was up from 0.915 percent last week and was the highest since three-month bills averaged 0.935 percent on Nov. 17. The six-month rate was up from 0.975 percent last week and was the highest since 1.00 percent on Feb. 2.

In a separate report, the Federal Reserve said Monday that the average yield for one-year Treasury bills, a popular index for making changes in adjustable rate mortgages, dipped to 1.23 percent last week from 1.24 percent the previous week.

Americans in debt but coping well

WASHINGTON - American households' finances are generally in good shape even though consumers have built mountains of debt and bankruptcy filings have surged, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said Monday.

Years of low interest rates and extra cash from refinancing have given people flexibility to manage their debt better, the Fed chief said in a speech to a credit union conference.

The financial health of consumers is important to the economy, which in the second half of last year finally cast off its lethargy and began growing at a healthy pace. Consumer spending accounts for roughly two-thirds of all economic activity in the United States. A widespread deterioration in households' balance sheets could seriously crimp spending.

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