UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-Q

☑ **QUARTERLY REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the quarterly period ended October 29, 2005

OR

o **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the transition period from __________ to __________

Commission file number 1-31340

THE CATO CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware	56-0484485
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)	(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

8100 Denmark Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28273-5975
(Address of principal executive offices)
(Zip Code)

(704) 554-8510
(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Not Applicable
(Former name, former address and former fiscal year, if changed since last report)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes ☑ No o

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an accelerated filer (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act).

Yes ☑ No o

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act).

Yes o No ☑

As of November 15, 2005, there were 30,478,796 shares of Class A common stock and 690,525 shares of Class B common stock outstanding.

THE CATO CORPORATION

FORM 10-Q

October 29, 2005

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PART I FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ITEM 1. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE CATO CORPORATION

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF INCOME

	Three Months Ended		Nine Months Ended	
	October 29, 2005 (Unaudited)	October 30, 2004 (Unaudited) (Restated)	**October 29, 2005 (Unaudited)**	October 30, 2004 (Unaudited) (Restated)
	(Dollars in thousands, except per share data)			
REVENUES				
Retail sales	**$ 177,762**	$ 163,611	**$ 601,142**	$ 565,873
Other income (principally finance charges, late fees and layaway charges)	**3,592**	3,903	**11,103**	11,727
Total revenues	**181,354**	167,514	**612,245**	577,600
COSTS AND EXPENSES, NET				
Cost of goods sold	**119,869**	115,640	**396,729**	384,224
Selling, general and administrative	**51,231**	44,402	**151,328**	137,518
Depreciation	**5,094**	5,140	**15,158**	15,210
Interest expense	**10**	183	**172**	512
Interest and other income	**(1,235)**	(676)	**(3,247)**	(1,838)
	174,969	164,689	**560,140**	535,626
Income before income taxes	**6,385**	2,825	**52,105**	41,974
Income tax expense	**2,318**	1,025	**18,914**	15,236
Net Income	**$ 4,067**	$ 1,800	**$ 33,191**	$ 26,738
Basic earnings per share	**$ 0.13**	$ 0.06	**$ 1.07**	$ 0.87
Basic weighted average shares	**31,126,752**	30,913,685	**31,139,741**	30,832,394
Diluted earnings per share	**$ 0.13**	$ 0.06	**$ 1.04**	$ 0.85
Diluted weighted average shares	**31,771,535**	31,451,004	**31,798,500**	31,376,973
Dividends per share	**$ 0.13**	$ 0.117	**$ 0.377**	$ 0.34
Comprehensive income:				
Net income	**$ 4,067**	$ 1,800	**$ 33,191**	$ 26,738
Unrealized gains (losses) on available-for-sale securities, net of deferred income tax liability or benefit	**(20)**	(29)	**10**	44
Net comprehensive income	**$ 4,047**	$ 1,771	**$ 33,201**	$ 26,782

See notes to condensed consolidated financial statements.

THE CATO CORPORATION

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS

	October 29, 2005 (Unaudited)	October 30, 2004 (Unaudited) (Restated)	January 29, 2005
		(Dollars in thousands)	
ASSETS			
Current Assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	**$ 18,288**	$ 27,560	$ 18,640
Short-term investments	**75,107**	63,323	88,588
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts of $4,187, $6,223 and $6,122 at October 29, 2005, October 30, 2004 and January 29, 2005, respectively	**47,638**	49,404	50,889
Merchandise inventories	**103,435**	101,807	100,538
Deferred income taxes	**5,775**	4,971	5,781
Prepaid expenses	**2,919**	2,416	1,986
Total Current Assets	**253,162**	249,481	266,422
Property and equipment — net	**122,034**	116,307	117,590
Other assets	**10,941**	10,110	10,122
Total Assets	**$ 386,137**	$ 375,898	$ 394,134
LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY			
Current Liabilities:			
Accounts payable	**$ 71,286**	$ 72,710	$ 82,828
Accrued expenses	**45,395**	35,347	39,338
Accrued income taxes	**3,457**	5,910	4,465
Current portion of long-term debt	¾	6,000	6,000
Total Current Liabilities	**120,138**	119,967	132,631
Deferred income taxes	**10,172**	10,203	10,172
Long-term debt	¾	17,000	16,000
Other noncurrent liabilities (primarily deferred rent)	**24,306**	24,036	24,156
Commitments and contingencies:			
Stockholders' Equity:			
Preferred stock, $100 par value per share, 100,000 shares authorized, none issued	¾	¾	¾
Class A common stock, $.033 par value per share, 50,000,000 shares authorized; issued 30,663,977 shares, 26,170,545 shares and 26,249,178 shares at October 29, 2005, October 30, 2004 and January 29, 2005, respectively	**1,022**	872	875
Convertible Class B common stock, $.033 par value per share, 15,000,000 shares authorized; issued 5,597,834 shares, at October 29, 2005, October 30, 2004 and January 29, 2005, respectively	**187**	187	187
Additional paid-in capital	**37,841**	101,509	103,366
Retained earnings	**286,882**	261,015	265,499
Accumulated other comprehensive income	**81**	102	71
Unearned compensation — restricted stock awards	**(398)**	(1,081)	(911)
	325,615	362,604	369,087
Less Class A and Class B common stock in treasury, at cost (148,531 Class A and 4,907,309 Class B shares at October 29, 2005, and 5,906,179 Class A and 5,137,484 Class B at October 30, 2004 and January 29, 2005)	**(94,094)**	(157,912)	(157,912)
Total Stockholders' Equity	**231,521**	204,692	211,175
Total Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	**$ 386,137**	$ 375,898	$ 394,134

