Milliman analysis: September brings $45 billion improvement in pension funded status

Two consecutive months of gains follow four months of losses; discount rate climbs above 4.0%

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Pension liabilities of the 100 largest corporate defined benefit pension plans fell by $30 billion in September while the corresponding pension assets improved by $15 billion, lowering the Milliman 100 PFI pension deficit to $453 billion and increasing the funded ratio to 74.5%. The September 30, 2012, funded ratio still lags its December 31, 2011, value of 78.7%.

HIGHLIGHTS

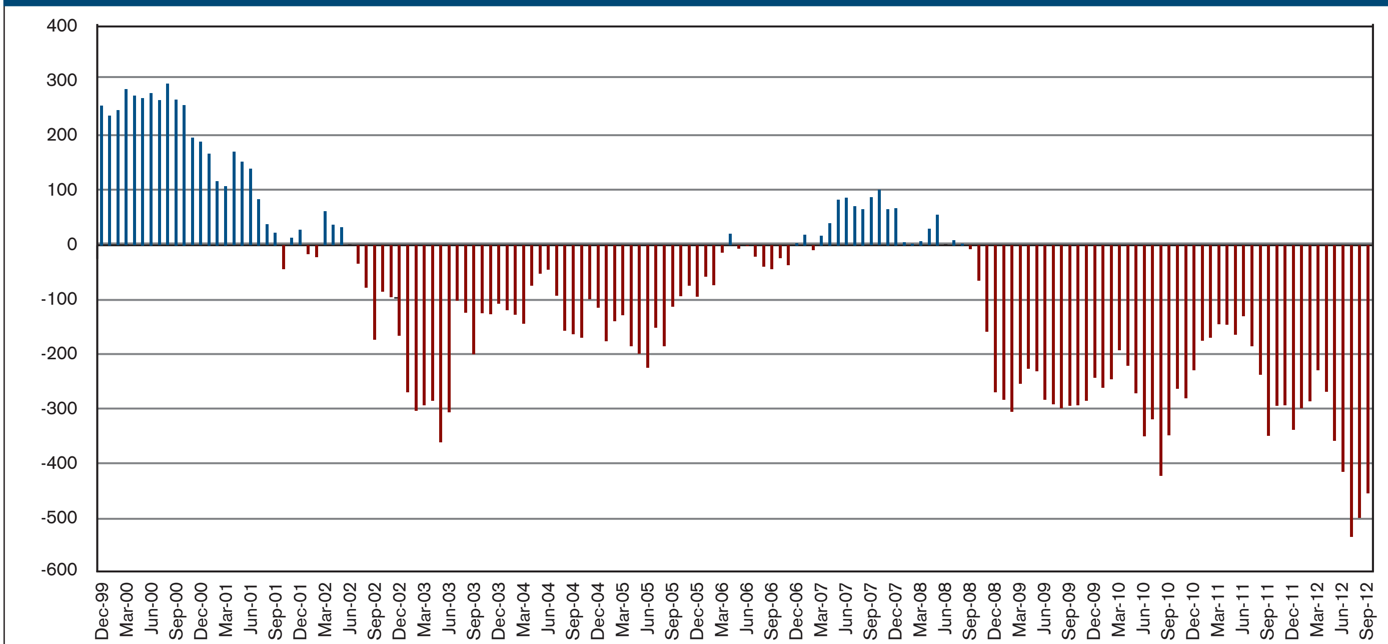
	$ BILLION			
	MV	PBO	FUNDED STATUS	FUNDED PERCENTAGE
AUG 2012	1,309	1,808	(498)	72.4%
SEP 2012	1,325	1,778	(453)	74.5%
MONTHLY CHANGE	+16	(30)	+45	+2.1%
YTD CHANGE	+78	+194	(116)	-4.2%

NOTE: NUMBERS MAY NOT ADD UP PRECISELY DUE TO ROUNDING

September's funded status improvement was fueled by an increase in the corporate bond interest rates that are the benchmarks used to value pension liabilities. September marks the second consecutive month of discount rate increases after the dismal performance between March and July, when the deficit ballooned in response to declining discount rates. As of September 30, the funded ratio climbed to 74.5%, up from 72.4% at the end of August.

The projected benefit obligation (PBO), or pension liabilities, decreased by $30 billion during September, lowering the Milliman 100 PFI value to $1.778 trillion from $1.808 trillion at the end of August. The change resulted from a modest increase of nine basis points in the monthly discount rate to 4.08% for September, from 3.99% for August.

