

A SILVER
LININGStocks rise as oil
prices fallBy MICHAEL J. MARTINZ
AP Business Writer

A sharp drop in oil prices encouraged buying Tuesday on Wall Street, with stocks rising even as a number of companies warned of profit shortfalls and higher costs, some of which could be passed on to consumers.

Investors welcomed the latest drop in crude futures after the government said it could release heating oil reserves to help combat higher heating prices as winter approaches. A barrel of light crude was quoted at \$63.90, down \$2.07, on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Yet while oil prices fell Tuesday, corporate America continued to wrestle with higher energy and materials costs. Procter & Gamble Co.'s stock was downgraded due to higher raw material prices, and Corox Co. blamed high energy costs for an expected earnings shortfall and increases in the retail prices of its products, which could exacerbate Wall Street's inflation fears.

"The market has a lot of faith that companies can handle the economic situation," said Bill Groenewald, head trader at Finance Investments. "I don't think people are going to be walking away from this marketplace based on oil and whatever impact it could have."

In early afternoon trading, the Dow Jones industrial average rose 19.33, or 0.18 percent, to 10,554.61.

Broader stock indicators also moved higher. The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 1.56, or 0.13 percent, to 1,228.26, and the Nasdaq composite index added 10.28, or 0.48 percent, to 2,165.71.

Bonds edged higher after the previous session's selloff, with the yield on the 10-year Treasury note falling to 4.37 percent from 4.39 percent late Monday. The dollar was mostly lower against other major currencies, while gold prices rose.

The latest Commerce Department report on factory orders failed to move the market substantially, even though August factory orders surged 2.5 percent in August, compared to a 2.5 percent drop in orders in July. Those figures did not include the impact of hurricanes Rita and Katrina and the subsequent jumps in energy and raw material costs.



Noodles & Company's new Braised Beef and Gnocchi dish, which will be available throughout the fall. (Photo courtesy Noodles & Company)

BOULDER BIZ

Noodles did it all
for the Gnocchi

BOULDER-BASED RESTAURANT CHAIN OFFERING NEW DISH

By OAKLAND L. CHILDERS
Colorado Daily Weekend Editor

Boulder-based restaurant chain Noodles & Company says it knows what men really want — A little Gnocchi.

Gnocchi (pronounce no-kee) is a potato-based, Italian dumpling and is the signature ingredient in the restaurant's latest creation, Braised Beef and Gnocchi. The concoction, which includes

spinach, red onion, mushrooms and red bell pepper with a splash of cream, will be available starting today until mid-December.

"We hope that our new Braised Beef & Gnocchi allows folks to get in touch with their meat and potatoes side," said Ross Kamens, Noodles & Company's executive chef in a press release. "In fact, we think everyone would be happier if they got a little gnocchi at the

lunch hour....or dinner."

The release of the new dish marks the second Noodles & Company has released a seasonal dish featuring ingredients not typically found on the menu. In the spring, the restaurant unveiled an angel hair pasta dish with fresh asparagus and a chilled asparagus and romaine salad. It's part of a company-wide strategy to keep customers

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INDEXES

DOW JONES

High: 10,567.00

Low: 10,534.78

Close: 10,547.11

Change: +94.27

NASDAQ

Yesterday: 2,158.28

+14.07

NYSE INDEX

7528.31 - 82.13

By HOPE YEN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Minority-owned businesses say they're paying the price for the decision by Congress and the Bush administration to waive certain rules for Hurricane Katrina recovery contracts.

About 1.5 percent of the \$1.6 billion awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency has gone to minority businesses, less than a third of the 5 percent normally required.

On Tuesday, Sen. Olympia J. Snowe, R-Maine, and Rep. Donald A. Manzullo, R-Ill., asked the Government Accountability Office to investigate whether small and minority-owned businesses have been given a fair opportunity to compete for Katrina contracts.

Andrew Jenkins doesn't think so.

Once Katrina's destructive

waters receded, he began making calls in hopes of a winning government contract for his Mississippi construction company.

ON THE NET

FEMA contracting:
<http://www.dhs.gov/openforbusiness>

Jenkins, who is black, says he watched in frustration as the contracts went to others, many of them larger, white-owned companies with political ties to Washington.

"That just doesn't smell right," said Jenkins, president of AJA Management and

Technical Services Inc. of Jackson, Miss., noting the region has a higher percentage of blacks and minority-owned businesses than other areas of the country.

Many requirements normally attached to government contracting were waived by Congress and the administration. The result has been far more no-bid contracts going to businesses that have an existing relationship with the government.

There also was an easing of

affirmative action rules for contractors and a suspension of a "prevailing wage" law that black lawmakers and business people believe will hurt the disproportionately large number of black hourly workers in the region.

"It sends a bad message," said Harry Alford, president of the National Black Chamber of Commerce. "What they're basically saying to the minority in New Orleans is, 'We'll make it harder for you to find a job. And if you do, we'll make sure you get paid less.'"

CASINO MIGRATION

Gambling on
the WestGULF COAST CASINO WORKERS FLOCK
TO OTHER GAMING CAPITALSBy ADAM GOLDMAN
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS - By the time Hurricane Katrina departed, there was no reason for Marlies Wely to stay.

The storm had gutted the Biloxi, Miss., casino where Wely dealt cards. A dozen nearby gambling halls that might have offered work were destroyed or damaged. So Wely packed her bags, toted her two cats and headed for Las Vegas.

"Opportunity came knocking at 160 miles per hour," says Wely, one of hundreds of Gulf Coast casino workers flocking to other gambling capitals in search of a paycheck. "It said: Go west, go west."

Even as casino operators push to build new resorts in Mississippi, gambling sites around the country have begun hiring refugee card dealers, cooks, valets and security guards whose jobs were washed away by Katrina.

About 14,000 people worked in Mississippi's coastal casinos. In New Orleans, 2,600 are out of work after the only on-land casino in the distressed city shut down. More workers

could find themselves in the same predicament if seven casinos around Lake Charles, La., struck by Hurricane Rita, don't reopen quickly.

Many workers say they can't afford to wait.

"I don't know if you've been broke. It's not a good feeling," says Wely, who landed a job at the Stardust casino on the Las Vegas strip. "I'm looking forward to a paycheck."

The world's two largest casino operators, Harrah's Entertainment Inc. and MGM Mirage Inc., have promised to pay their out-of-work employees for the 90 days following Katrina. But the companies say they have not decided what they will do once that time ends. Harrah's has put its top executives from the Gulf casinos on retainer, but says it has to make other decisions on payroll.

In the meantime, casino companies say they're embracing the displaced workers and expediting hiring to fill out their ranks and provide some relief.

Already, Gulf casino workers have fanned out to Nevada, New Jersey, Michigan, Indiana, [See CASINOS, Page A14]



Marlies Wely, center, deals cards at the Stardust Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. The 41-year-old Katrina evacuee left Biloxi, Miss., with her two cats after the casino where she worked was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. (AP Photo/Associated Press)

HURRICANE AFTERMATH

Insult to injury

MINORITY FIRMS GETTING FEW KATRINA CONTRACTS

Graphic: Dan Kessler/News & Views. Photo: AP Photo/Associated Press