See notes to condensed consolidated financial statements.

THE CATO CORPORATION

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

	Nine Months Ended	
	October 29, 2005 (Unaudited)	October 30, 2004 (Unaudited) (Restated)
	(Dollars in thousands)	
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net income	**$ 33,191**	$ 26,738
Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	**15,158**	15,210
Provision for doubtful accounts	**3,519**	3,877
Deferred income taxes	**6**	25
Compensation expense related to restricted stock awards	**512**	512
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	**1,516**	1,598
Changes in operating assets and liabilities which provided (used) cash:		
Accounts receivable	**(268)**	(567)
Merchandise inventories	**(2,897)**	(4,515)
Prepaid and other assets	**(1,752)**	2,988
Accrued income taxes	**(1,008)**	1,404
Accounts payable, accrued expenses and other liabilities	**(7,903)**	4,863
Net cash provided by operating activities	**40,074**	52,133
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Expenditures for property and equipment	**(21,050)**	(18,619)
Purchases of short-term investments	**(56,689)**	(52,469)
Sales of short-term investments	**70,180**	36,735
Net cash used in investing activities	**(7,559)**	(34,353)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Cash overdrafts included in accounts payable	**2,500**	(900)
Dividends paid	**(11,808)**	(10,516)
Purchase of treasury stock	**(2,812)**	¾
Payments to settle long term debt	**(22,000)**	(4,500)
Proceeds from employee stock purchase plan	**416**	479
Proceeds from stock options exercised	**837**	1,360
Net cash used in financing activities	**(32,867)**	(14,077)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	**(352)**	3,703
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	**18,640**	23,857
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	**$ 18,288**	$ 27,560

See notes to condensed consolidated financial statements.

THE CATO CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (UNAUDITED)
FOR THE THREE MONTHS AND NINE MONTHS ENDED OCTOBER 29, 2005
AND OCTOBER 30, 2004 (RESTATED)

NOTE 1 — GENERAL:

The condensed consolidated financial statements have been prepared from the accounting records of The Cato Corporation and its wholly-owned subsidiaries (the “Company”), and all amounts shown as of and for the periods ended October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004 are unaudited. In the opinion of management, all adjustments considered necessary for a fair presentation have been included. All such adjustments are of a normal, recurring nature. The results of the interim period may not be indicative of the entire year.

The interim financial statements should be read in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements and notes thereto, included in the Company’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended January 29, 2005.

The Company restated its Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheet and statements of cash flows for the nine months ended October 30, 2004 and its Condensed Consolidated Statements of Income for the three months and nine months ended October 30, 2004 as a result of correcting its lease accounting practices.

The Company historically straight-lined lease expense over the period from the open date of the store through the initial non-cancelable lease term expiration. However, in accordance with FASB issued Statement No. 13 (“SFAS 13”), “Accounting for Leases,” as amended, FASB issued Technical Bulletin No. 88-1 (“FTB 88-1”), “Issues Relating to Accounting for Leases,” and FASB issued Technical Bulletin No. 85-3 (“FTB 85-3”), “Accounting for Operating Leases with Scheduled Rent Increases.” As a result, the Company corrected its lease accounting practices to recognize lease expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term which begins on the date the Company obtains control of the property and includes any renewal periods for which failure to renew imposes a penalty on the lessee such that renewal is determined to be reasonably assured. Likewise, the Company corrected its practices to amortize landlord allowances on a straight-line basis over the lease term. These corrections to the Company’s lease accounting practices reduced net income by $50,000 and $110,000 for the three months and nine months ended October 30, 2004, respectively, and had no impact on diluted earnings per share.

