

Retailers endure tepid May

Shoppers show lingering signs of recession scars

Anne D'Innocenzio
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Shoppers are still showing some scars from the recession. In a May filled with wild stock market swings, consumers gave retailers only slim revenue gains over a terrible May 2009.

The second straight month of sluggishness after a surprisingly solid start to the year underscores both the fragility and choppiness of the economic recovery that will most likely persist at least through the fall.

The International Council of Shopping Centers index for revenue at stores open at least a year reflected such tentative spending, rising 2.6 percent in May. The figure was in line with a reduced growth forecast that ranged anywhere from 2 percent to 2.5 percent.

Michael P. Niemira, ICSC's chief economist, had original-

At a glance

Percent change in sales compared with May 2009

Abercrombie & Fitch Co.	-3.0
Aeropostale Inc.	+1.0
American Eagle Outfitters	-3.0
BJ's Wholesale Club Inc.	+6.8
Costco Wholesale Corp.	+9.0
Gap Inc.	+1.0
J.C. Penney Co.	-1.8
Kohl's Corp.	+3.5
Limited Brands Inc.	+5.0
Macy's Inc.	+1.4
Neiman Marcus Group	+5.6
Nordstrom Inc.	+3.7
Saks Inc.	+5.8
Target Corp.	+1.3
TJX Cos.	+4.0

The Associated Press

ly expected a 3.5 percent gain. May's results follow a 0.8 percent gain in April, and a 9.0 percent increase in March.

"It's going to be a roller coaster," said Sherif Mityas, a partner in the retail practice at management consultant A.T. Kearney. "You're going to have fits and starts. ... Consumers are looking for threads of good news among the bad news, and that's dictating what they're spending

on everything from groceries to \$1,000 TVs."

Mityas said he doesn't believe a recovery will be in full swing until the fourth quarter.

The choppy stock market hasn't made consumers who'd started to spend again any more confident.

"We've had our splurges. We don't need to waste any more money," said Stacy Phillips, 46, who lives in Brooklyn with her husband, a chief financial officer for an HMO. They spent \$4,000 on a vacation to Iceland and Paris in early April, but now they're feeling frugal again as they worry about the stock market, which has tumbled on fears that a European debt crisis will hammer global economic growth.

"It doesn't seem like anything is happening that's making me feel better," she added.

The big test for consumer spending will start in August, when back-to-school spending begins. Right now, however, teens aren't buying much as they can't depend on their parents to finance their purchases and they face grim summer job prospects.

Move to '4G' may not be necessary

Peter Svensson
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Cell phone companies are about to barrage consumers with advertising for the next advance in wireless network technology: "4G" access. The companies are promising faster speeds and the thrill of being the first on the block to use a new acronym.

But there's less to 4G than meets the eye, and there's little reason for people to scramble for it, at least for the next few years.

Sprint Nextel Corp. is the first carrier to beat the drum for fourth-generation wireless technology. It's releasing its first 4G phone, the EVO, today.

In the fall, Verizon Wireless will be firing up its 4G network in 25 to 30 cities, and probably will make a big deal of that. A smaller provider, MetroPCS Communications Inc., is scheduled to introduce its first 4G phone around the same time.

So what is 4G? Broadly speaking, it's a new way to use the airwaves, designed from the start for the transmission of data rather than phone calls. To do that, it borrows aspects of the latest generation of Wi-Fi, the short-range wireless technology.

For consumers, 4G means, in the ideal case, faster access to data. For instance, streaming video might work better, with less stuttering and higher resolution. Videoconferencing is difficult on 3G and

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Childress has restored order and dignity to the franchise, and has done plenty of winning of late, as well. The Vikings have improved each

might work better on 4G. Multiplayer video games may benefit too.

Other than that, it's difficult to point to completely new uses for 4G phones — things they can do that 3G phones can't.

Instead, the upgrade to 4G is more likely to enhance the things you can already do with 3G, said Matt Carter, president of Sprint's 4G division.

