



## Score Big With 4 Dividend-Paying Stocks From NHL Semi-Final Cities

### Description

It's the NHL semi-finals and both series are heating up. Two teams will soon compete for the Stanley Cup. However, for investors, there's interest beyond the games in these semi-final markets. Here are four dividend-paying companies sharing the spotlight with hockey in these cities.

#### 1. Chicago

**CME Group** ([NASDAQ: CME](#)) is the globe's leading and most diverse derivatives marketplace. It handles 3 billion contracts worth approximately \$1 quadrillion annually (on average). This month, it announced that April 2014's volume averaged 12.2 million contracts daily. This represents an increase of 6% versus April 2013. The total volume for April 2014 was over 256 million contracts.

*The Financial Times* reported this month that CME Group is cultivating a tri-party collateral management system with a group of European Central Securities Depositories. Its London, England-based clearing house publicized that it was working with the settlement business of **SIX Group**, the Swiss exchange, and **BNY Mellon**, the U.S. custodian bank that is also developing a European CSD.

Robert Almanas, managing director of SIX Securities Services, said this about European Market Infrastructure Regulation: "The need for collateral and collateral management will continue to grow in this regulatory environment with EMIR, and this is an opportunity for us and our customers. Also, we will expand our customer base through CME Clearing Europe."

Last week, CME Group declared a second-quarter dividend of \$0.47 per share.

#### 2. Montreal

**Saputo** ([TSX: SAP](#)) is one of the top 10 dairy processors worldwide — it's Canada's largest and Argentina's third-largest, and is among the top three U.S. cheese producers. The company produces, markets, and distributes a broad spectrum of dairy products.

For Q3 fiscal 2014 (ended December 31, 2013), Saputo's net earnings were \$144.1 million. This represents an increase of \$14.1 million, or 10.8%. Revenue for this quarter was \$2.34 billion. This

represents an increase of \$542.6 million (30.1%).

Saputo acquired dairy products producer Morningstar Foods from the latter's parent company, Dean Foods. Morningstar complements Saputo's U.S. cheese business. The Morningstar acquisition is adding approximately \$150 million of EBITDA on an annual basis. Saputo completed this acquisition in January 2013.

This past February, Saputo's board of directors approved a dividend of \$0.23 per share.

### 3. New York

**American Express** ([NYSE: AXP](#)) has 107.2 million cards in force, a \$952.4 billion global billed business, and \$33 billion in annual revenue. The company's products and services encompass credit cards, small business credit cards, corporate cards, prepaid cards, savings accounts and CDs, and gift cards. In 2013, American Express had record earnings of \$5.4 billion in net income. This was up 20% from 2012. It reduced total expenses by 1% in 2013. American Express also set a goal of limiting operating expense growth to no greater than 3% in 2013 and 2014, and it beat that goal in 2013.

This month, Dan Schulman, group president of enterprise growth, noted that customers loaded over \$1.9 billion on American Express prepaid cards this year through April 2014. This is close to triple the amount from 2013.

On May 13, 2014, American Express' board of directors approved a \$0.03 (13%) increase in the quarterly dividend on its common stock. This raised the dividend to \$0.26 per common share, from \$0.23.

### 4. Los Angeles

**Occidental Petroleum** ([NYSE: OXY](#)) is a global oil and gas exploration and production company. Based on equity market capitalization, it is among the largest in the United States. The company's oil and gas segment earnings for Q1 2014 were \$2.1 billion versus \$1.9 billion for Q1 2013. It had Q1 2014 net income of \$1.4 billion.

For production growth this year, Occidental is increasing its capital expenditures. The company's capital program for 2014 increases to approximately \$10.2 billion, versus a little less than \$9 billion in 2013. Most of the increase will go to the oil and gas segment.

Occidental has paid quarterly dividends continuously since 1975. This past February, its board increased the dividend by \$0.08 to \$0.72 per quarter (an increase of \$2.88 per share from the prior annual amount of \$2.56 per share). It has increased its dividend every year for 12 consecutive years and 13 times during that period.

The NHL is winding its way to the finals. In the meantime, these companies continue to position operations for growth. They represent income opportunities for investors during and beyond the current NHL season.

## CATEGORY

### 1. Investing

## TICKERS GLOBAL

1. NASDAQ:CME (CME Group)
2. NYSE:OXY (Occidental Petroleum Corporation)
3. TSX:SAP (Saputo Inc.)

### Category

1. Investing

### Date

2025/08/17

### Date Created

2014/05/26

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