

vs.'14); nat. gas, 10.5 billion cubic feet (-6% vs. '14). On an oilequivalent basis, total production rose 3.2% in 2015. Daily refinery runs, 4.4 million barrels (-1% vs. '14); product sales, 5.8 mill. bbls (-2% vs. '14). Chemical sales, 24.7 mill. tonnes (+2% vs. '14)

69.6% of Imperial Oil (Canada). Vanguard owns 6.3% of stock; BlackRock, 5.8% (4/16 Proxy). Employs 73,500. Chrmn. and CEO: Rex Tillerson. Inc.: NJ. Addr.: 5959 Las Colinas Blvd., Irving, TX 75039-2298. Tel.: 972-444-1000. www.exxonmobil.com

53976 50021 Current Liab. 64633 Past Est'd '13-'15 ANNUAL RATES Past 10 Yrs. 6.5% 6.5% 5.0% of change (per sh) 5 Yrs. to '19-'21 2.0% 3.0% 4.0% 4.5% 5.0% Sales "Cash Flow" Earnings 10.0% 10.0% Dividends Book Value 4.0% 4.5%

52910

42227

17468

4938

42623

32412

18762

42945

30027

**Current Assets** 

Accts Payable Debt Due

| Cal-  | QUARTERLY SALES (\$ mill.)A  |        |        |        | Full   |
|-------|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| endar | Mar.31                       | Jun.30 | Sep.30 | Dec.31 | Year   |
| 2013  | 96336                        | 95301  | 100508 | 98102  | 390247 |
| 2014  | 94344                        | 98287  | 96047  | 76085  | 364763 |
| 2015  | 59228                        | 65395  | 59866  | 52321  | 236810 |
| 2016  | 42290                        | 50925  | 51330  | 53455  | 198000 |
| 2017  | 57000                        | 62000  | 65000  | 66000  | 250000 |
| Cal-  | EARNINGS PER SHARE B         |        |        |        | Full   |
| endar | Mar.31                       | Jun.30 | Sep.30 | Dec.31 | Year   |
| 2013  | 2.12                         | 1.55   | 1.79   | 1.91   | 7.37   |
| 2014  | 2.10                         | 2.05   | 1.89   | 1.56   | 7.60   |
| 2015  | 1.17                         | 1.00   | 1.01   | .67    | 3.85   |
| 2016  | .43                          | .41    | .63    | .73    | 2.20   |
| 2017  | .85                          | .90    | 1.00   | 1.20   | 3.95   |
| Cal-  | QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID C=† |        |        |        | Full   |
| endar | Mar.31                       | Jun.30 | Sep.30 | Dec.31 | Year   |
| 2012  | .47                          | .57    | .57    | .57    | 2.18   |
| 2013  | .57                          | .63    | .63    | .63    | 2.46   |
| 2014  | .63                          | .69    | .69    | .69    | 2.70   |
| 2015  | .69                          | .73    | .73    | .73    | 2.88   |
| 2016  | .73                          | .75    | .75    |        |        |

Exxon Mobil appears to be finishing up one of the less exciting chapters in its long and storied history. Earnings are on track to fall for the second consecutive year, as oil prices completed a long slide in February, and have only partly recovered since. As big and powerful as Exxon is, its performance is still dependent on the vigor of crude oil prices. Assuming improved realizations in 2017, profits could perk up nicely. Longer term, there is a greater possibility oil will be valued more highly, given reduced investments in projects these days. That should work strongly to the benefit of earnings and the stock price out to 2019-2021.

Already known for its efficiency, the company has stepped it up another notch. Combating the worst industry downturn in decades has meant obtaining lower prices from service suppliers, improving work flow designs, and using even more technology. Cost reductions, such as these, are already supporting margins and should pay off big as oil prices improve.

Volume gains have slowed. Combined

oil and natural gas production climbed 3.2% in 2015, but was essentially flat

through the first nine months of 2016. Frankly, there is less incentive to bring along projects quickly, with quotations not yet compelling. Over time, Exxon can probably step up the pace of development to boost oil and gas flows, but production may exhibit more of a flattish tone until then. Note: Weak realizations also appear likely to soon result in a rare asset impairment charge, which is not reflected in our earnings presentation.

Exxon may not be the cash machine of a few years earlier, but it is still the clear leader in its field. The company executes the global integrated petroleum business model of oil pumping, refining, and chemicals manufacturing better, and on a larger scale, than anyone. Its top-notch balance sheet ensures low-cost project financing, as well. The combination of these factors points to improved returns as industry conditions come into balance.

These high-quality shares are timely (Rank: 2). Total return potential on a 3to 5-year basis is also attractive, particularly for conservative investors seeking a weighting in the energy sector.

Robert Mitkowski December 2, 2016

(A) Net of gasoline excise taxes.
(B) Based on diluted shares. Excludes nonrecurring gains (losses): '00, 12¢; '01, 3¢; '02, 7¢; '03, 67¢; '05, 36¢; '06, 7¢; '12, \$1.61. Next | ■Dividend reinvestment plan available.

earnings report due late January.
(C) Dividends historically paid in the second week of March, June, Sep., and Dec.

Stock Purchase Plan available w/o broker. (D) In mill., adjusted for split.

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability A++ 95 Price Growth Persistence **Earnings Predictability** 50