

REUTERS

US STOCKS-Wall St to open lower after retail sales data

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- * Retail sales post biggest decline since September
- * BP climbs on supportive UK comments
- * Futures off: Dow 64 pts, S&P 8.7 pts, Nasdaq 5.75 pts

NEW YORK, June 11 (Reuters) - U.S. stocks were set for a lower open on Friday after sales at U.S. retailers unexpectedly fell in May, stirring fears the economic recovery was losing some steam.

Total sales dropped 1.2 percent, the largest decline since September, after rising 0.6 percent in April, the government said. April sales were previously reported at a 0.4 percent increase.

"This is a big number. Retail sales is what drives the engine if you believe 70 percent of the economy is consumer based," said **Joe Saluzzi**, co-manager of trading at **Themis Trading** in Chatham, New Jersey. "That is not good. How are you ever going to get the economy going?"

"The most disturbing part is all the (government) stimulus that's been thrown in, and you still can't get these numbers up. That is really, really bad."

Retail giant Wal-Mart Stores Inc dipped 0.3 percent to \$51.05 in premarket trading.

Due later Friday are the Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan preliminary June consumer sentiment index and the Commerce Department's business inventories for April.

Economists expect a sentiment reading of 74.5 against the prior 73.6, and a 0.5 percent increase in inventories over the previous 0.4 percent.

S&P 500 futures fell 8.7 points and were below fair value, a formula that evaluates pricing by taking into account interest rates, dividends and time to expiration on the contract. Dow Jones industrial average futures lost 64 points, and Nasdaq 100 futures shed 5.75 points.

U.S.-listed shares of BP Plc climbed 4.9 percent to \$34.40 premarket as supportive comments from UK officials outweighed reports the Gulf of Mexico oil spill was much bigger than estimated.

National Semiconductor Corp added 0.2 percent to \$13.55 premarket after delivering margin and revenue forecasts above estimates, signaling demand is bouncing back after a horrendous 2009 for the microchip industry.

Dell Inc slipped 2.7 percent to \$12.72 premarket after it said it is in settlement talks with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission over an investigation into its accounting practices and its relationship with chipmaker Intel Corp . Dell has set a \$100 million reserve for a potential settlement.

Wendy's/Arby's Group Inc Chairman Nelson Peltz said an unnamed party is interested in a potential deal, sending shares up 9.5 percent to \$4.75 premarket.