



Paul speaks to attendees at the 2013 SIFMA Annual Meeting in New York.

“Trust and confidence in the market is absolutely critical to global growth, productivity and job creation.”

– Paul Purcell
Chairman, President & Chief Executive Officer



Paul being interviewed by Gerri Willis of Fox Business Network.

Fueling the U.S. Economy, Increasing Prosperity

Paul Purcell discusses Baird and the face of the financial industry at 2013 SIFMA Annual Meeting

Paul Purcell, Baird's Chairman, President & Chief Executive Officer, spoke at the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA) Annual Meeting in New York on Nov. 12. Paul, who is also a member of the SIFMA board, talked about Baird, the importance of the capital markets and the financial industry's role in improving confidence, and the overall effectiveness of the markets.

Following his opening comments, Paul participated in a Q&A session with Gerri Willis, host of "The Willis Report," a Fox Business Network (FBN) prime-time program covering financial and political stories.

Centered around the theme "Helping Americans Succeed, Helping Main Street Prosper," the meeting brought together financial services leaders, prominent policymakers, thought leaders and financial media who provided insights into the role of the financial services industry in fueling the U.S. economy and increasing prosperity. Among those also speaking were former President Bill Clinton; Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida; Mary Jo White, chair of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC); and Lloyd Blankfein, chairman and chief executive officer of Goldman Sachs.

Paul opened by providing background on Baird and its privately held, employee-owned structure. He explained how Baird's model enables the firm to simplify decision-making, be long-term-oriented and strengthen its client-first mentality.

He also underscored the importance Baird places on taking care of employees who, in turn, take care of the firm's clients. He pointed to Baird's long-standing FORTUNE recognition, having been recognized as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For® for 10 consecutive years, as evidence the firm was on the right path.

Paul credited the firm's broad business model, which is unusual for a middle-market firm, and being conservatively run as essential in helping Baird navigate through the downturn. Baird has remained profitable throughout the economic challenges and has increased employment by 25% since the end of 2007. At the end of the day, it is "our firm, our reputation and our capital," Paul explained.

Tying into the theme of the meeting, Paul went on to explain how trust and confidence in the industry is important in the effectiveness of the marketplace. He offered his perspective on the markets, steps the broader financial services industry has taken and other efforts that could further rebuild investor confidence.

"The market operates better with trust and confidence," Paul remarked. "This is absolutely critical to global growth, productivity and job creation. It's important we accomplish that as an industry." ►

Fueling the U.S. Economy, Increasing Prosperity

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In his comments, Paul explained that there has been a significant reduction in leverage throughout the global market, especially in the U.S. Through deleveraging, the industry has helped increase trust and confidence in the market, which has helped reduce volatility and increase capital formation and the overall strength of the market, Paul noted.

“The U.S. markets are the most liquid, deepest and most efficient markets in the world,” Paul explained. “The world needs capital to grow. We, as an industry, need to better articulate how important that is and the industry’s role in that.”

Paul commented that the system is better capitalized now than it has been in recent years. More liquidity in the markets offers more transparency and efficiency for individual investors, he said. However, the industry can still do more to encourage trust and confidence, Paul said. For instance, he noted the importance of being more client-driven versus product-driven as an industry.

“Entrepreneurs need capital to grow their businesses, and this country is all about entrepreneurs and giving entrepreneurs access to capital to take their ideas and turn them into reality,” Paul elaborated in his conversation with Gerri. “Wall Street plays an incredibly important part in that process and ultimately, that does create more companies, more jobs, and more prosperity for everyone involved.” ■