NOTE 1 — GENERAL (CONTINUED):

As a result of the restatement, the Company's financial results have been restated as follows (in thousands, except per share data):

	As Previously Reported October 30, 2004	Adjustments	As Restated October 30, 2004
Deferred income taxes	$ 259	$ 4,712	$ 4,971
Total Current Assets	244,769	4,712	249,481
Total Assets	371,186	4,712	375,898
Accrued expenses	35,520	(173)	35,347
Accrued income tax	5,757	153	5,910
Total Current Liabilities	119,987	(20)	119,967
Other noncurrent liabilities	11,158	12,878	24,036
Total Liabilities	158,348	12,858	171,206
Retained earnings	269,161	(8,146)	261,015
Total Stockholders' Equity	212,838	(8,146)	204,692
Total Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	$ 371,186	$ 4,712	$ 375,898

	Three Months Ended			Nine Months Ended		
	As Previously Reported October 30, 2004	Adjustments	As Restated October 30, 2004	As Previously Reported October 30, 2004	Adjustments	As Restated October 30, 2004
Revenues	$ 167,514	$ 0	$ 167,514	$ 577,600	$ 0	$ 577,600
Cost of Goods Sold	115,481	159	115,640	383,876	348	384,224
Selling, general and administrative	44,481	(79)	44,402	137,692	(174)	137,518
Income before taxes	2,904	(79)	2,825	42,148	(174)	41,974
Income tax provision	1,054	(29)	1,025	15,300	(64)	15,236
Net income (loss)	$ 1,850	$ (50)	$ 1,800	$ 26,848	$ (110)	$ 26,738
Basic earnings per share	$ 0.06	$ —	$ 0.06	$ 0.87	$ —	$ 0.87
Diluted earnings per share	$ 0.06	$ —	$ 0.06	$ 0.85	$ —	$ 0.85

NOTE 1 — GENERAL (CONTINUED):

Cash equivalents consist of highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less. Investments with original maturities beyond three months are classified as short-term investments. The fair values of short-term investments are based on quoted market prices.

Short-term investments are classified as available-for-sale. As they are available for current operations, they are classified in the Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheets as current assets. Available-for-sale securities are carried at fair value, with unrealized gains and temporary losses, net of income taxes, reported as a component of accumulated other comprehensive income. Other than temporary declines in fair value of investments are recorded as a reduction in the cost of the investments in the accompanying Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheets. The cost of debt securities is adjusted for amortization of premiums and accretion of discounts to maturity. The amortization of premiums, accretion of discounts and realized gains and losses are included in interest and other income.

During the third quarter of 2005, the Company revised its process for determining the amount of accounts receivable that should be written off each period. This change in process was consistent with industry and regulatory guidelines and resulted in an acceleration of the account receivable write-offs of approximately $1,700,000. This write-off reduced the Allowance for Doubtful Accounts in the third quarter of 2005. This change in process had no affect on the current period's earnings and management does not expect that the change will have a material affect on the Company's future earnings or financial position.

Net comprehensive income for the third quarter and nine months ended October 29, 2005 was $4,047,000 and $33,201,000, respectively. Net comprehensive income for the third quarter and nine months ended October 30, 2004 was $1,771,000 and $26,782,000, respectively. Net comprehensive income is composed of net income and net unrealized gains and losses on available-for-sale securities, net of tax.

Merchandise inventories are stated at the lower of cost (first-in, first-out method) or market as determined by the retail inventory method.

On May 26, 2005, the Board of Directors approved a three-for-two stock split in the form of a stock dividend of the Company's Class A and Class B common stock effective June 27, 2005. Furthermore, on May 26, 2005, the Board of Directors increased the quarterly dividend by 11% from $.175 per share to $.195 per share, or an annualized rate of $.78 per share on a pre-split basis. On a post-split basis, the annualized rate is $.52 per share. The dividend for the third quarter was paid on September 26, 2005 on a post-split basis at a quarterly rate of $.13 per share. Prior year basic and diluted earnings per share have been adjusted for the three-for-two stock split.

