

## **Wells Fargo downgrades Williams Cos. stock**

**By CASEY SMITH World Business Writer | Posted: Friday, September 11, 2015 12:00 am**

Wells Fargo released a research report to investors Thursday that downgrades Williams Cos. (WMB) stock to a “Market Perform” rating. Previously Williams’ shares had a rating of “Outperform,” according to a Money Flow Index report.

According to MFI’s report, the company’s shares have dropped 18.31 percent during the past 52 weeks.

Williams’ shares closed at \$44.27 on Thursday afternoon, down nearly 3.8 percent from Wednesday’s close of \$46.01 per share.

The company’s stock prices hit a 52-week high of \$61.38 on June 22, the first day of trading after it was announced that Energy Transfer Equity had made an unsuccessful bid to acquire the Tulsa-based company.

ETE’s bid for Williams Cos. consisted of an all-equity transaction valued at \$53.1 billion.

WMB shares hit a 52-week low of \$40.07 on Jan. 14.

MFI also reported that on Tuesday heightened volatility was witnessed in Williams Cos., which led to swings in the share price and saw the trading volume jump to 4,604,661 shares.

Ying Qi, a client liaison with Fredric E. Russell Investment Management Co., said that with current commodity prices, it’s inevitable to see volatile stock prices and downward trends for companies in the energy sector.

However, the current bidding war for Williams among Spectra Energy, Kinder Morgan and ETE has brought made many investors uncertain about Williams, she said.

The downgrade by Wells Fargo fueled the disappointment among investors, she said, and today the company saw another price dip.

“Williams rejected Energy Transfer Equity’s acquisition offer back in June, which was equivalent to \$64 per share,” Qi said.

“Investors back then got very excited and passionate about WMB. Emotion always plays a big role in stock market, now investors are losing patience.”