



Withdrawal  
wire photo

Israeli army officers deliver eviction documents to a Jewish settler in the Gaza Strip Jewish settlement of Neve Dekalim, on Aug. 16. Soldiers informed the family that they will be removed by force if they don't leave during the night.

## Rising gas prices leads to a poor showing for Wal-Mart

NEW YORK (AP) — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. struggled in the second quarter and muted its earnings outlook on Tuesday, again blaming higher gasoline prices for curbing the spending plans of its low-income shoppers. In contrast, shoppers at moderate-price department store retailer J.C. Penney Co. Inc. and at upscale Nordstrom Inc. focused on fashion rather than fuel, resulting in strong results and an upbeat outlook.

Meanwhile, teen retailer Abercrombie & Fitch Co. posted big profit gains in the second quarter, though results missed analysts' forecasts. The company raised its outlook for the year.

The looming concerns over oil prices lowered the stock prices of many retailers.

Wal-Mart posted a 5.8 percent gain in second-quarter profits, beating Wall Street projections, but the results marked the smallest percentage gain in four years. The world's largest retailer's revenues fell short of projections. Penney recorded a sharp increase in profits, boosted by strong sales of merchandise across all divisions, and said that annual profits would surpass Wall Street expectations.

Nordstrom had a 39 percent increase in profits, beating analysts' estimates. The company upgraded its profit for the year.

Abercrombie & Fitch enjoyed a 35 percent increase in second-quarter profits from a year ago, helped by strong sales of denim

and knit fashions.

The disappointing results from Wal-Mart offer further evidence that the discounter can't rely on the lowest prices to fuel sales and profit growth as rivals like Target Corp. and Penney, both of which appeal to a higher-income shopper, keep sharpening their merchandising assortment. While Wal-Mart began to expand into trendier apparel and home fashions this year to make itself less vulnerable to the economy's jitters, the question is whether it can lure shoppers fast enough to turn business around.

"They have to keep up because the competition is offering more interesting merchandise," said Philip M. Zahn, retail analyst at Fitch Ratings.

For the three months ending July 31, Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart earned \$2.8 billion, or 67 cents per share, up from \$2.65 billion, or 62 cents per share, in the year-ago period. That was the smallest quarterly gain since the retailer's second quarter of 2001 when it recorded a 2.8 percent increase, according to Thomson Financial.

Wal-Mart reported sales of \$76.8 billion for the three months ending July 31, up 10.2 percent.

Analysts expected a profit of 65 cents per share and revenue of \$77.46 billion.

Wal-Mart Chief Executive Lee Scott

blamed high gasoline prices for the company's shortfall. Scott said a cool and wet spring got the quarter off to a slow start but summer came in stronger than forecast.

Scott said in a call with investors Tuesday that inflation appears to be under control, except when considering fuel prices.

"I worry about the effect of higher oil prices," he said. Scott said higher prices at the pump could erase economic gains for a portion of Wal-Mart's customer base.

Scott said the company has kept its low-priced items but has improved its mix of merchandise in mid- and premium-price categories.

Chief Financial Officer Tom Schoewe said utility expenses rose by \$100 million in the quarter and fuel costs were up \$30 million. Wal-Mart is continuing an aggressive expansion and plans to increase its square footage by 8 percent this fiscal year.

Wal-Mart projected it would earn between 55 cents and 59 cents per share for its third quarter and between \$2.63 and \$2.70 for the year. Analysts are expecting a profit of 60 cents per share for the third quarter and \$2.66 for the year.

Chairman and Chief Executive of Penney Myron Ullman said customers have absorbed higher gasoline prices "but we can't expect that to continue" if energy prices keep rising.

### Couple married in a McDonald's drive-thru

IRWIN, Pa. (AP) — Do you want fries with those vows?

Ken Sinchar and Lori Sherbondy have heard that and every other fast-food joke since they announced their plans to marry at a McDonald's drive-thru in North Huntingdon Township — the place where they fell in love four years earlier.

On Monday night, Sinchar rolled through the drive-thru in his white minivan, just as he had done day after day, hoping to chat with "that blue-eyed brunette named Lori."

But on this night, Sinchar rolled down his window, Sherbondy slid open hers and the couple grabbed hands as a district judge announced them husband and wife.

Sinchar was expecting to pick up a Big Mac, not a date, when he pulled through the Norwin Towne

Shopping Center McDonald's years ago.

