Source: Bloomberg. Returns are total returns. The 5-yr. return is an average annual. One-week, YTD, 12-mo. and 5-yr. performance returns calculated through 8/15/14.

Source: Bloomberg. Returns are total returns. The 5-yr. return is an average annual. One-week, YTD, 12-mo. and 5-yr. performance returns calculated through 8/15/14.

Source: Barclays Capital. Returns are total returns. The 5-yr. return is an average annual. One-week, YTD, 12-mo. and 5-yr. performance returns calculated through 8/15/14.

Source: Bankrate.com, iMoneyNet.com and Bloomberg.

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Factoids for the week of August 11 - 15, 2014

Monday, August 11, 2014
Census Bureau data shows that the average square footage of newly constructed single-family homes in the U.S. increased by 56.5% from 1,660 square feet in 1973 to 2,598 square feet in 2013, according to USA TODAY. Over the same period, however, the average number of people per household fell from 3.01 to 2.54. The average sales price of newly constructed single-family homes surged 419.2% from $62,500 in 1978 (earliest available data) to $324,500 in 2013.

Tuesday, August 12, 2014
Moody’s reported that the global speculative-grade default rate stood at 2.1% in July, down from 2.2% in June, according to its own release. Moody’s is forecasting a default rate of 2.2% for December 2014. The historical average for the default rate on speculative-grade debt has been approximately 4.7% since 1983. The U.S. speculative-grade default rate stood at 1.8% in July, down from 1.9% in June. The default rate on senior loans stood at 0.96% in July, up from 0.83% in June, according to Standard & Poor’s LCD. The average sales price of newly constructed single-family homes surged 419.2% from $62,500 in 1978 (earliest available data) to $324,500 in 2013.

Wednesday, August 13, 2014
In 2011, the most recent year in which the IRS has compiled final data, an individual needed to have an adjusted gross income of at least $389,000 to be in the top 1% of wage earners in the U.S., according to CNNMoney. That figure stood at $426,439 in 2007, prior to the 2008 financial crisis. In 2011, the top 1% earned nearly 19% of all adjusted gross income reported and paid 35% of all federal income taxes collected by the IRS. The effective tax rate of the top 1% was 23.5%, well above the 14.0% average tax rate for the top 50% of filers.

Thursday, August 14, 2014
Year-to-date through July, the federal government collected $1.80 trillion in taxes, up 7.8% from the $1.67 trillion collected in the same period in 2013, according to Forbes. Tax receipts were higher (y-o-y) in each of the first seven months. Tax revenue is also higher on a fiscal year basis ($2.40 trillion collected), which ends in September. While individual income taxes accounted for approximately 46% of total receipts y-t-d, corporate income taxes contributed slightly less than 10%. The remainder was comprised of Social Security and Medicare taxes, excise taxes and customs duties. Estate and gift taxes accounted for less than 1%.

Friday, August 15, 2014
In addition to such hurdles as high student loan balances and increased competition for properties from institutional investors, lenders are requiring bigger down payments from buyers wanting to purchase a home in the U.S., according to Bloomberg. In 2013, the median down payment fell from 3.01 to 2.54. The average sales price of newly constructed single-family homes surged 419.2% from $62,500 in 1978 (earliest available data) to $324,500 in 2013. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York reported that mortgage originations for properties from institutional investors, lenders are requiring bigger down payments from buyers wanting to purchase a home in the U.S., according to Bloomberg. In 2013, the median down payment fell from 3.01 to 2.54. The average sales price of newly constructed single-family homes surged 419.2% from $62,500 in 1978 (earliest available data) to $324,500 in 2013. The average sales price of newly constructed single-family homes surged 419.2% from $62,500 in 1978 (earliest available data) to $324,500 in 2013. The average sales price of newly constructed single-family homes surged 419.2% from $62,500 in 1978 (earliest available data) to $324,500 in 2013.