The ECB continued climbing in the second and third quarters with increases of 7.4% and 6.7% respectively. The ECB closed the year strong rising an additional 10.3% during the fourth quarter. Overall, the ECB performed extremely well in 2013 returning $46,676.57 on the initial $100,000 investment.

People always want to know how their investments are doing and how the overall stock market is performing. In addition, people may also want to know how publically owned companies familiar to the Eau Claire area and Western Wisconsin region are doing in terms of market performance compared to other investments.

The Chippewa Valley Center for Economic Research & Development (CVCERD) collects and maintains stock market data on four separate hypothetical investments (including investments in local stocks) of $100,000 and track/compare their performance over the year.

An account of these investments is reported weekly in Tuesday’s Business Section of the Leader-Telegram. In addition, the CVCERD issues three quarterly reports and a year-end report on these investments including specific information on selected companies. The Leader-Telegram also runs a story based on each of these reports.

The 2013 Eau Claire Stock Basket (ECB) consists of 46 companies with an employment presence in the region including retail, manufacturing, dining and entertainment, health care and more.

At the beginning of the year, each company gets an equal share of the initial hypothetical $100,000 investment and then we see what happens over the year.

This poster presents a graphical and statistical summary of the ECB and its bottom performers in 2013.

The ECB’s great performance in 2013 can be explained by its consistent growth throughout the year. Some of the companies in the ECB performed so well that negative growth by others in the basket weren’t enough to substantially impact the whole basket.

Especially tech retailers’ and service companies’ increasing and sustained performances were the main reason the ECB outperformed the other indexes. Best Buy’s “renew blue” turnaround plan, Lee Enterprises’ reorganization in its financial management, Buffalo Wild Wings’ new pricing system were among the pillars that held the ECB’s performance strong.

Another key is that the companies in the ECB are fairly well diversified across sectors and industry types.

Xcel Energy’s stock was relatively flat over 2013. Over the year it was noted that Xcel experienced higher operating and maintenance costs and a cooler than expected summer which held them back from higher gains. Xcel has struggled with losing individual consumers to solar power.

Seneca Food’s ended the year badly due to the bad product mix and weak selling prices that hit the company in the second quarter, leading its stock prices to plunge 52% to $0.59 a share. With its shares trading roughly 90% of book value, Seneca Food was performing below the industry average.

Since declaring bankruptcy in the midst of the Great Recession, short sellers have been trying to run GGP into the ground. A weak holiday season in 2013 has contributed to the short sellers’ downward pressure on GGP’s stock value.

TMT Technologies is struggling because of the innovation in their industry. TMT’s main private sector product is large servers for businesses. As the market moves towards cloud computing for their storage needs, TTM is starting to lose sales.

JCPenney underwent a disastrous rebranding attempt in 2012 and 2013 under (now former) CEO Ron Johnson. They changed their pricing strategy and their store layout. Both of these changes were unpopular with customers, and sales dramatically fell.

We gratefully acknowledge generous funding support from the UWEC Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Blugold Commitment, Xcel Energy-Eau Claire, and Northwestern Bank-Chippewa Falls.