"View it as the difference between watching regular TV and high-definition TV," Carter said. "Once you've experienced high-definition TV it's hard to go back to standard TV. It's the same sort of thing here."

So the improvement from 3G to 4G is not as dramatic as the step from 2G to 3G, which for the first time made real Web browsing, video and music downloads practical on phones. The introduction of 3G started in earnest about five years ago, but it isn't complete — AT&T Inc. and T-Mobile USA still have little rural 3G coverage, for instance.

There's an important caveat to the claim that 4G will be faster, as well. It will definitely be faster than the 3G networks of Sprint and Verizon Wireless — about four times faster, initially. But the other two national carriers, AT&T and T-Mobile, are upgrading their 3G networks to offer data-transfer speeds that will actually be higher than the speeds 4G networks will reach this year or next.

That means that rather year under his watch. They went 6-10 in 2006, 8-8 in 2007 and 10-6 with an NFC North title last season.

Also, one day after being told by the Minnesota Vikings that extending the lease at the Metrodome was not an option, the team's landlord made the offer anyway

than focusing on real speeds, Sprint and Verizon will try to frame their marketing around the "4G" term, said Dan Hays, who focuses on telecommunications at management consulting firm PRISM.

"It's a terrible story from a consumer standpoint, because it's tremendously confusing," he said.

AT&T and T-Mobile are able to upgrade their 3G networks because they use a different 3G technology than Verizon and Sprint, which have maxed out their 3G speeds. Taking the step to 4G is natural for Verizon and Sprint, especially because they have new chunks of the radio spectrum that they want to take advantage of.

The fact that Verizon Wireless and Sprint are adding fresh spectrum may be more important than the fact that they are using it for 4G service. No matter if used for 4G or 3G, new spectrum means the companies can accommodate more data-hungry devices such as smart phones.

AT&T's network is already staggering under data congestion caused by the iPhone in New York and San Francisco. The carrier has made relieving the congestion a top priority this year, and its 3G upgrades are part of that process.

There is a lot of talk of a coming "iPhone 4G." Apple Inc. will most likely release the fourth generation of the iPhone for AT&T's network this summer, but it's virtually certain that it will not be able to use a 4G wireless network.

and infuriated the only major tenant left in the stadium. The Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission passed a plan to offer a two-year extension on the lease, which is set to expire in 2011. It calls for the Vikings to get revenue from any post-season games at the Metrodome, but it also threatens to reinstate a \$4 million annual rent if the team does not sign the extension.

Spielman's wife

Job hopes rise on flurry of reports

Martin Crutsinger
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fewer people are filing claims for unemployment aid, new jobs are showing up in service industries, and companies are squeezing all they can from lean staffs and may need to hire soon.

Hopes for the job market brightened Thursday ahead of a closely watched report on the nation's employment picture — although experts cautioned that the economy probably isn't creating jobs as quickly as usual after a recession.

"While we will see a period of job growth, it is going to take a long time to get back the jobs we lost," said Mark

dies: Stefanie Spielman, the wife of NFL and Ohio State star Chris Spielman who led a public fight against breast cancer, died after a lengthy battle with the disease. She was 42. Stefanie

Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, who predicts the nation will not recover the 8 million jobs lost in the downturn until 2013.

Economists predict the May jobs report, due this morning, will show the nation added 513,000 jobs in May. Most of them, as many as 400,000 by some estimates, will be temporary government jobs to help with the census.

The unemployment rate is expected to fall slightly, to 9.8 percent from 9.9 percent.

While analysts say layoffs will keep tapering off and companies will gradually hire more, a lack of strength throughout the economy complicates the recovery.

