Stocks near highest point of year



RICHARD DREW / The Associated Press

Thomas Bishop, left, talks with a fellow specialist at the New York Stock Exchange. Election uncertainty has kept the market from big gains or losses.

Dow gets investors' vote of confidence

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NEW YORK — Major stock indexes rose Tuesday as investors awaited the results of Congressional elections, putting the Dow Jones industrial average near its highest point of the year.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose more than 60 points. The Dow has now traded above its 2010 closing high of 11,205 four times over the past two weeks but failed to close above that level each time.

Small companies performed especially well. The Russell 2000, the index that tracks the performance of smaller corporations, jumped 2 percent to 712.89. The index is up nearly 14 percent for the year, roughly double the return of the Dow and the broad Standard and Poor's 500 index.

Uncertainty over the effects of the midterm elections and the size of the Federal Reserve's expected stimulus program due today have kept the market from ending with either big gains or losses in recent days.

Eric Thorne, an investment adviser with Bryn Mawr Trust Wealth Management, said many traders have been using the end of the day to take short-term profits. With the economy still looking weak, there's no guarantee stocks will continue to climb.

An expected win for Republicans in the House of Representatives could set up a scenario that leads to gridlock in Congress, meaning there could be a slowdown in new government spending and regulatory reform.

Exactly how the election will play out is still uncertain, which is part of the reason stocks have wavered recently.