

MONEY

Is March out like a bull?

The markets are in a good mood — coming off three weeks of gains — and this week should be a turning point for the Street and its March rally.

A batch of new government reports would have the power to reverse the trend if the data is not up to investors' expectations, but they could also bolster growing optimism

about the direction of the economy.

"If we see upside on the data, we might hold — or rally some more," said Doug De Groote, a managing director at United Wealth Management, a division of United Capital Financial Advisors.

Last week, the Dow Jones industrials gained 6.8 percent, the Standard

& Poor's 500 index picked up 6.2 percent and the Nasdaq composite index rose 6 percent.

The rally was fed in part by surprising gains in housing and factory orders numbers. This week, the government reports on how many jobs were lost last month, and the Institute for Supply Management will report on the

manufacturing and service sectors.

Economists expect the Labor Department to say Friday that 640,000 jobs were cut last month. The unemployment rate is expected to have risen to 8.4 percent from 8.1 percent during the month of February, according to economists polled by Thomson Reuters. (AP)

■ SMALL BUSINESS

Eco-'Depot' helps green homes

BY LANA BORTOLOTT
Special to amNewYork

All it took was one toxic scare and Sarah Beatty decided it was time to spread the gospel of green.

She even built a temple. The Green Depot, the brand's flagship store, opened at 222 Bowery last month. The 3,500-square-foot store sells materials for the home that are deemed safe and environmentally friendly, from toxin-free paints and cleaning supplies to baby furniture.

Beatty, 43, turned to green entrepreneurship after her home renovation revealed a mold contamination.

She saw an opportunity to get into the green construction business.

"I thought there was a transition coming, a market for it, yet few supplies and no reliable access point for getting products," she said.

In 2005, she founded Green Depot to supply construction companies with eco-friendly building materials. She expanded into retail to serve home-



Sarah Beatty, Green Depot owner, dispenses dish soap from the tap, just one of the environmentally friendly options for consumers at her Bowery store. (KRISTY MAY)

improvement types who also want to keep it green.

"It was an imperative to create a place for people to enter the door, understand a definition of green and let us help drive the conversation forward," Beatty said.

Customers can shop according to their concerns, from chemical sensitivities to fair-trade practices.

"We offer options that are 'good,' 'better' and 'best,' not only in price point but in product attri-

We offer options that are 'good,' 'better' and 'best.'

—Bryan Tereza,
store manager

butes," said store manager Bryan Tereza.

Beatty said her company is experiencing more than

200 percent growth a year. The construction business is ailing, but there has been an emphasis on using green materials to retrofit buildings.

The store is an experiment in the recycle-reuse-reduce philosophy.

"I think it's really to show people green is about more than mud huts and Birkenstocks," Beatty said. "We want to show people you can do it from the ground up."

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Briefs

GM faces deadline on what to do with Hummer brand

By tomorrow, GM will have to decide the fate of its Hummer brand. The company said it is still talking to possible buyers.



Geithner: Bailout funds dwindle to \$135 billion

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said yesterday that bailout funds for banks have been reduced to \$135 billion from \$700 billion, but did not say if he would tap Congress for more money.

G-20 summit a forum for nations to debate crisis

The world is gearing up for the G-20 finance meeting in London, which starts Thursday. At a summit this weekend world leaders discussed the need for government control and for free markets.

Federal cigarette tax jump takes effect this week

The largest federal tobacco tax hike ever takes effect Wednesday. Major cigarette makers raised prices weeks ago to offset drops in profits once the per-pack tax climbs from 39 cents to \$1.01. (AP)