During the third quarter of 2005, the Company repurchased 148,300 shares of Class A common stock for $2,807,228, or an average price per share of $18.93.

NOTE 2 — EARNINGS PER SHARE:

FASB No. 128 requires dual presentation of basic EPS and diluted EPS on the face of all income statements for all entities with complex capital structures. Basic EPS is computed as net income divided by the weighted average number of common shares outstanding for the period. Diluted EPS reflects the potential dilution that could occur from common shares issuable through stock options and other convertible securities. Unvested restricted stock is included in the computation of diluted EPS using the treasury stock method. There was an insignificant number of shares withheld from the computation of diluted EPS due to anti-dilutive effects for the nine months ended October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004. The shares reflected below have been adjusted for the three-for-two stock split completed on June 27, 2005.

	Three Months Ended		Nine Months Ended	
	October 29, 2005	October 30, 2004	**October 29, 2005**	October 30, 2004
Weighted-average shares outstanding	**31,126,752**	30,913,685	**31,139,741**	30,832,394
Dilutive effect of stock options	**644,783**	537,319	**658,759**	544,579
Weighted-average shares and common stock equivalents (stock options) outstanding	**31,771,535**	31,451,004	**31,798,500**	31,376,973

NOTE 3 — SUPPLEMENTAL CASH FLOW INFORMATION:

Income tax payments, net of refunds received, for the nine months ended October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004 were $19,668,000 and $12,221,000, respectively. Cash paid for interest for the nine months ended October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004 were $210,000 and $543,000, respectively.

NOTE 4 — FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS:

The Company has an unsecured revolving credit agreement, which provides for borrowings of up to $35 million. This revolving credit agreement was entered into on August 22, 2003 and is committed until August 2008. The credit agreement contains various financial covenants and limitations, including the maintenance of specific financial ratios. There were no borrowings outstanding during the nine months ended October 29, 2005 or the fiscal year ended January 29, 2005. Interest is based on LIBOR, which was 4.08% on October 29, 2005.

On August 22, 2003, the Company entered into a new unsecured $30 million five-year term loan facility, the proceeds of which were used to purchase Class B Common Stock from the Company's founders. Payments are due in monthly installments of $500,000 plus accrued interest. Interest is based on LIBOR, which was 4.08% on October 29, 2005. On April 5, 2005, the Company repaid the remaining balance of $20.5 million on this term loan facility with no early prepayment penalty. With the early retirement of this loan, the Company had no outstanding debt as of April 5, 2005.

The Company had approximately $1,484,000 and $1,817,000 at October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004, respectively, of outstanding irrevocable letters of credit relating to purchase commitments.

NOTE 5 — REPORTABLE SEGMENT INFORMATION:

The Company has two reportable segments: retail and credit. The Company operated its women's fashion specialty retail stores in 31 states at October 29, 2005, principally in the southeastern United States. The Company offers its own credit card to its customers and all related credit authorizations, payment processing, and collection efforts are performed by a separate subsidiary of the Company.

The following schedule summarizes certain segment information (in thousands):

Three Months Ended October 29, 2005	Retail	Credit	Total
Revenues	$ 178,226	$ 3,128	$ 181,354
Depreciation	5,069	25	5,094
Interest and other income	(1,235)	—	(1,235)
Income before taxes	5,093	1,292	6,385
Total assets	320,659	65,478	386,137
Capital expenditures	9,366	—	9,366

Nine Months Ended October 29, 2005	Retail	Credit	Total
Revenues	$ 602,522	$ 9,723	$ 612,245
Depreciation	15,076	82	15,158
Interest and other income	(3,247)	—	(3,247)
Income before taxes	48,486	3,619	52,105
Total assets	320,659	65,478	386,137
Capital expenditures	21,048	2	21,050

Three Months Ended October 30, 2004	Retail (Restated)	Credit	Total (Restated)
Revenues	$ 163,953	$ 3,561	$ 167,514
Depreciation	5,120	20	5,140
Interest and other income	(676)	—	(676)
Income before taxes	1,321	1,504	2,825
Total assets	311,077	64,821	375,898
Capital expenditures	6,804	50	6,854

Nine Months Ended October 30, 2004	Retail (Restated)	Credit	Total (Restated)
Revenues	$ 567,004	$ 10,596	$ 577,600
Depreciation	15,151	59	15,210
Interest and other income	(1,838)	—	(1,838)
Income before taxes	38,050	3,924	41,974
Total assets	311,077	64,821	375,898
Capital expenditures	18,484	135	18,619

The Company evaluates performance based on profit or loss from operations before income taxes. The Company does not allocate certain corporate expenses or income taxes to the credit segment.