FIGURE 1: MILLIMAN 100 PENSION FUNDING INDEX PENSION SURPLUS/DEFICIT



The Milliman 100 PFI asset value increased by $15 billion during September, raising the Milliman 100 PFI value to $1.325 trillion from $1.310 trillion at the end of August. The increase was due to the September investment gain of 1.32%. By comparison, the Milliman 2012 Pension Funding Study, published in March 2012, reported that the median expected investment return during 2011 was 0.63% (7.80% annualized).

THIRD QUARTER 2012 SUMMARY

The quarter that ended September 30 saw the funded status deficit grow by $39 billion. This was primarily due to interest rate declines in July 2012 that resulted in the lowest discount rate in the 12-year history of the Milliman 100 PFI. The asset return over the last quarter was 3.66% and the discount rate had a net decrease of 24 basis points. The funded ratio of the Milliman 100 companies decreased to 74.5% at the end of September from 75.6% at the end of June.

Over the last 12 months (October 2011 to September 2012), the cumulative asset return has been 15.0% and the Milliman 100 PFI funded status deficit has increased by $105 billion. For these 12 months, the funded ratio of the Milliman 100 companies dropped to 74.5% from 77.4%, primarily due to declining discount rates.

2012-2013 PROJECTIONS

If the Milliman 100 PFI companies were to achieve an 7.8% median asset return (as per the 2012 Pension Funding Study) expected for their pension plan portfolios and the current discount rate of 4.08% were to be maintained during years 2012 through 2013, we forecast the funded status of the surveyed plans would increase. This would result in a projected pension deficit of $438 billion (funded ratio of 75.4%) by the end of 2012 and a projected pension deficit of $362 billion (funded ratio of 79.9%) by the end of 2013. For purposes of this forecast, we have assumed 2012 aggregate contributions of $67 billion and 2013 aggregate contributions of $81 billion.

Please note that the contribution assumptions have not been adjusted to reflect the potential impact of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), which includes pension funding stabilization provisions. While several plan sponsors have announced reduced contributions, we believe that a majority of the Milliman 100 companies will continue to prudently fund the pension deficits in their respective plans and presumably continue with their existing pension de-risking funding strategies rather than lower their contribution level to satisfy the new ERISA minimum standards.

Under an optimistic forecast with rising interest rates (reaching 4.23% by the end of 2012 and 4.83% by the end of 2013) and asset gains (11.8% annual returns), the funded ratio would climb to 78% by the end of 2012 and 96% by the end of 2013. Under a pessimistic forecast with similar interest rate and asset movements (3.93% discount rate at the end of 2012 and 3.33% by the end of 2013 and 3.8% annual returns), the funded ratio would decline to 73% by the end of 2012 and 66% by the end of 2013.

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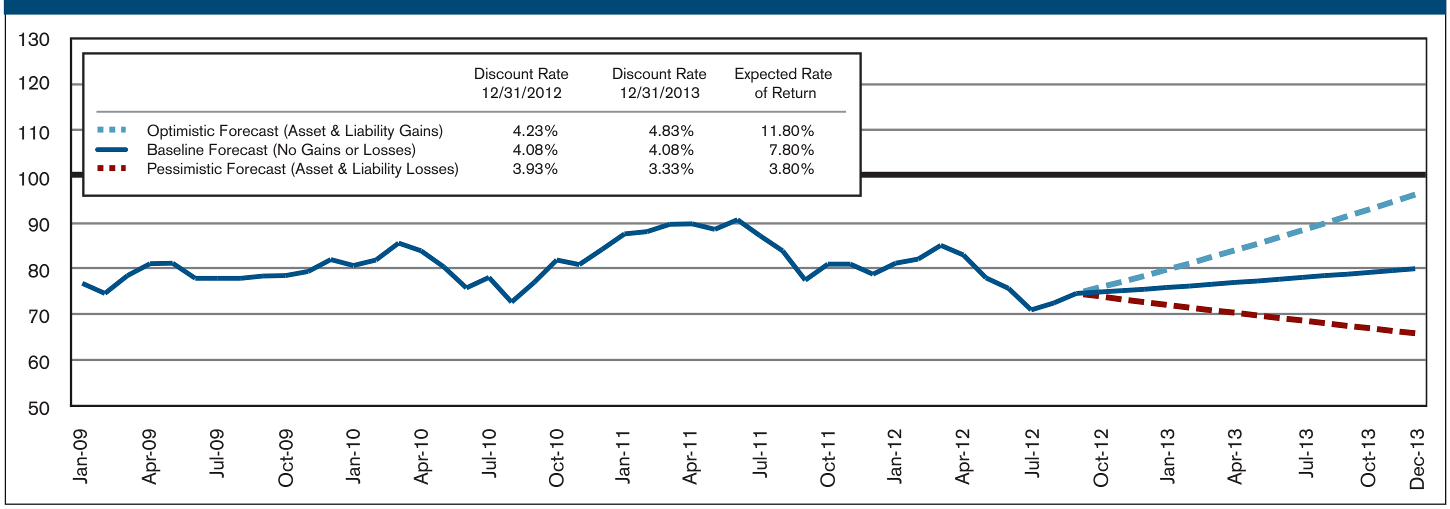
FIGURE 2: MILLIMAN 100 PENSION FUNDING INDEX – PENSION FUNDED RATIO



