



WEEKLY MARKET COMMENTARY

For the Week of October 1st, 2020

The Markets

On Friday, the markets reacted negatively to the news that President Trump tested positive for the coronavirus, adding more uncertainty to the upcoming election. The major indices recovered some of the day's losses after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's encouraging remarks about a potential agreement for another stimulus bill. For the week, the Dow rose 1.88 percent to close at 27,682.81. The S&P gained 1.54 percent to finish at 3,348.42, and the NASDAQ climbed 1.50 percent to end at 11,075.02.

Debt Limit — Legislation signed by President Trump in July 2019 suspended our country's debt ceiling limit until July 31, 2021, so there is no statutory limit on our nation's borrowing for the next 10 months. The debt ceiling has been raised, temporarily extended, or suspended 87 times since 1960 (source: Treasury Department, BTN Research).

Lots of People — 22 percent of Americans (74 million people) are on Medicaid, the nation's health care program for low-income Americans that is jointly funded by the federal government and all 50 states (source: Medicaid, BTN Research).

Should We Get a Bite to Eat? — 12 percent of the sit-down restaurant chains (not fast food), that were in business before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in February, are now out of business and have closed for good (source: Black Box Intelligence, BTN Research).

WEEKLY FOCUS – It's Cybersecurity Awareness Month

The pandemic has made many of us especially grateful for the internet, which makes it possible to work from home, shop online, attend religious services virtually, and stay connected with family and friends. Unfortunately, enjoying all those conveniences is not without risks. Realizing Americans are distracted by the pandemic, the upcoming election, and social unrest, cyber criminals are upping their game. Here are a few ways we can protect ourselves from hacks, scams, and malware.

Look twice before you click. Crooks and spammers will try to get you to act quickly and automatically. Instead, pause to consider before opening any unexpected email attachment. And most importantly, NEVER click on a link in an email asking you to enter your password or change your password. Always go directly to the site you use to enter your password or call the company directly if there appears to be an actual problem.

Use strong passwords. Strong passwords are fairly long and use a combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers, and special characters. Using the first letters of an original phrase can make a password difficult for thieves to guess. Don't keep a list of passwords anywhere near your device. If you keep a list, don't spell out your phrase or word. Instead, record a hint, followed by the numbers and symbols in the password, ideally unique to each site. Another option is to consider purchasing a password managing system.

Add a second step. For sensitive sites, such as financial accounts, add two-factor identification. After signing in, the institution will either text, call, or email a one-time code.

Stay current. Google your name and delete old, unused accounts that come up. Clear your browser history periodically. Delete apps you no longer use. Use the latest security software, web browser, and operating systems. Regularly check for updates, or better yet, sign up for automatic updates when you can. Back up your data to the cloud.

Stay independent. When signing up for a new service or app, pass up the offer to sign in using Facebook or your Google account, which exposes the data in your accounts.

It is important to stay vigilant about securing your financial and personal information. We can help you develop a strategy to keep this information as secure as possible. Call us to discuss this or any other financial concerns you have.

* 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, Copyright October 2020. All rights reserved. Securities offered through Securities America, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. SAI#[3269073.1](#)

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