The following schedule summarizes the direct expenses of the credit segment which are reflected in selling, general and administrative expenses (in thousands):

	Three Months Ended		Nine Months Ended	
	October 29, 2005	October 30, 2004	**October 29, 2005**	October 30, 2004
Bad debt expense	**$ 1,074**	$ 1,208	**$ 3,517**	$ 3,877
Payroll	**251**	287	**801**	859
Postage	**223**	250	**820**	826
Other expenses	**263**	292	**884**	1,051
Total expenses	**$ 1,811**	$ 2,037	**$ 6,022**	$ 6,613

NOTE 6 — STOCK OPTIONS:

The Company applies APB Opinion No. 25, "Accounting for Stock Issued to Employees," and related interpretations in accounting for its stock option plans. The exercise price for all options awarded under the Company's stock option plans has been equal to the fair market value of the underlying common stock on the date of grant. Accordingly, no compensation expense has been recognized for options granted under the plans. Had compensation expense for the stock options granted been determined consistent with SFAS No. 148, "Accounting for Stock-Based Compensation — Transition and Disclosure," the Company's net income and basic and diluted earnings per share amounts for the third quarter and nine months ended October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004 as adjusted for the three-for-two stock split on June 27, 2005 would approximate the following pro forma amounts (dollars in thousands, except per share data):

	Three Months Ended		Nine Months Ended	
	October 29, 2005	October 30, 2004 (Restated)	**October 29, 2005**	October 30, 2004 (Restated)
Net Income as Reported	**$ 4,067**	$ 1,800	**$ 33,191**	$ 26,738
Add: Stock-Based employee compensation expense included in reported net income, net of related tax effects	**109**	109	**326**	326
Deduct: Total stock-based employee compensation expense determined under fair value based method for all awards, net of related tax effects	**(125)**	(109)	**(387)**	(356)
Pro forma Net Income	**$ 4,051**	$ 1,800	**$ 33,130**	$ 26,708
Earnings per share:				
Basic — as reported	**$ .13**	$ .06	**$ 1.07**	$ .87
Basic — pro forma	**$ .13**	$ .06	**$ 1.06**	$ .87
Diluted — as reported	**$ .13**	$ .06	**$ 1.04**	$ .85
Diluted — pro forma	**$ .13**	$ .06	**$ 1.04**	$ .85

NOTE 7 — RECENT ACCOUNTING PRONOUNCEMENTS:

In December 2004, the Financial Accounting Standards Board issued SFAS No. 123 (revised) "Share-Based Payment." This statement eliminates the alternative to account for share-based compensation transactions using APB Opinion No. 25 and will require that compensation expense be measured based on the grant-date fair value of the award and recognized over the requisite service periods for awards that vest. SFAS No. 123 (revised) will also require a change in the classification of certain tax benefits from options deduction to financing rather than operating cash flows. The Company is currently evaluating the impact of this statement, which will be effective as of the beginning of the Company's 2006 fiscal year as a result of the deferral of the effective date by the Securities and Exchange Commission. However, the Company does not expect the adoption of this statement to have a material impact on its consolidated financial statements.

THE CATO CORPORATION
ITEM 2. MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL CONDITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

RESULTS OF OPERATIONS:

The following table sets forth, for the periods indicated, certain items in the Company's unaudited Condensed Consolidated Statements of Income as a percentage of total retail sales:

	Three Months Ended		Nine Months Ended	
	October 29, 2005	October 30, 2004 (Restated)	**October 29, 2005**	October 30, 2004 (Restated)
Total retail sales	**100.0%**	100.0%	**100.0%**	100.0%
Total revenues	**102.0**	102.4	**101.9**	102.1
Cost of goods sold	**67.4**	70.7	**66.0**	67.9
Selling, general and administrative	**28.8**	27.2	**25.2**	24.3
Depreciation	**2.9**	3.1	**2.5**	2.7
Interest expense	**—**	0.1	**—**	0.1
Interest and other income	**(0.7)**	(0.4)	**(0.5)**	(0.3)
Income before income taxes	**3.6**	1.7	**8.7**	7.4
Net income	**2.3**	1.1	**5.5**	4.7

Comparison of Third Quarter and First Nine Months of 2005 with 2004.

