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Buffett buys Iron Mountain, Republic Services shares

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By Eric Rosenbaum, TheStreet

Berkshire Hathaway (BRK.B), the investment company of billionaire Warren Buffett, doubled its holdings in Iron Mountain (IRM) and Republic Services (RSG) in the fourth quarter, according to a regulatory filing.

Buffett dumped shares of CarMax (KMX), Gannett (GCI), Ingersoll-Rand (IR), Johnson & Johnson (JNJ) and Procter & Gamble (PG).

Berkshire expanded its position in the data storage company Iron Mountain to 7 million shares from 3.3 million in September as the stock lost 15%. Buffett took his stake in waste management firm Republic Services to 8.3 million shares from 3.6 million. Republic Services stock gained 6.6% during the quarter.

Among the underperforming stocks, Berkshire sold 2 million shares of Ingersoll-Rand, or a little more than 25% of its stake in the company. Buffett sold one million shares of CarMax and Gannett, though it was a more sizable move out of Gannett, as Berkshire only owned a little over 3 million shares of Gannett in the third quarter, while Berkshire still owns 8 million shares of CarMax.

Bing: More on Warren Buffett

Buffett may have been executing on some well-timed exits in the fourth quarter, when their shares advanced more than 15%. The stocks also hit lows during the period. Gannett's 52-week low was \$1.85; Ingersoll-Rand had traded as low as \$11.46; and CarMax has dropped to \$8 in the past year.

Berkshire Hathaway also sold more than 10 million shares of Johnson & Johnson. Johnson & Johnson has been trading near its 52-week high for the past two months, so the fourth quarter may have been profit booking time for Buffett. The stock gained 5.8% during the quarter. Its 52-week high is \$65.95.

Buffett continued to trim holdings ConocoPhillips (COP) and Moody's (MCO), positions he started to cut in the third quarter. Buffett sold 7 million shares of Moody's and 20

million shares of ConocoPhillips, about one-third of its ConocoPhillips stake. Berkshire was left with one-fifth of its earlier position in the rating agency.

ConocoPhillips wasn't the only energy stock Buffett sold during the fourth quarter. Berkshire also sold a stake of 854,000 shares in Exxon Mobil (XOM). Could someone in Omaha be unhappy about the price Exxon is paying for the acquisition of XTO Energy (XTO)?

Buffett also slashed his health care holdings, selling 2 million shares of insurers WellPoint (WLP) and UnitedHealth Group (UNH).

Buffett voiced his displeasure about Kraft's (KFT) acquisition of Cadbury (CBY) during the fourth quarter, but his stake remained the same.

Buffett favorites Wal-Mart (WMT) and Wells Fargo (WFC) saw continued buying. Buffett had said on television recently that he doesn't think Wells Fargo will ever disappoint on revenues. He bought 7 million additional shares of Wells Fargo and added 1 million shares of Wal-Mart.

Concurrent with Berkshire's acquisition of Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Buffett sold his stakes in Norfolk Southern (NSC) and Union Pacific (UNP).