Americans' appetite for spending has eased. Manu-

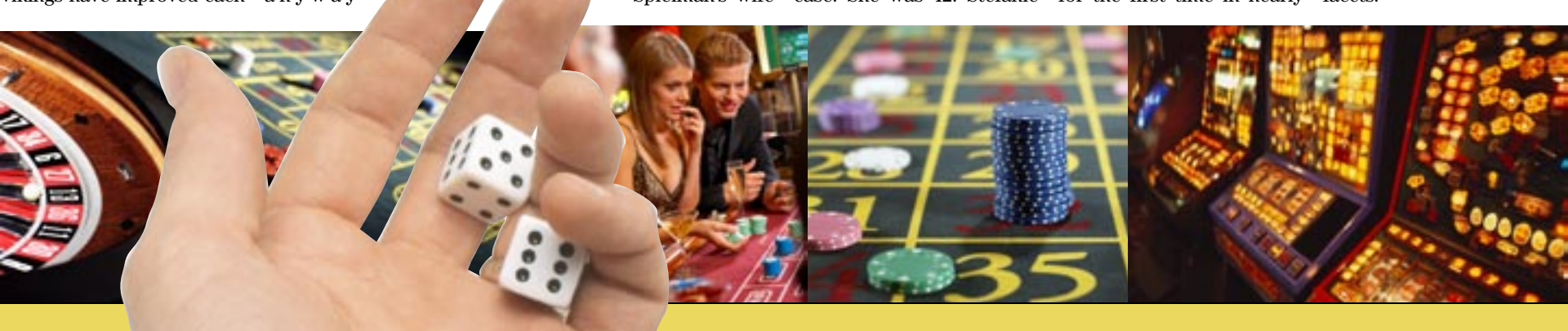
facturing output has been strong, but that's mostly because businesses are replenishing their stockpiles after slashing them during the recession.

Unless Americans pick up the pace on spending, manufacturing could fizzle. Consumer habits are closely tied to employment and wage growth.

"We have a very mixed picture at the moment," said Nigel Gault, chief U.S. economist for IHS Global Insight.

Gault said the economy is probably growing slightly faster now than in the first quarter of the year, but the boost is coming from temporary factors, like the home-buyer tax credit that expired at the end of April.

five weeks. Lions: The home game against the Cleveland Browns will be blacked out on local TV. Redskins: Running back Clinton Portis will miss his second straight game as he recovers from a concussion. Dungy to lead forum: Tony Dungy will lead a new NFL player advisory forum that will meet with players about league policies, programs and issues that affect their lives on and off the field. Those subjects will include player health and safety, personal conduct, game rules and procedures and other facets.



Watch out!

Things could get dicey.

But isn't that thrill oh-so worth it?

GOP backs Blakeman to oppose Gillibrand

Ex-Nassau legislator may face primary from 2 Republicans

Nick Reisman
Albany Bureau

NEW YORK — Bruce Blakeman, a former Nassau County legislator, was picked Thursday as the preferred candidate to face Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand at the state Republican convention, but his two GOP opponents vowed to defeat him in a primary.

Blakeman, 54, was designated the party's choice after two rounds of county-by-county voting by delegates. In addition to Blakeman, former Rep. Joseph DioGuardi, D-Osining, and economist David Malpass were seeking the Republican nod.

"I'm ready for anything, bring it on," Blakeman told reporters after giving a victory speech. "Whatever it is — if it's a primary — I don't care. The fact of the matter is I'm in it for the people."

Blakeman said he would travel around the state to energize voters.

"We're going to outwork everybody like I've been doing," Blakeman said. "I'm going to get in my car and go to every nook and cranny."

Thursday was the third and final day of the state Republican Party convention to determine statewide candidates for governor, attorney general, comptroller and two U.S. Senate seats.

The party designated Onondaga County Executive Greg Edwards for lieutenant governor by acclamation, the preferred running mate for designated GOP gubernatorial candidate Rick Lazio.

Blakeman received 51.42 percent of the vote on the second round of balloting. Malpass qualified for a spot on the primary ballot with 39.61 percent of the delegate vote.

DioGuardi, who received less than 25 percent of the delegate vote in the first and second rounds, must collect at least 15,000 signatures of registered Republican voters to get on the primary ballot. He also has the backing of the state Conservative Party.