Total retail sales for the third quarter were $177.8 million compared to last year's third quarter sales of $163.6 million, a 9% increase. Same-store sales increased 4% in the third quarter of fiscal 2005. For the nine months ended October 29, 2005, total retail sales were $601.1 million compared to last year's first nine months sales of $565.9 million, a 6% increase, and same-store sales increased 1% for the comparable nine month period. Total revenue, comprised of retail sales and other income (principally, finance charges and late fees on customer accounts receivable and layaway fees), were $181.4 million and $612.2 million for the third quarter and nine months ended October 29, 2005, respectively, compared to $167.5 million and $577.6 million for the third quarter and nine months ended October 30, 2004, respectively. The Company operated 1,222 stores at October 29, 2005 compared to 1,149 stores at the end of last year's third quarter. For the first nine months of 2005 the Company opened 52 stores, relocated 11 stores and closed seven stores.

Credit revenue of $3.1 million, represented 1.7% of total revenues in the third quarter of 2005, compared to 2004 credit revenue of $3.6 million or 2.1% of total revenues. The reduction in credit revenue was due to lower finance charge and late fee income from lower proprietary credit sales penetration, various terms changes, and the accelerated write-off of certain accounts due to the change in write-off from the Recency method to the Contractual method. Credit revenue is comprised of interest earned on the Company's private label credit card portfolio and related fee income. Related expenses include principally bad debt expense, payroll, postage and other administrative expenses and totaled $1.8 million in the third quarter of 2005 compared to last year's third quarter expenses of $2.0 million. The decrease in costs was principally due to lower bad debt expense and payroll costs.

RESULTS OF OPERATIONS — (CONTINUED):

Other income in total, as included in total revenues in the third quarter of 2005, decreased slightly to $3.6 million from $3.9 million in the third quarter of 2004. The decrease resulted primarily from lower finance charge income.

Cost of goods sold was $119.9 million, or 67.4% of retail sales and $396.7 million or 66.0% of retail sales for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005, compared to $115.6 million, or 70.7% of retail sales and $384.2 million, or 67.9% of retail sales for the prior year's comparable three and nine months periods, respectively. The overall decrease in cost of goods sold as a percent of retail sales for the third quarter and first nine months of 2005 resulted primarily from lower procurement costs and lower markdowns. The reduction in procurement cost is primarily the result of increased direct sourcing and the reduction in markdowns is primarily due to tighter inventory control and better sale throughs of regular priced merchandise. Cost of goods sold includes merchandise costs, net of discounts and allowances, buying costs, distribution costs, occupancy costs, freight and inventory shrinkage. Net merchandise costs and in-bound freight are capitalized as inventory costs. Buying and distribution costs include payroll, payroll-related costs and operating expenses for the buying departments and distribution center. Occupancy expenses include rent, real estate taxes, insurance, common area maintenance, utilities and maintenance for stores and distribution facilities. Total gross margin dollars (retail sales less cost of goods sold) increased by 20.7% to $57.9 million and by 12.5% to $204.4 million for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005 compared to $48.0 million and $181.6 million for the prior year's comparable three and nine month periods, respectively. Gross margin as presented may not be comparable to those of other entities as they may include internal transfer costs in selling, general and administrative expenses while the Company classifies them as cost of goods sold.

Selling, general and administrative expenses (SG&A) primarily include corporate and store payroll, related payroll taxes and benefits, insurance, supplies, advertising, bank and credit card processing fees and bad debts. SG&A expenses were $51.2 million, or 28.8% of retail sales and $151.3 million, or 25.2% of retail sales for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005, compared to $44.4 million, or 27.2% of retail sales and $137.5 million, or 24.3% of retail sales for prior year's comparable three and nine months periods, respectively. SG&A expenses as a percentage of retail sales increased 160 basis points for the third quarter of fiscal 2005 as compared to the prior year and increased 90 basis points for the first nine months of fiscal 2005, as compared to the prior year. The percentage increase and overall dollar increase in SG&A expenses for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005 resulted primarily from increased incentive based performance bonuses, increased selling-related expenses and infrastructure expenses attributable to the Company's store growth.

Depreciation expense was $5.1 million, or 2.9% of retail sales and $15.2 million or 2.5% of retail sales, for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005, compared to $5.1 million, or 3.1% of retail sales and $15.2 million, or 2.7% of retail sales, for prior year's comparable three and nine month periods, respectively.

