

WEEKLY MARKET COMMENTARY

For the Week of March 10, 2014

THE MARKETS

U.S. stocks finished mostly higher on Friday with the S&P 500 reaching another record close on the release of positive jobs data. January's jobs report was revised higher and more jobs than expected were created in February. The Dow and the S&P 500 closed higher for the second consecutive week, while the NASDAQ recorded its fifth straight week of gains. For the week, the Dow rose 0.84 percent to close at 16,452.72. The S&P gained 1.05 percent to finish at 1,878.04 and the NASDAQ climbed 0.65 percent to end the week at 4,336.22.

Returns Through 03/07/14	1 Week	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Dow Jones Industrials (TR)	0.84	-0.24	17.68	13.78	23.23
NASDAQ Composite (PR)	0.65	3.82	34.16	16.45	27.36
S&P 500 (TR)	1.05	2.02	24.21	15.24	25.05
Barclays US Agg Bond (TR)	-0.57	1.43	-0.06	3.70	4.93
MSCI EAFE (TR)	-0.35	0.96	17.71	6.73	19.27

Source: Morningstar.com. *Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Three- and five-year returns are annualized. The Dow Jones Industrials, MSCI EAFE, Barclays US Agg Bond and S&P, excluding "1 Week" returns, are based on total return, which is a reflection of return to an investor by reinvesting dividends after the deduction of withholding tax. The NASDAQ is based on price return, which is the capital appreciation of the portfolio, excluding income generated by the assets in the portfolio in the form of interest and dividends. (TR) indicates total return. (PR) indicates price return. MSCI EAFE returns stated in U.S. dollars.

And Your Plan Is What? – Thirty-eight million of the 84 million American households (45 percent) that are headed by working-age people (i.e., not retired) do not own any pre-tax retirement accounts such as a 401(k) or an IRA (source: National Institute on Retirement Security, BTN Research).

At The Very End – Federal outlays for Medicare were \$498 billion in fiscal year 2013, and \$50 billion (10 percent) of that total was spent on Medicare patients in the final month of their lives (source: Medicare, BTN Research).

Improvement – At the end of 2010, 9.0 percent of mortgages had at least one payment past due and another 4.6 percent of mortgages were in the foreclosure process. As of the end of 2013, 6.4 percent of mortgages had at least one payment past due and another 2.9 percent of mortgages were in the foreclosure process (source: Mortgage Bankers Association, BTN Research).

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WEEKLY FOCUS – Too Much Do-Good May Hurt Your Finances

When it comes to helping others, your family will normally be at the top of the list. But just how much assistance can you give them without adversely affecting both them and yourself?

Potential risks of helping your family financially include denting your retirement income, risking your credit rating, impacting family relationships and facing tax implications. That doesn't mean you should never help out a family member when they are in need. You should just go about it the smart way.

Always Put Yourself First: Before considering helping someone with a financial gift, you should first make sure you'll have enough resources to last your lifetime and that your gift won't set you back to an uncomfortable level. If you don't have the money, don't offer it, unless you are certain that money can be repaid in a timely fashion.

Think About Credit Scores: Sure, helping a family member buy a new car or luxurious furniture may make you relative of the century, but there are risks to consider. If you buy something for them outright, they may not have the chance to build up their own credit score, which can make it harder for them down the road for larger purchases like a house. Having a joint checking account or credit card or co-signing for a loan puts you at risk of the family member defaulting on payments and bringing your credit score down with them.

Hand-outs vs. Hand-ups: Helping out a relative can be rewarding and can bring families closer, but you have to be careful how often you dish out the cash when requested. While we don't want to think our family members would take advantage of our generosity, it is a possibility that can hurt your finances and your relationship. If you continuously give, family members may come to expect your gifts and may be worse off later if you stop providing them.

Before giving any sort of financial gift, think about the potential risks and rewards of helping your loved ones. We want you and your family to live financially stable lives together. We can help you or your loved ones explore ideas for overcoming financial obstacles and how to give gifts that can make a difference without adversely affecting you.



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* The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted index of 30 actively traded blue-chip stocks. NASDAQ Composite Index is an unmanaged, market-weighted index of all over-the-counter common stocks traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System. The Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index (MSCI EAFE Index) is a widely recognized benchmark of non-U.S. stock markets. It is an unmanaged index composed of a sample of companies representative of the market structure of 20 European and Pacific Basin countries and includes reinvestment of all dividends. Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index is an unmanaged index comprised of U.S. investment-grade, fixed-rate bond market securities, including government, government agency, corporate and mortgage-backed securities between one and 10 years. Written by Securities America. SAI#875629