

U.S. and in Canada and Mexico (as of 2/1/15). Acquired Hughes Supply in 1/06. Average store size: 104,000 sq. ft. indoor plus 24,000 sq. ft. garden center. Items stocked: about 35,000. Product lines include building materials, lumber, floor/wall coverings; plumb-

own less than 1.0% of common; Capital World Investors, 10.3% (4/14 Proxy). CEO & President: Craig Menear. Incorporated: DE. Address: 2455 Paces Ferry Road N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30339. Telephone: 770-433-8211. Internet: www.homedepot.com.

ANNUAL RATES Past Est'd '11-'13 Past 10 Yrs. to '18-'20 of change (per sh) 5 Yrs. Sales "Cash Flow" 7.5% 8.0% 2.5% 5.0% 9.0% 11.5% Earnings Dividends Book Value 13.5% 14.5% -0.5% 7.0% 19.5% 6.5% 8.5% -0.5%

15372

5376

1321 4765

11462

Current Assets

Accts Payable Debt Due

Current Liab.

Other

895

15279

5797

33 4919

10749

1016

15302

5807

328 5134

11269

Fiscal Year Begins			ALES (\$ m Oct.Per		Full Fiscal Year
2012	17808	20570	18130	18246	74754
2013	19124	22522	19470	17696	78812
2014	19687	23811	20516	19162	83176
2015	21000	24650	21400	19850	86900
2016	21700	25700	22300	20800	90500
Fiscal Year Begins	EARNINGS PER SHARE A B Apr.Per Jul.Per Oct.Per Jan.Per				Full Fiscal Year
2012	.65	1.01	.74	.67	3.10
2013	.83	1.24	.95	.73	3.76
2014	.96	1.52	1.10	1.00	4.56
2015	1.15	1.68	1.29	1.05	5.17
2016	1.32	1.95	1.47	1.26	6.00
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID C =				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2011	.25	.25	.25	.29	1.04
2012	.29	.29	.29	.29	1.16
2013	.39	.39	.39	.39	1.56
2014	.47	.47	.47	.47	1.88
2015	.59				

The Home Depot closed out fiscal 2014 (ended February 1, 2015) on a high note. Sales in the January term jumped 8.3% from a year earlier, and strength was broad-based across geographies and merchandise categories. Purchases over \$900 were also solid, as were online sales and those to professional customers. Comps jumped 7.9%. Meantime, modest gross margin expansion was driven by supply chain improvements, lower fuel costs, and a reduction in shrinkage. Too, total operating expenses as a percentage of the top line fell 139 basis points.

The momentum ought to continue through fiscal 2015, driven by moderate GDP growth on our shores and a tailwind from the housing and remodeling markets. However, management noted that the strong U.S. dollar will likely weigh on sales and earnings somewhat. To wit, the company estimates that if exchange rates remain where they were recently, fiscal 2015 sales and earnings would be trimmed by roughly \$1 billion and \$0.06 a share, respectively (the low ends of sales and earnings guidance reflect such a scenario). Specifically, the top line

is likely to expand some 3.5%-4.7%, based on a 3.3%-4.5% increase in comps and the addition of six stores. The gross margin is apt to remain steady from the fiscal 2014 figure, while modest operating margin expansion is probable. Approximately \$4.5 billion in stock repurchases should aid pershare comparisons, with earnings likely to come in between \$5.11 and \$5.17 a share. Costs related to last year's data breach are possible and could weigh on the bottom line, although net costs for the breach totaled only \$5 million in the January term. Home Depot stock has climbed nicely since our December review, as investors seemed to brush aside currencyrelated headwinds. Indeed, The Home Depot has plenty of positives going for it on both a macro (GDP growth, housing-related tailwind, etc.) and companyspecific (efforts to court professional customers, an enhanced online presence, high levels of shopper satisfaction, etc.) basis. While the stock enjoys a premium valuation, we still find the equity attractive, especially for conservative investors seeking a moderate level of current income. Matthew E. Spencer, CFA March 27, 2015

 (A) Fiscal year ends Sunday closest to January 31st of the following year.
(B) Diluted earnings. Excludes nonrecurring. gains/(losses): '07, (\$0.10); '08, (\$0.44); '09,

(\$0.09); '10, (\$0.02); '12, (\$0.10); '14, \$0.15. Totals may not sum due to rounding. Next

earnings report due May 19th. (C) Dividends historically paid in March, June, (\$0.93/share).

Sept., and Dec. ■ Div'd reinvest. plan avail. (D) In millions, adjusted for stock splits. (E) Includes intangibles. At 2/2/14: \$1,289 mill. Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability A++ 90 Price Growth Persistence 65 **Earnings Predictability** 80