



## Webinar Announcement

Argus Research will host a webinar for clients at 11 a.m. ET on Wednesday, September 4, 2024. The webinar is entitled **Consumer Discretionary: Retail and Housing Outlook**. The webinar will be hosted by Argus Director of Research Jim Kelleher, CFA. Jim will be joined by Senior Analyst Chris Graja, CFA.

After a top-three performance in 2023, Consumer Discretionary has been a bottom-two sector so far in 2024. Consumers appear tapped out from more than two years of high inflation; due to high prices, they have had to prioritize necessities over even low-cost discretionary items. The Fed's inflation-fighting monetary policy has pushed interest rates to multi-year highs, creating another barrier to buying financing-dependent items such as houses and cars.

Chris, in his role as both retail & housing analyst and as Argus Chief Economist, was encouraged by a healthy back-to-school spending season. With a fully-employed workforce and receding inflation, the retail environment is solid. But consumers remain bargain-conscious, which is one reason why Walmart is gaining market share in households with incomes exceeding \$100,000 per year. Successful merchants such as TJX are cognizant of this reality and are continuing offer significant innovation and value.

The impending decline in interest rates is likely to be positive for housing, although lower rates may not drive the housing cycle quite as vigorously as in past cycles. That is due to low mortgage rates on most homes and the many homes that have no mortgage. Chris is long-term bullish on housing, however, due to supply and demand. There is a shortage of affordable homes and a big demographic influx of people looking to start households and families.

Currently, many aging boomers are stuck in houses that are too big but on which they have low-rate mortgages (which keeps them from looking for a new home). Assuming lower rates begin to break the mortgage logjam, the long-moribund housing sector could again contribute to economic growth, as it did in the pandemic and post-pandemic periods.

In addition to his industry commentary, Chris will provide top picks in the Consumer Discretionary sector spanning retail, housing, and other areas. Listeners are encouraged to submit questions that we'll address in a Q&A session at the conclusion of formal remarks.

Please note that the CFP Board has accepted Argus' Monthly Webinar for one (1) hour of continuing education (CE) credit.

The webinar, as always, will be interactive, with a question-and-answer period. We will be recording the webinar, and a rebroadcast will be available on the password-protected portion of our website. Slides related to the presentation will be posted on our website the day of the webinar and will be available via the webcast itself.

**To register for the event, please see the instructions on the first page of the PDF version of any Market Digest or Market Update report dated August 30, 2024, or later. If you have any problems, contact us at [clientservices@argusresearch.com](mailto:clientservices@argusresearch.com) or (212) 425-7500.**