

Can a Bowling Ball Predict Oil Prices?

Note: As we begin a New Year and wish the best for our readers and advertisers, the price of oil is on everyone's mind. To offer a bit of perspective on the subject, we turned to Dan Larson, our Business Development Manager, for some timely and ironic commentary.

David Hill



Out of pure frustration and curiosity, I dug the crystal ball out of the closet this morning to see which way oil prices are really headed. The results, as they say, will surprise you.

First, I should tell you about my crystal ball. It's made of a nice, pearlescent polyurethane and is often mistaken for a bowling ball, especially since it has three holes and "Property of Starlite Bowling" engraved in big letters.

After a quick cleaning with a special chamois similar to that used by fortunetellers around the world, I set the ball on the table and stood back to watch it roll off and hit the floor with a predictable thud. If it hits and rolls left, oil prices will go down. A roll to the right and they are on the way up.

Today, the ball rolled left, bumped the table leg and set off on a parabolic course directly toward the dog's dish. Not wanting to interfere with market forces, I allowed the ball to hit the dish and splash water on the floor. A sign!

A quick check of the commodities page on my smartphone confirmed what I suspected. Prices will go down, and then they will go up.

Yes, I understand there are some misguided folks out there who scoff at my method of forecasting the most important commodity in the world. I've grown accustomed to the skeptics. History is on my side.

Every day, we hear from the OPEC-won't-cut-production theorists and the victims-of-shale's-success apologists. But when you get down to it, nobody really knows. There are plenty of very good guesses by some very smart people, but whenever somebody says oil prices are going one way or the other, that's all it is, a guess.

Prices for oil, and the resulting decline in the price of everything from gasoline and jet fuel to asphalt and plastics, are lower than we've seen since 2009. Will they go lower? Maybe. Will prices rebound? Probably. When? In a while.

Dan Larson
Denver, Colorado
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