**Husson Stock Index**

 **Week Ended November 22, 2024**

 For the week ending November 22, 2024, the Husson Stock Index (HSI) closed at 243.45,

 which is a 0.66% increase from the week prior. The S&P 500 increased this week by 1.68% from 5,870.62 to 5,969.34. The Dow Jones Industrial Average increased this past week by 1.96% from 43,444.99 to 44,296.51. Year to date, the HSI has grown by 7.18%, while the S&P 500 has grown by 25.15% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average has grown by 17.53%.

 **Summary**

The Husson Stock index bounced back this week, as 20 out of 26 stocks increased in share price. For the week ending November 22, 2024, the stock with the greatest percentage increase was Walmart Inc. (WMT). This stock’s share price grew 7.35% from $84.25 to $90.44. Movement in the retail giant’s share prices may be trailing impressive Q3 earnings that hit the news on November 19th. Among the impressive results was an astounding 5% jump in revenue boosting it up to $169.6 billion. EPS also jumped 14% to $0.58, which beat the expectations of Wall Street analysts. One big story that I caught was that Brian Setzer, who had served as the executive Vice President and the Head of the $55 billion health and wellness division (responsible for 12.4% of WMT’s United States sales) was leaving the company after two years in the position. Of course, with any loss of a prominent figure in a company, there are questions raised about instability, and compensating for the talent that has gone out the door. Walmart has been on a scorching run so far this entire year, frequently outpacing the S&P 500. Let's keep an eye on this one. The second largest percentage increase this week was Unum Group with a weekly increase of 3.62%. The third biggest increase was from WEX Inc. (WEX). This stock’s share price rose from $179.08 to $185.38, a 3.52% increase over the week. The local bank has been a bit out of the news as of late, but a couple of new developments may have led to increased confidence from investors. Last week, on November 12, WEX reached an agreement with Holman, one of the largest integrated automotive service companies in the North American region, extending until 2030. WEX benefits from this deal by receiving leverage from Holman for their fleet mobility payments and technology solutions offered to their customers. This is a great gain for the company, as more than 600,000 customers belong to the commercial fleet industry that relies on WEX’s technology. Another big news piece to come through the wire this week occurred more recently on November 21st. WEX announced the release of the WEX Medicare Advantage marketplace, a revolutionary digital shopping solution built into the member experience of its Medicare Advantage benefits program. This makes WEX’s services much more available and accessible to all its customers.

For the second week in a row, the stock with the largest percentage decline was General Dynamics Corporation (GD). However, the decline was much less severe compared to the week of 11/15. Shares for GD decreased 2.15% this week, as share prices dropped from $287.99 to $281.81. GD has lost about 7.1% since their Q3 earnings report about a month ago. The company is facing some backlash regarding a $1.4 million fine paid by a subsidiary of GD for violating the Fair Labor Standards Act. The subsidiary located in Mexicali, Mexico, is alleged to have paid employees in Mexican pesos well below the federal minimum wage rate. In contrast, analysts at The Motley Fool are very optimistic about this stock and view it as possibly the best company in its industry and represents a great buy-and-hold stock for investors seeking passive income. The article points to the importance of defense companies to the U.S. government, which is a very stable partner for any business to collaborate with. GD had raised its annual dividend for 33 consecutive years at an average of 8.8% over the last decade. Politically-related pressure has been coming down on America to reduce its spending, but historically, the military can do whatever they feel is necessary monetarily. For the week ended November 22, 2024, the stock with the second largest percentage decline was Lowe’s Companies, Inc. (LOW). The retailer’s price per share fell from $269.4 to $264.68, which is a 1.75% decrease over the week. Politics may have been influencing investor behavior surrounding LOW this week, as potential tariffs from the Trump Administration may have negative impacts on the retail home improvement giant. Stanley Black & Decker CEO Don Allan released a statement on November 21st indicating worries about a rise in tool prices as the United States attempts to cut back its imports from China. Allen mentioned that there would be “about 60 to 70% higher costs” if the power tool manufacturing that China produces was brought back onshore in the United States. A rise in tool prices would likely drive consumer demand away from Lowe’s and individuals may pivot away from do-it-yourself home projects if the costs of equipment get too high. Jim Cramer, host of *Mad Money*, a very popular and influential television program on CNBC, recently spoke about Lowe’s on the program, and investors may have followed his outlook on the stock. Cramer first prefaced that Lowe’s Companies, Inc. is very similar to its rival Home Depot, in the sense that they tend to still perform well when the Fed cuts rates. Cramer then took a look into their recent earnings report, pointing out that the adjusted diluted EPS of $2.89 beat many forecasts. Another notable measure was total revenues of $20.2 billion, which also beat estimates, however, this was a 1.5% decrease compared to last year. Cramer ends his take by mentioning that although demand is noticeably weaker in the DIY segment, the company has seen promising growth in online sales during the quarter, likely due to increased business with professional contractors who adhere to Lowe’s targeted offerings and loyalty programs. The company repurchased around 2.9 million shares for a total value of $758 million, while paying out $654 million in dividends over the quarter.