"Why not have three rather than two? I'm in this until the end," DioGuardi said. "I will win the Republican primary.

What you saw here is the inside game."

DioGuardi, a certified public accountant and father of "American Idol" judge Kara DioGuardi, represented parts of Westchester County in the House of Representatives for two terms. He lost re-election to Democrat Nita Lowey in 1988.

Malpass also said he was prepared for a primary race.

"I look forward to fighting for our goals and principles across New York state," said Malpass, an economist in the Reagan and first Bush administrations. "This is going to be a tough race and we're going to win. We're going to win because all New Yorkers are tired of political flip-flopping and empty promises."

Gillibrand, of Columbia County, was picked by Gov. David Paterson in 2009 to fill the Senate seat vacated by Hillary Rodham Clinton, after she became secretary of state in the Obama administration.

"No matter which Republican is on the ticket in November, New Yorkers will have a clear choice between their agenda of failed policies bought and paid for by special interests and Sen. Gillibrand,



Joseph DioGuardi



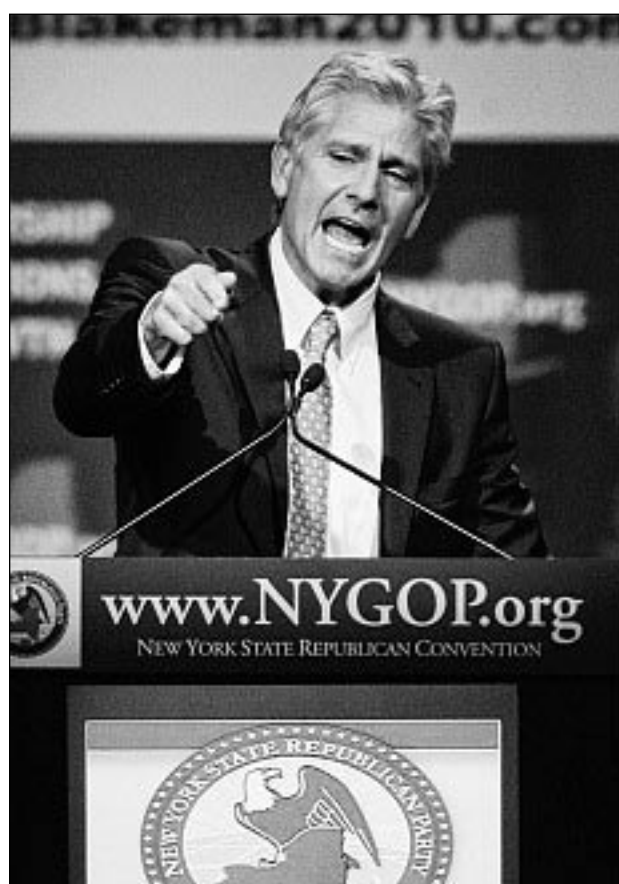
David Malpass

who fights every day to create jobs for New York families," said Glen Caplin, a spokesman for Gillibrand's campaign.

Polls show Gillibrand, who represented a Republican-dominated district north of Albany while in the House of Representatives, is considered vulnerable while running for her first statewide office.

But she is considered a prodigious fundraiser. Better-known Republican candidates have ruled out running against her, and Democratic party leaders — including Sen. Charles Schumer — have successfully urged potential challengers not to face her in a primary.

Republicans are also expected to have a primary to challenge Schumer, between political consultant Jay Townsend and former CIA agent Gary Berntsen.



Mary Altaffer/The Associated Press
Bruce Blakeman addresses the New York State Republican Convention on Thursday. The former member of the Nassau County Legislature picked up the party's official designation to take on Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand.

Albany Watch: statepolitics.lohudblgs.com

Paterson won't sign Power For Jobs bill

Joseph Spector
Albany bureau

ALBANY — Gov. David Paterson's office said Thursday he will not sign a short-term extension of the Power For Jobs program because lawmakers refuse to agree on a long-term solution.

