

PRIMARY CREDIT RATE CHANGE

August 11, 2004

The Federal Reserve Board approved action by the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis, increasing the primary credit rate from 2.25 percent to 2.50 percent, effective August 11, 2004.

According to the Federal Reserve press release, the Federal Open Market Committee: believes that, even after this action, the stance of monetary policy remains accommodative and, coupled with robust underlying growth in productivity, is providing ongoing support to economic activity. In recent months, output growth has moderated and the pace of improvement in labor market conditions has slowed. This softness likely owes importantly to the substantial rise in energy prices. The economy nevertheless appears poised to resume a stronger pace of expansion going forward. Inflation has been somewhat elevated this year, though a portion of the rise in prices seems to reflect transitory factors. The Committee perceives the upside and downside risks to the attainment of both sustainable growth and price stability for the next few quarters are roughly equal. With underlying inflation still expected to be relatively low, the Committee believes that policy accommodation can be removed at a pace that is likely to be measured. Nonetheless, the Committee will respond to changes in economic prospects as needed to fulfill its obligation to maintain price stability.

If you have any questions, please call Hillary Debenport, Assistant Vice President, toll free at 1-866-666-8316, or locally at (314) 444-8488.