

| Cash Assets | 6550 | 7781 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Receivables | 5937 | 6768 | 6677 |
| Inventory (LIFO) | 40714 | 43803 | 44858 |
| Other | 1774 | 1588 | 2369 |
| Current Assets | 54975 | 59940 | 61185 |
| Accts Payable | 36608 | 38080 | 37415 |
| Debt Due | 6022 | 12392 | 11773 |
| Other | 19670 | 21346 | 20157 |
| Current Liab. | 62300 | 71818 | 69345 |



BUSINESS: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. is the world's largest retailer, op-
erating 3,288 supercenters (includes sizable grocery departments), 508 discount stores, 632 Sam's Clubs, and 407 Neighborhood Mar kets in the U.S., plus 6,107 foreign stores, mainly in Latin America, with the balance in Asia, Canada, and the U.K. as of $1 / 31 / 14$. Total store space: 1.101 billion square feet. Retail space is largely
Wal-Mart has a new CEO. Doug McMilIon succeeded Mike Duke on February 1, 2014. Mr. McMillon has had various leadership roles in Wal-Mart's hierarchy.
We are encouraged by the change.
Fiscal fourth quarter results were weak. Domestic same-store sales fell 40 basis points compared with a 50-basispoint gain in 2013's fourth quarter. Traffic fell $1.7 \%$, while the average ticket increased $1.3 \%$. The e-commerce business positively affected comp sales by approximately 30 basis points. Management cited severe winter weather conditions, a reduction in government food stamp benefits, and a shortened holiday season for the weak results. Comps are expected to be flat in the current quarter, on top of a $2.4 \%$ decline in the previous year.
Wal-Mart's historic track record of cutting costs may hit a bump in the road this year. Even with weakness in the U.S. and increased investment in store expansion and e-commerce, the company was still able to grow operating income faster than sales in the fiscal fourth quarter. Recently, management admitted that continued investment in those initia-
owned, and most stores are within 400 miles of a distribution center. Groceries accounted for $55 \%$ of U.S. sales; sales per square foot in 2012: about $\$ 437$. Has 2,200,000 employees. Off./dir. own $50.6 \%$ of shares (4/14 proxy). Chairman: S. Robson Walton. CEO and Pres.: Doug McMillon. Inc.: DE. Addr.: 702 S.W. 8th St., Bentonville, AR 72716. Tel.: 479-273-4000. Internet: www.walmart.com.
tives, as well as its everyday low-price strategy, may result in deleverage this year. It didn't reveal specific plans to improve its arguably understaffed shelfstocking and customer service workforce. Both questions have weighed on investors' minds in the recent past.
Wal-Mart remains focused on its small-format stores. Management mentioned that the "big basket trip" to its supercenters remains healthy, but the "stock-up trip" (i.e., everyday items like bread and milk) has declined recently. To help remedy this, it plans on adding 270 to 300 new small units this year, including 160 to 180 Neighborhood Markets, and 110 to 120 Walmart Express locations.
These shares are suitable for conservative investors. Although underlying demand trends could certainly be better, the worst is probably behind Wal-Mart for the near term. We like the small-format expansion strategy, and have confidence in Wal-Mart International's ability to transition emerging markets to the everyday low price strategy while still provide largely localized merchandise.
Kevin Downing
May 2, 2014
(A) Fiscal year ends Jan. 31st of following and gains: '01, (\$0.01); '05, \$0.03; '08, (\$0.07); Dec.. Dividend reinvestment plan available. calendar year. Sales exclude rentals from li- '09, \$0.04; '10, \$0.40;'11, \$0.03; '13, (\$0.23). (D) In millions. censed depts. (B) Based on diluted shares. Next earnings report due May 15th. (C) Divds. May not sum due to rounding. Excls. (losses) historically paid in early Mar., May, Aug., and

Company's Financial Strength
Stock's Price Stability
Price Growth Persistence
Earnings Predictability

