# **Economics Group**

# WELLS SECURITIES

## MONTHLY OUTLOOK

### **U.S. Overview**

### **Domestic Expansion in the Face of Global Risks**

Real economic growth of 2 to 2.5 percent, with moderate inflation, characterizes the expansion as has been the story for some time. One result of this outlook is our expectation that the Federal Reserve will continue with its low federal fund rate benchmark for this year. Long-term benchmark rates are expected to rise, as the risk-on trade increases with fewer expectations for a double-dip recession in the United States and a collapse in Europe.

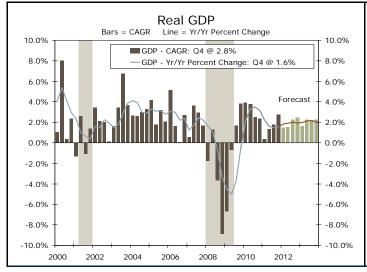
Despite the cyclical recovery, structural problems remain in the labor, housing and state and local government sectors. After two-plus years of recovery, these structural issues remain a damper on the strength of the recovery. Meanwhile, the global economy remains challenged with the cyclical weakness in the European economy combined with the emergence of significant risks with respect to the Middle East and the outcome of the U.S. election this fall. We believe a European recession is in swing right now that should lower export growth and earnings for some U.S. companies, at least in the near term.

Tensions in the Middle East could lead to a spike in oil prices in the short-run and possibly an extended period of uncertainty that might limit the supply of oil in a pattern reminiscent of the 1970s. Meanwhile, election uncertainties will likely begin to weigh on business decision making, as potential significantly different fiscal policy options would be associated with alternative election outcomes. Such uncertainties should weigh on economic, business investment and employment growth.

### **International Overview**

### Global Economy: Coming in for a Soft Landing?

The global economy revealed a bit more resilience at the start of the year. In January, the easing of global monetary policy and the improvement in global financial conditions has helped lift manufacturing and service sentiment in much of the world. However, our view of global growth for 2012 remains hardly altered. Global growth is still expected to slow to around 3.1 percent in 2012 from a 3.5 percent growth rate in 2011. The Eurozone crisis is far from solved, but financial conditions in Europe are much improved from the past month, giving fiscal authorities more breathing room to get a handle on their existing debt and solvency issues, and European banks a chance to improve their liquidity and capital positions. The main driver of the financial improvement has come from the European Central Bank's (ECB) new three-year long-term refinancing operations (LTRO) that European banks have utilized liberally, helping themselves to about €500 billion in loans so far. The staunching of the European bank liquidity problems in the near term have given investors the confidence to snap up the distressed debt of Spain and Italy. Ten-year government bond yields in Italy have fallen below 6 percent from a November peak of 7.50 percent, but yields for the Italian government and other highly indebted European countries still remain elevated in a historical context. In addition, there is no guarantee that the ECB LTRO operations will help avoid a bank credit crunch in Europe that could deepen and prolong a European economic downturn. For now the economic data suggest that the global growth slowdown appears gradual.





 $Source: U.S.\ Department\ of\ Commerce,\ Bloomberg\ LP\ and\ Wells\ Fargo\ Securities,\ LLC$ 

Together we'll go far



### **Sustained Domestic Expansion**

Continued gains in personal consumption, equipment and software spending as well as residential investment will support our domestic expansion. Weakness in structures and government spending will moderate the overall pace of growth in the first half of this year.

Consumers have benefited from improved job growth along with further income gains reinforced by moderation in the overall pace of consumer price inflation. We remain cautious about the recent pickup in employment and the decline in the unemployment rate. Although some improvement was expected, the degree of improvement may reflect a seasonal adjustment issue as well as a question of the recent decline in labor force participation rates. Recently, as a sign of better consumer times, there has been a pick-up in the pace of light vehicle sales suggesting better consumer incomes and confidence. Business equipment investment will also continue to support the domestic expansion as this sector remains an above-trend contributor to growth. Residential construction, particularly remodeling, will also add to growth.

On the downside, non-residential construction has been hit by a downdraft in energy exploration and drilling. At the federal level, defense cuts appear to be emerging, while budget sequestration appears to be another factor reducing spending. Global economic weakness has resulted in softness in export growth that should result in a drag on real GDP growth in the first half of this year.

Inflation will slow down in the year ahead, as commodity and producer prices moderate and unit labor costs rise slowly. With moderate growth and lower inflation, we expect short-term interest rates to remain low for most of the year, while longer-term borrowing rates rise as the search for yield continues, the risk-on trade accelerates and investors seek better investment opportunities.

