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BUSINESS BRIEF

Dow dumps 240 on fears about slumping financials

Wall Street again surrendered to investors' anxiety about the financial sector Monday, sending the Dow Jones industrials down 239.61, or 2.11 percent, to 11,131.08 and back into bear market territory. The flight from equities sent investors into safe-haven bets like Treasury bonds. Financials that had rallied in recent weeks after logging huge declines suffered from the same worries about souring debt that caused an abrupt end to their run-up late last week.

Motorola reorganizing non-handset businesses

Motorola Inc. will reorganize its non-handset business into three units, the company said Monday. Schaumburg-based Motorola said in March that it plans to separate the handset business, which has been hurt by a two-year decline in cell phone sales, from the home and networks unit. The array of businesses in the home and network business will be organized in these units: TV set-top boxes and modems; voice-oriented cellular network equipment; and wired and wireless broadband network equipment. Motorola reports its second-quarter financial results Thursday.

Linens 'n Things to close fewer stores than planned

Bankrupt retailer Linens 'n Things on Monday offered a sign that business may be improving slightly, saying it will close fewer stores than originally anticipated. But it also said it will close stores at River Forest Town Center in River Forest and at Hawthorne Fashion Square in Vernon Hills. The home furnishings and bedding retailer, which filed for bankruptcy in May, said it will close 57 stores in the latest part of its restructuring, down from 87 as planned.

Answering the call

TECH | Skokie telecom hopes to create a buzz with phone solutions

BY SANDRA GUY
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Skokie tech innovator Ifbyphone is giving marketers and small businesses a fast, cheap, Web-based way to set up a virtual call center in the form of an application to be unveiled at the digital Ad:tech conference in Chicago next week.

Call centers are more often associated with overseas sweatshops, but Ifbyphone's Lead Distributor service, starting at \$15-to-\$40-a-month with 100 minutes of call time, can enable businesses to hire Americans to answer calls or make requested customer calls in their homes. People answering or making customer calls require no special equipment — just a phone and Internet access.

The service, set up at Ifbyphone's Web site (ifbyphone.com), gives small businesses the same capabilities as Fortune 500 companies to track Web surfers as they browse, call the Web surfer, set up local or toll-free phone numbers instantly for marketing campaigns, and route incoming calls to any phone at specified times to ensure the calls



Irv Shapiro, CEO-CTO, Ifbyphone Inc., is shown in his Skokie office. His service lets small businesses quickly set up a virtual call center, allowing calls to be routed to anyone in the company anywhere. | JOHN H. WHITE-CHICAGO SUNTIMES

are answered by human beings, said Ifbyphone CEO Irv Shapiro.

Even in today's e-mail, text-messaging and instant-messaging world, salespeople understand that a telephone call remains the most

effective way to close a sale, Shapiro, who founded and sold Metamor Technologies and Edventions.

"A conversation is the most valuable thing a salesperson can have," he said.

Jon Arnold, principal of J

Arnold & Associates, a Toronto-based telecommunications analyst, said Ifbyphone's mashups of the Internet and voice technology are turning visionary ideas into real-world applications.

"This technology is more

than just putting a customer into a queue or doing cheaper calls," Arnold said. "Ad agencies and other businesses can put intelligence into their networks that fit their needs."

YOUR WALLET

SUN-TIMES STAFF, WIRES

Think environment in this job climate

Students trying to decide on a career choice should consider going green, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

The Chicago-based outplacement firm's chief exec-

utive, John Challenger, notes fields related to the environment, ecology and alternative energy are expected to fuel growth. The American Solar Energy Society found renewable energy and energy-efficient industries created nearly 8.5 million jobs in 2006, a number forecast to reach 40 million by 2030.

The push toward increased environmental responsibility is creating new green-collar jobs in industries and companies where

these positions previously didn't exist, Challenger said.

He noted more building design firms want architects and engineers with "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" accreditation.

A growing number of jobs "will be created by companies researching and developing alternative sources of energy," he added. "These firms, which once found it difficult to secure funding, are now the darlings of ven-

ture capitalists"

Saab slicing warranty term

General Motors Corp.'s Saab unit is cutting the length of its warranty on its 2009 U.S. models to reduce costs, the company said Monday.

Saab will now offer a four-year powertrain warranty for up to 50,000 miles in place of the five-year, 100,000-mile warranty offered on other GM brands.

Audi, BMW and Volvo of-

fer four-year, 50,000-mile warranties on their vehicles.

Home equity use falls

Homeowners "cashed out" about \$68 billion in home equity during the first half of the year, the lowest since the first six months of 2004, according to mortgage finance company Freddie Mac.

Contributing: AP

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