The program provides low-cost power to about 520 businesses and nonprofit groups in New York, but lawmakers

The man who brought Brett Favre to the Minnesota Vikings will be sticking around for a while.

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Paladino plans run, blasts Lazio, Cuomo

Cara Matthews
Albany Bureau

NEW YORK — Buffalo developer Carl Paladino, who didn't receive the GOP nomination for governor this week, said Thursday that his campaign would spend about \$500,000 getting signatures to force a Republican primary and set up a Tea Party-oriented line for November.

Paladino, 63, said his campaign would bring "fresh thinking, common sense, principles and the courage to fight the special interests" with the goal of returning government to the people.

"I will enter the Republican primary by petition to ensure New Yorkers have a choice beyond two career politicians who together crashed our

year under his watch. They went 6-10 in 2006, 8-8 in 2007 and 10-6 with an NFC North title last season.

Also, one day after being told by the Minnesota Vikings that extending the lease at the Metrodome was not an option, the team's landlord made the offer anyway and infuriated the only major tenant left in the stadium.

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Carl Paladino



Rick Lazio

tion in New York City, would need 15,000 signatures from Republicans to force a GOP primary and 15,000 from voters to run on a third-party line. Supporters will choose the name of the line. He plans to announce a lieutenant-governor candidate in the next few weeks.

Paladino, who has pledged to spend \$10 million of his money in the race, accused Lazio and Cuomo of being partly responsible for New

York's economic problems. He also threatens to reinstate a \$4 million annual rent if the team does not sign the extension.

Spielman's wife dies: Stefanie Spielman, the wife of NFL and Ohio State star Chris Spielman who led a public fight against breast cancer, died after a lengthy battle with the disease. She was 42. Stefanie Spielman died at the family's home in Upper Arlington, surrounded by her family, said WBNS radio in Columbus, where Chris Spielman co-hosts a show. Stefanie Spielman was 30 years old and three months pregnant in 1998 when she

Mae and Freddie Mac to buy \$2.4 billion in sub-prime mortgages while lowering underwriting standards and forcing lower down payments on 105 percent financing," he said.

Paladino played for reporters an excerpt from a 2004 pilot radio show on WVOX in New Rochelle featuring Cuomo and Lazio bantering with one another.

"Cuomo's misjudgment helped lead to a U.S. financial meltdown and wiped out the 401(k)'s and bank accounts of God knows how many people in the state of New York and the United States of America," Paladino said. "The savior of New York? I don't think so."

He said Cuomo is a liberal who is painting himself as a

conservative and that Lazio "doesn't have the fire in the belly to get the people excited, and we do."

The Cuomo campaign would not comment.

Paladino said the Conservative Party, which made Lazio its gubernatorial pick last week, is supporting "a liberal Republican who doesn't support the party's pro-life, pro-Second Amendment platform" and said he's "more into deal-making than principle."

"I'm the only Republican who should be the next governor of New York, and I intend to be," Paladino said.

Lazio spokesman Barney Keller said Paladino "should use his resources to work with Rick to unite the party

and focus on the real task which is defeating Andrew Cuomo in the fall."

Paladino said he was disappointed by the Republican process. GOP Chairman Eric Cox encouraged him to get into the race and "be bound by the process" but later that week endorsed Levy for governor, Paladino said.

"I thought the Republican process would be fair and open. It wasn't," he said.

Paladino said he was told he could speak at the convention, but was only able to do that by nominating himself for governor.

"I thought guys in construction were cut-throat. Some county chairmen here make these guys look like Girl Scouts," he said.

detected a lump in her breast. She later fresh start in Buffalo.

Falcons: Jerious Norwood is back on the field and the team hopes their No. 2 running back can play when they meet the Giants Sunday. Norwood, sidelined by a hip flexor, practiced Thursday for the first time in nearly five weeks.

Lions: The home game against the Cleveland Browns will be blacked out on local

TV. Redskins: Running back Clinton Portis will miss his second straight game as he recovers from a concussion.

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