In December, the dividend-payers (417) in the S&P 500 (equal weight) posted a total return of -2.43%, vs. -3.19% for the non-payers (87), according to S&P Dow Jones Indices. There are currently 504 stocks in the index. In 2015, the payers were down 3.08%, vs. a loss of 1.27% for the non-payers. It was the fourth consecutive year in which the non-payers outperformed the payers on an equal weight basis. From 2000-2015, however, payers outperformed the non-payers in 10 of those 16 years. In 2015, the number of dividend increases totaled 544, down from 375 in 2014. Sixteen dividends were cut, compared to 8 in 2014.

Tuesday, January 5, 2016

MPF Research, a unit of property management software provider RealPage, reported that rents for new residents of apartment complexes in the 100 largest metro areas in the U.S. rose an average of 4.8% in 2015, the sixth consecutive year in which the increase exceeded the typical 2.7% hike, according to USA TODAY. Over the past six years, rents rose 22.5% to an average of $1,244 per month, the biggest jump for that timeframe in the 25 years that MPF has tracked such data. MPF sees rents increasing by 4.1% in 2016, with annual increases remaining above average through 2018. Apartment occupancy stood at 95.8% in Q4'15, up from 95.5% in Q4'14. The all-time high was 96.8% in 2000.

Wednesday, January 6, 2016

The S&P Dow Jones Indices, which tracks approximately 10,000 U.S. traded stocks, announced that total stock dividend distributions increased by a net (increases less decreases) $3.6 billion in Q4'15, down significantly from the $12.0 billion increase registered in Q4'14, according to its own release. In 2015, dividend increases (net) totaled $38.7 billion, down from $54.8 billion in 2014. In Q4'15, there were 755 dividend increases, down from the 971 dividend increases in Q4'14. The number of dividends cut or suspended in Q4'15 totaled 142, up from the 67 cut or suspended in Q4'14. Energy issues accounted for 48% of the dividend reductions and 80% of the dollar cuts in Q4'15, according to Howard Silverblatt, senior index analyst at S&P Dow Jones Indices.

Thursday, January 7, 2016

In 2015, commercial real estate in the U.S. posted its best showing since 2007, according to JLL. Data from Real Capital Analytics revealed that sales of income-producing properties (> $2.5 million) rose 16% year-over-year to $503.7 billion. Industrial, hotel and apartment properties were the most active, with y-o-y growth increasing by 44%, 40% and 24%, respectively. Retail properties posted the worst showing due to a 5% decline in transactions.

Friday, January 8, 2016

Nearly 25% of people polled by the Kaiser Family Foundation (ages 18-64) say that they or someone in their household had problems paying medical bills. The survey found that the task of covering medical expenses is more common among people with lower or moderate incomes. The findings of another survey just released by Bankrate.com sheds some additional light on this subject. It found that approximately 63% of Americans currently do not have enough savings to handle a $500 emergency.