

FEAR FACTOR

WEDNESDAY CLOSE: 69.65

The Chicago Board Options Exchange's Volatility Index, often called Wall Street's fear gauge, has been breaking records, showing the highest levels of volatility in the index's 15-year history. The VIX closed at 69.65, just below the record 70.33 set Oct. 17. This year's average is 27.25.

The historical average is 19.

