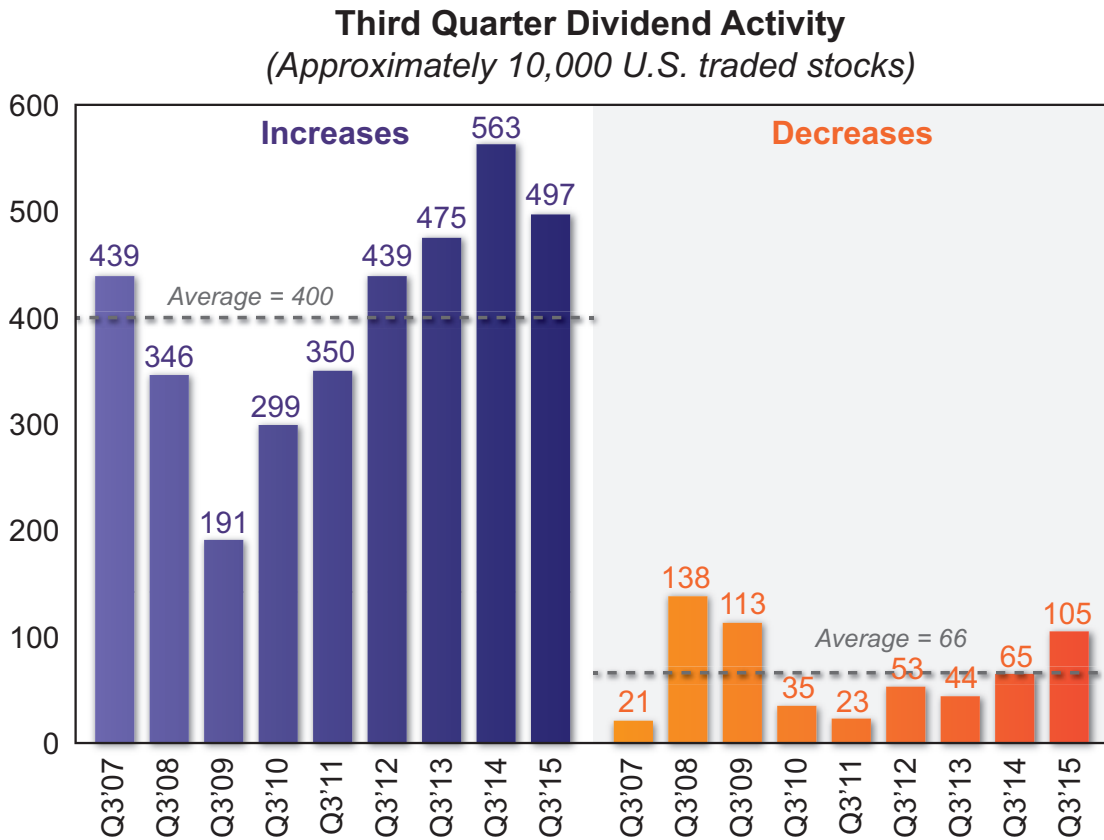


Stock Dividend Increases Dipped (Y-O-Y) After Strong Rebound From 2008-2009 Recession Levels



Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices

View from the Observation Deck

1. The number of quarterly dividend increases initiated by U.S. traded companies continues to reflect strength, in our opinion.
2. While the 497 increases just reported for Q3'15 was a notable decline from the 563 increases in Q3'14, the increases significantly outpaced the average for the period depicted in the chart.
3. The 439 increases posted in Q3'07 was at the tail end of the previous bull market in stocks, which ended on 10/9/07. So any comparison with Q3'15 is strength-on-strength, in our opinion.
4. The sharp rise in the number of dividend cuts from 65 in Q3'14 to 105 in Q3'15 is largely a reflection of the weakness in the energy sector, according to Howard Silverblatt, senior index analyst at S&P Dow Jones Indices.
5. In 2014, crude oil prices peaked on 6/20 at a closing price of \$107.26 per barrel, according to Bloomberg. The price closed at \$45.09 per barrel on 9/30/15, or 58.0% below its peak.

This chart is for illustrative purposes only and not indicative of any actual investment.

