

Local News - Local News - January 19, 2012

Hart Capital's INW composite rises in fourth quarter

Market values increased during last quarter for 11 of 15 public companies

By Treva Lind

Of the Journal of Business

Hart Capital Management Inc.'s Inland Northwest Composite, which gauges the total market value of 15 publicly traded companies in the region, increased 9 percent last quarter compared with the previous quarter.

Still, the composite finished well down from a year earlier.

The Spokane-based investment firm reported earlier this month that as of Dec. 31, the composite rose to \$10.4 billion, up almost \$900,000 from the \$9.5 billion value at the end of the third quarter. During the latest quarter, 11 of the 15 companies showed increasing value.

Sterling Financial Corp., Itron Inc., and Coeur d'Alene Mines Corp. had the greatest fourth-quarter increases in market capitalization, which is share price multiplied by the number of outstanding shares. Sterling's value went up by \$268 million; Itron increased \$256 million; and Coeur rose by \$242 million.

Potlatch Corp., Ambassadors Group Inc., and Hecla Mining Co. showed the greatest decreases in quarter-to-quarter market value. Potlatch's value was down \$16.5 million; Ambassadors fell \$22.6 million; and Hecla saw a \$38.5 million dip.

For the entire year, the composite declined by 21 percent, or \$2.8 billion, compared with a year ago when it stood at \$13.2 billion. For the year, three companies remained in positive territory. They are Avista Corp., up \$225 million; WTB Financial Corp., the holding company for Washington Trust Bank, up \$21.4 million; and Northwest Bancorp., the holding company for Inland Northwest Bank, up \$400,000.

In addition to the composite, Hart Capital operates an Inland Northwest Index, which tracks the same 15 companies in an index methodology similar to that of the Standard & Poor's Index. The index also increased by 9 percent in a quarter-to-quarter comparison, while the S&P 500 Index rose by 11 percent.

The best performers in the regional index over the three-month period were Key Tronic Corp., up 35.5 percent; and Sterling Financial, up 35 percent.

The worst-performing stock in the index compared with the prior quarter was Sandpoint-based Intermountain Community Bancorp., with a 24 percent decline.

The 15 companies included are Avista, Ambassadors Group, Clearwater Paper Corp., Coeur d'Alene Mines, Coldwater Creek Inc., Hecla, Idaho Independent Bank, Intermountain Community Bancorp., Itron, Key Tronic, WTB Financial, Northwest Bancorp., Potlatch Corp., Red Lion Hotels Corp., and Sterling Financial.