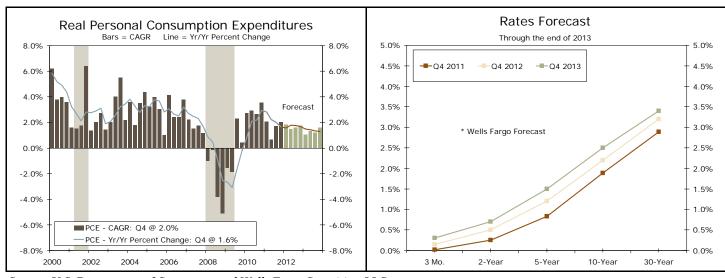
# Just When You Thought It Was Safe to Leave the House

While the cyclical recovery moves ahead, the structural problems of labor, housing and federal deficits have become more obvious. We have written regularly on these hard realities and yet, only recently have many commentators come to view these realities as far less susceptible to the traditional fiscal and monetary stimulus programs. Instead, the challenges are far more intricate and long term in their resolution. Until these structural issues are addressed, it will be tough to achieve above-trend growth for a sustained period of time.

### Meanwhile, Across the Pond

The current European recession has two negative effects on the U.S. economy. First, slower growth is a negative for U.S. exports and corporate profits for U.S. firms. Second, there is the uncertain extent of financial links between European institutions and those in the United States. This has had an interesting effect which was reported in the Fed's latest Senior Loan Officer Survey providing evidence that banks had tightened lending standards to European clients while European banks have become less competitive on lending within the U.S. credit markets. In terms of its effect on U.S. trade, the effect of foreign growth (the income effect) outweighs the influence of changes in the exchange rate.

Finally, we recognize the difficulty of accounting for the uncertainty associated with issues in the Middle East and the politics of European elections. Moreover, it remains unclear to what extent a slowdown in China and the proposed phase out of the GSEs will affect the economy in the year ahead. What is important to decision makers is that the cyclical recovery is here and now, the focus must be toward the structural problems of the domestic hard realities and global adjustments.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC

