The Zacks Analyst Blog Highlights: Symmetry Medical, Johnson & Johnson, Stryker, Zimmer Holdings and MarkWest Energy Partners

The Associated Press

Zacks.com announces the list of stocks featured in the Analyst Blog. Every day the Zacks Equity Research analysts discuss the latest news and events impacting stocks and the financial markets. Stocks recently featured in the blog includeSymmetry Medical, Inc. (NYSE:SMA), Johnson & Johnson (NYSE:JNJ), Stryker Corporation (NYSE:SYK), Zimmer Holdings, Inc.

(NYSE:ZMH) and MarkWest Energy Partners L.P. (NYSE:MWE).

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20101027/ZIRLOGO) Get the most recent insight from Zacks Equity Research with the free Profit from the Pros newsletter: http://at.zacks.com/?id=5513 Here are highlights from Wednesday's Analyst Blog: Symmetry Surgical Expands in Europe Symmetry Surgical, a subsidiary of orthopedic implants and instruments maker Symmetry Medical, Inc.

(NYSE:SMA), recently signed a distribution agreement with a leading medical device distributor, MTG Medical Technologies (MTG). Per the terms of the deal, MTG will distribute Symmetry Surgical's surgical instruments product portfolio in Europe. MTG, a subsidiary of Neuro-Competence, distributes cutting-edge yet affordable medical devices to hospitals located across Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. Given MTG's strong presence in these countries, the partnership will enable Symmetry Surgical to grow its customer base in the European market. The distribution agreement is in line with Symmetry Surgical's focus on worldwide expansion of its business inclusive of all brands under the erstwhile Codman Surgical Instruments and SSi. The company further plans to expand into other key European countries to attract healthy revenue opportunities.

Since Symmetry Medical's core Original Equipment Manufacturing ("OEM") Solutions business is facing declining capital spending, procedural and pricing pressure from the weak global orthopedic market, the company is focused on expanding its smaller Symmetry Surgical business. In the last reported third quarter 2012 results, revenues from the smaller Symmetry Surgical unit increased more than twofold to $24.8 million in the quarter, buoyed by the Olsen Medical and Codman & Shurtleff, Inc. acquisition, which contributed roughly $13.7 million to the division's sales. Earlier, in October, Symmetry Surgical had entered into a distribution agreement with Canada-based AMT Electrosurgery Inc. to distribute its entire portfolio of medical devices in Canada. In June, Symmetry Surgical had completed a distribution agreement with Japan Surgical Specialty ('JSS') Corporation to sell its products in the Japanese market. The company had also completed a distribution agreement to directly distribute its offerings in Australia and New Zealand. Symmetry Medical is the largest OEM provider of implants and related surgical instruments and cases to

orthopedic devices manufacturers. Its major customers include Johnson & Johnson's (NYSE:JNJ) DePuy, Stryker Corporation (NYSE:SYK) and Zimmer Holdings, Inc. (NYSE:ZMH). Currently, we have a Neutral recommendation on the stock, which retains a short-term Zacks #3 Rank (Hold). MarkWest Seals Deal with Antero Denver, Colorado-based MarkWest Energy Partners L.P. (NYSE:MWE) has agreed to render processing, fractionation, and marketing services to Antero Resources for its liquid acreage in Utica Shale play. MarkWest will execute the transaction through the joint venture -- MarkWest Utica EMG, L.L.C.

aka MarkWest Utica -- formed with private-equity group The Energy & Minerals Group ("EMG"). The operations of the joint venture include the development of natural gas gathering, transportation and processing and natural gas liquid (NGL) transportation, fractionation, as well as marketing infrastructure in the Utica shale in eastern Ohio. Per the agreement, MarkWest Utica will set up a natural gas processing unit in Noble County, Ohio with an interim capacity of 45 million cubic feet per day (MMcf/d). The facility is expected to be fully completed in the second quarter of 2013. The joint venture will complement this unit with a cryogenic gas processing facility of 200 MMcf/d capacity that will likely come on-line by the third quarter of 2013. A third 200 MMcf/d cryogenic processing plant will also be developed toward the end of 2013. MarkWest Utica also intends to build a NGL gathering system as well as a fractionation and marketing complex in Harrison County, Ohio. All the facilities together will be Utica Shale's largest fractionation and marketing complex that is slated to be entirely operational in the first quarter of 2014. The total unit will be capable of providing about 100,000 barrels per day (Bbl/d) of C2+ fractionation. This new complex is designed to be well connected with the Marcellus Shale where MarkWest enjoys strong exposure and position. This Harrison facility along with the complex of Houston will form the biggest fractionation complexes in the northeast that will offer high-class operating flexibility and consistency, as well as market access.

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