<u>RESULTS OF OPERATIONS — (CONTINUED):</u>

Interest expense was $0.0 million, or 0.0% of retail sales and $0.2 million or 0.0% of retail sales, for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005, compared to $0.2 million or 0.1% of retail sales and $0.5 million or 0.1% of retail sales for the prior year's comparable three and nine month periods, respectively. The interest was on a $30.0 million five-year term loan facility entered into on August 22, 2003, the proceeds of which were used to purchase Class B Common Stock from the Company's founders. On April 5, 2005, the Company repaid the remaining outstanding balance of $20.5 million on this loan facility with no early prepayment penalty. With the early retirement of this loan, the Company had no outstanding debt as of April 5, 2005.

Interest and other income was $1.2 million, or 0.7% of retail sales and $3.2 million or 0.5% of retail sales, for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005, compared to $0.7 million, or 0.4% of retail sales and $1.8 million, or 0.3% of retail sales, for the prior year's comparable three and nine month periods, respectively. The increase in the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005 resulted primarily from higher interest rates.

Income tax expense was $2.3 million, or 1.3% of retail sales and $18.9 million, or 3.2% of retail sales, for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005, compared to $1.0 million, or 0.6% of retail sales and $15.2 million, or 2.7% of retail sales, for the prior year's comparable three and nine month periods. The third quarter increase resulted from higher pre-tax income. The effective income tax rate for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal 2005 was 36.3%, unchanged from fiscal 2004.

During the third quarter of 2005, the Company experienced extensive damage to 12 stores located in the U.S. Gulf Coast as a result of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. The Company recorded a write-off of $749,515 for inventory and damages to store assets. The Company has property insurance that covers most damages as well as business interruption insurance. Since the Company's stores are widely dispersed, lost sales due to closed stores are generally limited and are often offset by increased sales in other stores. Therefore, these hurricanes have not had a material impact in the aggregate on the Company's financial position, liquidity or results of operations.

<u>LIQUIDITY, CAPITAL RESOURCES AND MARKET RISK:</u>

The Company has consistently maintained a strong liquidity position. Cash provided by operating activities during the first nine months of 2005 was $40.1 million as compared to $52.1 million in the first nine months of 2004. These amounts have enabled the Company to fund its regular operating needs, capital expenditure program, cash dividend payments, purchase of treasury stock and to prepay the term loan used to repurchase the Company's Class B Common Stock. In addition, the Company maintains $35 million of unsecured revolving credit facilities for short-term financing of seasonal cash needs, none of which was outstanding at October 29, 2005.

LIQUIDITY, CAPITAL RESOURCES AND MARKET RISK (CONTINUED):

The decrease in net cash provided by operating activities for the first nine months of 2005 is primarily the result of an increase in prepaid and other assets and a decrease in accrued income taxes and accounts payable and the prepayment of the term loan offset by a smaller decrease in merchandise inventories and an increase in net income.

The Company believes that its cash, cash equivalents and short-term investments, together with cash flows from operations and borrowings available under its revolving credit agreement, will be adequate to fund the Company's planned capital expenditures, dividends, purchase of treasury stock and other operating requirements for fiscal 2005 and for the foreseeable future beyond twelve months.

At October 29, 2005, the Company had working capital of $133.0 million compared to $129.5 million at October 30, 2004. Additionally, the Company had $1.9 million invested in privately managed investment funds at October 29, 2005, which are included in other assets of the Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheets.

At October 29, 2005, the Company has an unsecured revolving credit agreement, which provides for borrowings of up to $35 million. The revolving credit agreement is committed until August 2008. The credit agreement contains various financial covenants and limitations, including the maintenance of specific financial ratios with which the Company was in compliance as of October 29, 2005. There were no borrowings outstanding under these credit facilities during the first nine months ended October 29, 2005 or the fiscal year ended January 29, 2005.

On August 22, 2003, the Company entered into a new unsecured $30 million five-year term loan facility, the proceeds of which were used to purchase Class B Common Stock from the Company's founders. Payments are due in monthly installments of $500,000 plus accrued interest. Interest is based on LIBOR, which was 4.08% on October 29, 2005. On April 5, 2005, the Company repaid the remaining balance of $20.5 million on this loan facility with no early prepayment penalty. With the early retirement of this loan, the Company had no outstanding debt as of April 5, 2005.

The Company had approximately $1.5 million and $1.8 million at the October 29, 2005 and October 30, 2004, respectively, of outstanding irrevocable letters of credit relating to purchase commitments.