Wells Fargo U.S. Economic Forecast																					
	Actual					Forecast						Actual			Forecast						
	2010 2011			2012 2013						2009	2010	2011	2012	2013							
	10	2Q	3Q	40	10	2Q	3Q	40	10	2Q	3Q	4Q	10	2Q	3Q	4Q					
Real Gross Domestic Product (a)	3.9	3.8	2.5	2.3	0.4	1.3	1.8	2.8	1.5	1.6	2.3	2.5	1.6	2.2	2.2	2.3	-3.6	3.0	1.7	1.9	2.1
Personal Consumption	2.7	2.9	2.6	3.6	2.1	0.7	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.6	-2.0	2.0	2.2	1.7	1.4
Business Fixed Investment	6.0	18.6	11.3	8.7	2.1	10.3	15.7	1.7	14.1	6.0	6.8	7.6	3.4	4.5	5.9	6.9	-18.0	4.4	8.6	8.8	5.5
Equipment and Software	21.7	23.2	14.1	8.1	8.7	6.2	16.2	5.2	6.7	6.3	7.1	7.8	3.0	4.0	5.6	6.6	-16.3	14.6	10.3	7.5	5.3
Structures	- 24.7	7.5	4.2	10.5	-14.3	22.6	14.4	-7.2	2.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	5.0	6.5	7.0	8.0	-21.2	-15.8	4.1	4.2	6.2
Residential Construction	-15.3	22.8	-27.7	2.5	-2.5	4.2	1.2	10.9	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.0	11.0	14.0	15.0	-22.3	-4.3	-1.4	7.4	10.3
Government Purchases	-1.2	3.7	1.0	-2.8	-5.9	-0.9	-0.1	-4.6	-1.3	-1.8	-1.4	-1.3	-1.3	-1.1	-0.8	-0.9	1.7	0.7	-2.1	-1.9	-1.2
Net Exports	-376.8	-437.4	-458.7	-414.2	- 424.4	-416.4	-402.8	-405.8	-429.6	-441.3	- 433.5	-425.4	-410.1	-388.9	-376.0	-373.1	-358.8	-421.8	-412.4	-432.4	-387.0
Pct. Point Contribution to GDP	-1.0	-1.9	-0.7	1.4	-0.3	0.2	0.4	-0.1	-0.7	-0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.1	1.0	-0.5	0.1	-0.2	0.3
Inventory Change	39.9	64.6	92.3	38.3	49.1	39.1	-2.0	56.0	36.5	47.5	53.0	57.0	59.0	61.0	63.5	63.5	-145.0	58.8	35.6	48.5	61.8
Pct. Point Contribution to GDP	3.1	0.8	0.9	-1.8	0.3	-0.3	-1.4	1.9	-0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	-0.8	1.6	-0.2	0.1	0.1
Nominal GDP	5.5	5.4	3.9	4.2	3.1	4.0	4.4	3.2	3.9	3.7	4.3	4.5	3.7	4.4	4.5	4.5	-2.6	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.2
Real Final Sales	0.8	3.0	1.7	4.2	0.0	1.6	3.2	0.8	2.1	1.2	2.1	2.3	1.6	2.2	2.1	2.3	-2.8	1.4	1.9	1.8	2.0
Retail Sales (b)	5.3	6.9	5.6	7.6	8.2	7.8	8.0	7.0	4.9	4.6	4.5	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.3	-7.0	6.4	7.7	4.4	4.0
Inflation Indicators (b)																					
PCE Deflator	2.4	2.0	1.5	1.3	1.8	2.5	2.9	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	0.6	1.8	2.4	1.8	1.9
Consumer Price Index	2.4	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.2	3.3	3.8	3.3	2.4	1.8	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.2	-0.3	1.6	3.1	1.9	2.0
"Core" Consumer Price Index	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.6	1.1	1.5	1.9	2.2	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.7	1.8	1.6
Producer Price Index	5.1	4.3	3.7	3.8	5.0	6.7	6.9	5.6	3.1	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	-2.6	4.2	6.0	2.4	2.8
Employment Cost Index	1.7	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.2	1.7	1.3	2.6	2.1	2.2
Real Disposable Income (a)	4.9	5.6	2.3	1.5	1.2	-0.5	-1.9	0.8	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	-0.6	1.3	1.8	2.1	-2.1	1.8	0.9	0.8	1.1
Nominal Personal Income (b)	1.4	3.2	4.9	5.4	5.8	5.1	4.2	3.9	2.5	2.4	3.1	3.3	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.3	-4.0	3.7	4.7	2.8	2.2
Industrial Production (a)	8.1	7.1	6.7	3.1	4.8	0.7	6.3	3.1	3.8	3.6	3.0	2.2	-0.3	3.3	4.0	4.2	-11.1	5.3	4.1	3.5	2.3
Capacity Utilization	72.3	74.0	75.5	76.1	76.8	76.7	77.6	78.0	78.3	78.7	79.1	79.2	78.8	79.0	79.4	79.7	69.2	74.5	77.3	78.8	79.2
Corporate Profits Before Taxes (b)	46.7	41.5	27.4	18.2	8.8	8.5	7.5	6.4	6.2	6.0	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7	9.1	32.2	7.8	6.3	6.6
Corporate Profits After Taxes	36.0	36.2	23.3	17.4	10.6	9.4	11.1	7.0	7.4	7.2	7.4	7.4	6.8	7.0	7.0	7.2	16.0	27.5	9.5	7.4	7.0
Federal Budget Balance (c)	-328.9	-287.0	-290.2	-369.0	- 460.5	-141.1	-326.3	-321.7	-348.0	-174.0	- 200.2	-220.0	-215.0	-210.0	-210.0	- 185.0	-1415.7	-1294.2	-1296.8	-1043.9	-855.0
Current Account Balance (d)	-118.3	-120.3	-120.1	-112.2	-119.6	-124.7	-110.3	-115.0	-130.0	-140.0	- 145.0	-145.0	-140.0	-135.0	-135.0	-130.0	-376.6	-470.9	-469.6	-560.0	-540.0
Trade Weighted Dollar Index (e)	76.1	78.8	73.6	73.2	70.6	69.4	72.8	73.3	72.0	73.0	74.0	75.0	75.5	76.0	76.5	77.0	77.7	75.6	70.9	73.5	76.3
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Nonfarm Payroll Change (f)		196.0	- 45.3 9.5			129.7			204.3	140.0	125.0	150.0	113.3	130.0		150.0		85.6	151.7	8.3	
Unemployment Rate Housing Starts (g)	9.8 0.61	9.6 0.60	0.58	9.6 0.54	9.0 0.58	9.0 0.57	9.1 0.62	8.7 0.66	8.3 0.66	8.2 0.70	8.4 0.69	8.4 0.70	8.4 0.74	8.3 0.78	8.2 0.83	8.1 0.84	9.3 0.55	9.6 0.58	9.0 0.61	0.69	8.3 0.80
Light Vehicle Sales (h)	11.0	11.4	11.6	12.3	13.0	12.1	12.4	13.4	14.2	14.3	14.5	14.6	13.8	14.0	14.3	14.6	10.4	11.6	12.7	14.4	14.2
Crude Oil - WTI - Front Contract (i)	78.72	78.03	76.20	85.17	94.10	102.56	89.76	94.06	100.11	100.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	61.80	79.53	95.12	102.53	105.0
	70.72	70.00	70.20	00.17	71110	102.00	07.70	71.00	100.11	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	01.00	77.00	70.12	102.00	100.0
Quarter-End Interest Rates (j)																					
Federal Funds Target Rate	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
3 Month LIBOR	0.29	0.53	0.29	0.30	0.30	0.25	0.37	0.58	0.45	0.40	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.69	0.34	0.34	0.38	0.30
Prime Rate	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
Conventional Mortgage Rate	4.97	4.74	4.35	4.71	4.84	4.51	4.11	3.96	4.00	4.00	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.20	4.30	4.40	5.04	4.69	4.46	4.05	4.25
3 Month Bill 2 Year Note	0.16 1.02	0.18 0.61	0.16 0.42	0.12 0.61	0.09	0.03 0.45	0.02 0.25	0.02	0.03 0.25	0.05 0.35	0.10 0.40	0.15 0.50	0.20 0.50	0.20	0.25	0.30	0.15 0.96	0.14 0.70	0.05 0.45	0.08	0.24
	2.55						0.25								1.40			1.93		0.38	
5 Year Note 10 Year Note	3.84	1.79 2.97	1.27 2.53	2.01 3.30	2.24 3.47	1.76 3.18	1.92	0.83 1.89	0.80 1.90	0.90 2.00	1.00 2.10	1.20 2.20	1.20 2.20	1.30 2.30	2.40	1.50 2.50	2.20 3.26	3.22	1.52 2.78	2.05	1.35 2.35
30 Year Bond	4.72	3.91	3.69	4.34	4.51	4.38	2.90	2.89	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.30	3.40	4.08	4.25	3.91	3.05	3.28
So real Boliu	4.72	3.71	3.07	4.34	4.51	4.30	2.70	2.07	2.70	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.30	3.40	4.00	4.20	3.71	3.03	3.20