MILLIMAN 100 PENSION FUNDING INDEX – SEPTEMBER 2012 (ALL DOLLAR AMOUNTS IN MILLIONS)

END OF MONTH	YEAR	MARKET VALUE OF ASSETS	PROJECTED BENEFIT OBLIGATION (PBO)	FUNDED STATUS	CHANGE IN FUNDED STATUS	FUNDED RATIO
SEPTEMBER	2011	1,192,824	1,540,649	(347,825)	N/A	77.4%
OCTOBER	2011	1,241,510	1,534,408	(292,898)	54,928	80.9%
NOVEMBER	2011	1,235,787	1,527,813	(292,026)	872	80.9%
DECEMBER	2011	1,246,235	1,583,613	(337,378)	(45,352)	78.7%
JANUARY	2012	1,274,884	1,572,630	(297,746)	39,632	81.1%
FEBRUARY	2012	1,294,521	1,579,548	(285,027)	12,719	82.0%
MARCH	2012	1,297,681	1,526,122	(228,441)	56,586	85.0%
APRIL	2012	1,293,677	1,561,169	(267,492)	(39,051)	82.9%
MAY	2012	1,263,136	1,620,957	(357,821)	(90,329)	77.9%
JUNE	2012	1,283,703	1,697,711	(414,008)	(56,187)	75.6%
JULY	2012	1,298,061	1,830,942	(532,881)	(118,873)	70.9%
AUGUST	2012	1,309,286	1,807,731	(498,445)	34,436	72.4%
SEPTEMBER	2012	1,324,529	1,777,759	(453,230)	45,215	74.5%

PENSION ASSET AND LIABILTY RETURNS (ALL DOLLAR AMOUNTS IN MILLIONS)

		ASSET RETURNS			LIABILITY RETURNS	
END OF MONTH	YEAR	MONTHLY	YEAR-TO-DATE	DISCOUNT RATE	MONTHLY	YEAR-TO-DATE
SEPTEMBER	2011	-2.47%	-1.38%	4.54%	6.44%	15.94%
OCTOBER	2011	4.07%	2.64%	4.53%	0.40%	16.41%
NOVEMBER	2011	-0.47%	2.15%	4.53%	0.38%	16.85%
DECEMBER	2011	3.00%	5.22%	4.67%*	-1.80%	14.74%
JANUARY	2012	2.46%	2.46%	4.71%	-0.37%	-0.37%
FEBRUARY	2012	1.70%	4.20%	4.69%	0.76%	0.39%
MARCH	2012	0.40%	4.62%	4.88%	-3.05%	-2.67%
APRIL	2012	-0.15%	4.46%	4.76%	2.63%	-0.11%
MAY	2012	-2.21%	2.15%	4.56%	4.14%	4.03%
JUNE	2012	1.79%	3.98%	4.32%	5.03%	9.26%
JULY	2012	1.28%	5.31%	3.92%	8.11%	18.12%
AUGUST	2012	1.02%	6.38%	3.99%	-1.01%	16.93%
SEPTEMBER	2012	1.32%	7.79%	4.08%	-1.39%	15.30%

* Reflects a change in our discount rate methodology in moving from the Citigroup Pension Liability Index to the Citigroup Above Median Pension Liability Index.

ABOUT THE MILLIMAN 100 MONTHLY PENSION FUNDING INDEX

For the past 12 years, Milliman has conducted an annual study of the 100 largest defined benefit pension plans sponsored by U.S. public companies. The Milliman 100 Pension Funding Index projects the funded status for pension plans included in our study, reflecting the impact of market returns and interest rate changes on pension funded status, utilizing the actual reported asset values, liabilities, and asset allocations of the companies' pension plans.

The results of the Milliman 100 Pension Funding Index were based on the actual pension plan accounting information disclosed in the footnotes to the companies' annual reports for the 2011 fiscal year and for previous fiscal years. This pension plan accounting disclosure information was summarized as part of the Milliman 2012 Pension Funding Study, which was published on March 29, 2012. In addition to providing the financial information on the funded status of U.S. qualified pension plans, the footnotes may also include figures for the companies' nonqualified and foreign plans, both of which are often unfunded or subject to different funding standards than those for U.S. qualified pension plans. They do not represent the funded status of the companies' U.S. qualified pension plans under ERISA.

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