 **Overview**

The HSI was developed by Marie Kenney, while a student at Husson University, in

consultation with Associate Professor J. Douglas Wellington. The index is currently being

tracked and analyzed by Husson student Cameron Silva under the supervision of Associate Professor of Finance Dr. Jia Liu. The HSI currently tracks and analyzes the stocks of 26 companies that are considered to affect the Maine economy. These companies are either based in Maine or have an influence on the Maine economy through employment or consumer spending. This price-weighted index offers a numerical breakdown of Maine’s economy. The analysis investigates the events of the week and finds the likely reasons the index went up or down. This index and analysis help provide a better understanding of Maine’s economy as well as explain significant changes in stock prices of the companies that comprise the HSI.

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**Composition of the Husson Stock Index (HSI)**

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| **Ticker****Symbol:****Exchange** | **Stock** | **Maine****Affiliation** | **Sector** |
| AGR: NYSE | Avangrid, Inc. | Presence | Utilities |
| BAC: NYSE | Bank of America Corporation | Presence | Financials |
| BHB: NYSE | Bar Harbor Bank | Maine-based | Financials |
| CAC: NASDAQ | Camden National Corporation | Maine-based | Financials |
| CHTR: NASDAQ | Charter Communications, Inc. | Presence | Communications Services |
| CL: NYSE | Colgate-Palmolive Company | Maine-based | Consumer Staples |
| DRI: NYSE | Darden Restaurants, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Discretionaries |
| FNLC: NASDAQ | The First Bancorp, Inc. | Maine-based | Financials |
| GD: NYSE | General Dynamics Corporation | Presence | Industrials |
| HLT: NYSE | Hilton Worldwide Holdings, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Discretionaries |
| HD: NYSE | The Home Depot, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Discretionaries |
| ICCC: NASDAQ | ImmuCell Corporation | Maine-based | Health Care |
| IDXX: NASDAQ | IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. | Maine-based | Health Care |
| LOW: NYSE | Lowe's Companies, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Discretionaries |
| MCD: NYSE | McDonald's Corporation | Presence | Consumer Discretionaries |
| NBN: NASDAQ | Northeast Bank | Maine-based | Financials |
| PENN: NASDAQ | Penn National Gaming, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Discretionaries |
| RTX:NYSE | Raytheon Technologies Corporation | Presence | Industrials |
| TD: NYSE | The Toronto-Dominion Bank | Presence | Financials |
| TMUS: NASDAQ | T-Mobile US, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Services |
| UPS; NYSE | United Parcel Service, Inc. | Presence | Industrials |
| UNM: NYSE | Unum Group | Presence | Financials |
| VLO: NYSE | Valero Energy Corporation | Presence | Energy |
| WMT: NYSE | Walmart Inc. | Presence | Consumer Staples |
| WEX: NYSE | WEX Inc. | Presence | Information Technology |
| WBA: NASDAQ | Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. | Presence | Consumer Staples |