Forecast as of: February 8, 2012
Notes: (a) Compound Annual Growth Rate Quarter-over-Quarter
(b) Year-over-Year Percentage Change
(c) Quarterly Sum - Billions USD: Annual Data Represents Fiscal Yr.
(d) Quarterly Sum - Billions USD
(e) Federal Reserve Major Currency Index, 1973=100 - Quarter End

(f) Average Monthly Change (g) Millions of Units (h) Ouarterly Data - Average Monthly SAAR; Annual Data - Actual Total Vehicles Sold (f) Ouarterly Average of Daily Close

(j) Annual Numbers Represent Averages

### Global Economy: Coming in for a Soft Landing?

Manufacturing and service PMIs jumped in January not only for the United States, but also in much of the rest of the world. Importantly, the Eurozone economy revealed some surprising resilience. To be sure, the Eurozone economy continues to struggle and we are still forecasting a mild recession for the overall euro area in 2012, but January brought some improvement in Eurozone PMIs reducing market concerns about a deep and prolonged downturn on the continent. In fact, January marks the third consecutive month of improvement in the composite Eurozone PMI, according to Markit Economics. The Eurozone manufacturing PMI remained in contraction territory at 48.8 in January, but the services PMI rose to 50.4, just above the threshold between contraction and expansion. This was the first expansion reading for the Eurozone services PMI since August.

### A Bank Credit Crunch in Europe

Financial conditions in Europe have eased on the ECB's threeyear LTRO and better economic data in some Eurozone countries. However, the recent bank lending survey released by the ECB suggests that a bank credit crunch may already be underway in the Eurozone that could further undermine Europe's economic performance.

### **Europe's Consumers Go into Hibernation**

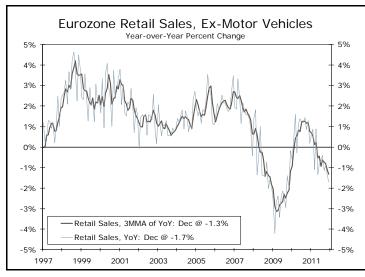
The December retail sales data coming from Europe show that European consumer demand has continued to weaken into the New Year. The unemployment rate in the Eurozone is at a 14-year high and government austerity is kicking in more than ever. European retail sales fell 0.4 percent in December, similar to November's decrease. Europe's real consumer spending likely contracted in the fourth quarter. German retail sales plunged 1.4 percent in December following a 1.0 percent decline in November. Retail sales in France slipped in

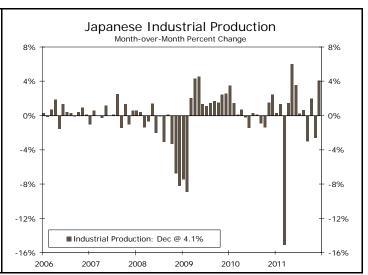
December, while Spain's retail sales fell another 0.8 percent during the month.

