Factoids for the week of April 27th – May 1st

**Monday, April 27, 2009**

So far in 2009, the Baltic Dry Index has posted a 17-day winning streak, a 21-day losing streak, and another 9-day winning streak (streak ended 4/23), according to Bespoke Investment Group. Despite the ups and downs the index has gained 145%, but is down 84% from its peak on May 20, 2008.

**Tuesday, April 28, 2009**

The Obama Administration and House Democrats are pushing a “cap-and-trade” system requiring utilities to reduce carbon emissions by 20% (from 2005 levels) by 2020 or buy credits from other companies, according to USA TODAY. Critics of the plan believe the system will push electricity prices higher for consumers. Ninety-five proposed coal-fired power plants have been canceled or postponed since the start of 2007, according to earthpolicy.org. The top 50 U.S. utilities boosted spending on lobbyists by 30% in 2008. The Center for Public Integrity reported that interest groups involved with climate change hired 2,430 lobbyists in the past year, up 300% from five years ago. The S&P Utilities Index is down almost 40% from its high on December 10, 2007, but now sports a dividend yield of 5%.

**Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

The Consumer Financial Literacy Survey for 2009, which was commissioned by the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, found that 41% of U.S. adults gave themselves a grade of “C,” “D,” or “F” for their knowledge of personal finances, according to MarketWatch.com. Only 18% gave themselves an “A.” The survey also revealed that 32% of respondents reported they have no savings, excluding retirement savings. When it comes to retirement savings, 33% said that do not allocate any of their household income toward retirement.

**Thursday, April 30, 2009**

With approximately 13 million people currently out of work in the U.S. one would think there are very few jobs for the taking. Ironically, there are nearly 3 million jobs that employers are actively recruiting for but unable to fill, according to BusinessWeek. A lack of flexibility and training are contributing to the problem. Many unemployed workers who own homes they can’t sell are unable to relocate. Many unemployed workers come from industries where their skills don’t fit those industries looking to hire, such as education, accounting and health care. The national unemployment rate hit 8.5% in March. The average weekly benefit check is around $306.