"I didn't used to go for fast food, but I looked at that woman in the window, and wow!" said Sinchar, a 38-year old floor installer. "I came back every lunchtime after that."

Sherbondy, 42, who's worked at the restaurant for eight years, said Sinchar made an impression, too.

"He's the only man I ever flirted with," Sherbondy said. "It got to where everyone in the store knew when it was 12:15, when my Hamburger Happy Meal Man was coming through," Sherbondy said.

"People might think that we're goofy and odd and all that, but it's really meant for us," Sherbondy said. "The transactions that we had through the window just meant a lot, so this means a lot."

### Illinois governor attempts to shut down hospital incinerators producing toxic waste emissions

CHICAGO (AP) — Two suburban Chicago hospitals will operate medical waste incinerators that produce toxic waste for five more years under agreements brokered by Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration.

Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood and Hinsdale Hospital will be able to keep their incinerators running until 2010, the Chicago Tribune reported in Monday editions, citing documents it obtained.

"Our goal is to do everything we can to shut down these incinerators, and we've been very successful so far in getting that done," Abby Ottenhoff, spokeswoman for Blagojevich told The Associated Press on Monday. "Without a law completely banning the incinerators, we are working with individual hos-

pitals to get them to get rid of their incinerators."

Several Illinois hospitals continued to burn their disposed medical products until Blagojevich, last fall, backed community activists urging the trash burners to shut down. Six hospitals agreed to turn off their incinerators.

Loyola eventually agreed to close its incinerator after meeting with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency director Doug Scott.

Both Loyola and Hinsdale have agreed to conduct tests for dioxins and cut back on the amount of waste they burn. The state also is requiring the three holdouts — St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Memorial Hospital in Belleville and Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Mt. Vernon — to be tested annually.

### U.S. Olympic Committee forces name change

EUGENE, Ore. (AP) — After nine years of slippery, slinky competition, the Ferret Olympics is being forced to change its name — the U.S. Olympic Committee has threatened to sue.

An estimated 75 ferrets will vie for medals at the Ferret Agility Trials on Sunday in events including the tube run and the paper bag escape. Only "they are not Olympians anymore," organizer Melanee Ellis said with a laugh.

Ellis started the Ferret Olympics in 1996, the year of the Atlanta games, as a fundraiser for a local ferret shelter.

The Ferret Olympics didn't attract much attention until the local newspaper reported on it in 2004, Ellis said.

Within two weeks of the story, she received phone calls from the BBC in London, "Late Show with David Letterman," "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" and, eventually, the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Ellis, 44, said she could hardly believe the woman on the phone was serious about the threat of a lawsuit for unauthorized use of a trademark.

"No one is being singled out," U.S. Olympic Committee spokesman Darryl Seibel said. "But the accumulated effect of letting that go unchecked would hinder the ability we have to do what we do."

"I'm sure Spaz is the most upset," Ellis said about the top athlete in her ferret lineup. "He never did win a medal at the Olympics. He thought this would be his year."

## Ekklesia "Dogs for Christ" & The Kirksville Church of Christ

110 Pfeiffer Ave.

Welcome  
Dan & Gaylene Green to Campus Ministry



Dan & Gaylene will reach out to students at the Truman, MACC, and A.T. Still campuses. They reside at Ekklesia's Campus House 1405 S. Florence, across from the Truman Football Stadium, and will coordinate campus ministry for Churches of Christ. Dan is a featured speaker on One Another Christianity, a television ministry to be launched in January 2006.

www.kirksvillechurchofchrist.com  
www2.truman.edu/ekkleisia  
627-4003 Church Office  
627-5003 Campus House, Call for Rides

### Upcoming Events:

- Marty James, Truman Alum. & Bank President speaks at 11 a.m. Sun. Aug. 21 at Church of Christ Located E. of Leisure World
- Ekklesia Open House Sun. Aug. 21, 2:00-3:15 p.m., Balloons, Lemonade & Cookies from Gaylene's Kitchen
- Free Tide and Cheer Samples — "Glad TIDEings We Bring. Be of good CHEER!" Activities Fair, Wed. Aug. 31
- Labor Day BBQ & Games, Mon. Sept. 5, 6 to 10 p.m. Ekklesia Campus House
- Hurry and redeem your Ekklesia coupons located around campus

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