### Asia-Pacific: Softer Growth in Q4

Meanwhile the growth slowdown continues in the Asia-Pacific countries, especially in the open export-oriented markets with significant exposures to Europe. Case in point, Singapore recently released its advance estimate of Q4 GDP and the data looked pretty ugly. Annualized GDP for Singapore fell 4.9 percent in the fourth quarter. Manufacturing output declined at a 21.7 percent annualized pace and construction plunging at a 6.7 annualized rate in Q4. Over the year, Singapore's economy managed a positive 3.6 percent growth rate, a marked deceleration from the end of 2010 when yearover-year growth came in at a sizzling 12.0 percent pace. On the bright-side. Japan's industrial production managed to climb 4.0 percent in December, offsetting the worse-thanexpected 2.7 percent decline in November. Japanese growth should accelerate to 1.0 percent in 2012, as rebuilding and government stimulus helps fill the void of a moribund consumer and weak exports. Japan's economy likely contracted 0.9 percent in 2011, as it reeled from the effect of its devastating earthquake and tsunami, while yen strength and slowing global growth hurt Japan's export sector.

The focus remains on global downside risks, although the ramp-up in global equity prices and stabilization of global financial conditions has improved the odds of a gradual slowdown in global growth rather than a plunge off the cliff. Watch the European bank credit crunch for signs that it is worsening or spreading to other regions of the globe. This could be an important leading indicator of a deeper and more prolonged global downturn. Higher oil prices are also a major downside risk for global growth, especially if a military conflict breaks out with Iran.





Source: IHS Global Insight and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC

Wells Fargo International Economic Forecast									
(Year-over-Year Percent Change)									
		GDP		CPI					
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013			
Global (PPP weights)	3.5%	3.1%	3.7%	5.4%	3.9%	4.1%			
Global (Market Exchange Rates)	2.3%	1.9%	2.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Advanced Economies <sup>1</sup>	1.4%	1.3%	2.0%	2.9%	1.6%	1.7%			
United States	1.7%	1.9%	2.1%	3.1%	1.9%	2.0%			
Eurozone	1.5%	0.0%	1.5%	2.7%	1.6%	1.7%			
United Kingdom	0.9%	0.9%	1.7%	4.5%	2.5%	1.8%			
Japan	-0.9%	1.0%	1.4%	-0.3%	-0.3%	-0.1%			
Korea	3.6%	2.6%	3.4%	4.0%	3.2%	3.0%			
Canada	2.4%	2.0%	2.8%	2.9%	1.8%	2.1%			
Developing Economies <sup>1</sup>	5.9%	5.3%	5.7%	8.2%	6.5%	7.0%			
China	9.3%	8.3%	8.8%	5.4%	2.9%	3.3%			
India	7.2%	7.0%	7.6%	8.9%	6.5%	7.8%			
Mexico	4.0%	3.7%	3.9%	3.4%	5.2%	5.5%			
Brazil	2.7%	3.2%	3.6%	6.6%	5.3%	5.0%			
Russia	4.3%	3.2%	3.0%	8.5%	6.5%	6.6%			

Forecast as of: February 8, 2012

Aggregated Using PPP Weights

Wells Fargo International Interest Rate Forecast												
(End of Quarter Rates)												
			3-Month	LIBOR					10-Year	Bond		
	2012				2013	3		201		2013		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
U.S.	0.45%	0.40%	0.35%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	1.90%	2.00%	2.10%	2.20%	2.20%	2.30%
Japan	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	1.00%	1.03%	1.06%	1.09%	1.10%	1.11%
Euroland*	0.80%	0.65%	0.65%	0.65%	0.70%	1.00%	1.85%	1.95%	2.10%	2.30%	2.60%	3.00%
U.K.	1.00%	0.70%	0.65%	0.65%	0.65%	0.70%	2.15%	2.25%	2.35%	2.50%	2.70%	3.10%
Canada	1.35%	1.25%	1.15%	1.20%	1.50%	1.75%	2.10%	2.30%	2.50%	2.90%	3.20%	3.40%

Forecast as of: February 8, 2012

\*10-year German Government Bond Yield

# Wells Fargo Securities, LLC Economics Group

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