LIQUIDITY, CAPITAL RESOURCES AND MARKET RISK (CONTINUED):

Expenditures for property and equipment totaled $21.1 million for first nine months ended October 29, 2005, compared to $18.6 million in last year's first nine months. The expenditures for the first nine months of 2005 were primarily for store development and investments in new technology. For the full year fiscal 2005, the Company is planning to invest approximately $29 million for capital expenditures. This includes expenditures to open 83 new stores and relocate 19 stores and close 12 stores. In addition, the Company plans to remodel nine stores and has planned for additional investments in technology scheduled to be implemented over the remainder of the fiscal year.

Net cash used in investing activities totaled $7.6 million for the first nine months of 2005 compared to $34.4 million used for the comparable period of 2004. The decrease was due primarily to the sale of short-term investments.

On May 26, 2005, the Board of Directors approved a three-for-two stock split in the form of a stock dividend of the Company's Class A and Class B common stock effective June 27, 2005. Additionally, on May 26, 2005, the Board of Directors increased the quarterly dividend by 11% from $.175 per share to $.195 per share, or an annualized rate of $.78 per share on a pre-split basis. On a post-split basis, the annualized rate is $.52 per share. The dividend for the third quarter was paid on September 26, 2005 on a post-split basis at a quarterly rate of $.13 per share.

The Company does not use derivative financial instruments. At October 29, 2005, the Company's investment portfolio was primarily invested in governmental and other debt securities with maturities less than 36 months. These securities are classified as available-for-sale and are recorded on the balance sheet at fair value, with unrealized gains and temporary losses reported net of taxes as accumulated other comprehensive income. Other than temporary declines in fair value of investments are recorded as a reduction in the cost of investments in the accompanying Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheets.

ITEM 3.QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DISCLOSURES ABOUT MARKET RISK:

The Company is subject to market rate risk from exposure to changes in interest rates based on its financing, investing and cash management activities.

FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS:

This Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q includes “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Exchange Act”). All statements other than statements of historical facts included in this Form 10-Q, including statements regarding the Company’s planned capital expenditures, intended store openings, closures, relocations and remodelings, its planned investments in technology and the expected adequacy of the Company’s liquidity, constitute forward-looking statements. Although the Company believes that the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements are reasonable, it can give no assurance that such expectations will prove to be correct. Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause the Company’s actual results to differ materially depending on a variety of important factors, including, but not limited to the following: general economic conditions; competitive factors and pricing pressures; the Company’s ability to predict fashion trends; consumer buying patterns; the effect of weather conditions, natural disasters, terrorist acts or other unforeseen events that could disrupt the Company’s operations or consumer activity; inventory risk due to shifts in market demand; and other factors discussed from time to time in the Company’s most recent reports on Form 10-K, 10-Q or 8-K filed with, or furnished to, the SEC, and the Company’s press releases, all of which may be accessed via the Company’s website, www.catocorp.com. The Company does not undertake any obligation to update any forward-looking statements.

ITEM 4. CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES:

As of October 29, 2005, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Company’s disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Rule 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e) promulgated under the Exchange Act) was performed under the supervision and with the participation of the Company’s management, including the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. Based on that evaluation, the Company’s Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer have concluded that, as of the end of the period covered by this report, the Company’s disclosure controls and procedures were effective to ensure that information required to be disclosed by the Company in its reports that it files or submits under the Exchange Act is recorded, processed, summarized and reported within the time periods specified in the Securities Exchange Commission rules and forms.

CHANGES IN INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTS:

During the quarter ended October 29, 2005, there has been no change in the Company’s internal control over financial reporting (as defined in Rule 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f) promulgated under the Exchange Act) that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the Company’s internal control over financial reporting.

PART II OTHER INFORMATION

THE CATO CORPORATION

ITEM 1. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

None

ITEM 2. UNREGISTERED SALES OF EQUITY SECURITIES AND USE OF PROCEEDS

Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Period	(a) Total Number of Shares Purchased	(b) Average Price Paid Per Share	(c) Total Number of Shares Purchased as Part of Publicly Announced Plans or Programs	(d) Maximum Number (or Approximate Dollar Value) of Shares that May Yet Be Purchased Under the Plans or Programs
August 2005	7,100	$ 18.79	7,100	1,735,744
September 2005	109,200	18.90	109,200	1,626,544
October 2005	32,000	19.05	32,000	1,594,544
Total	148,300	$ 18.93	148,300	

The Board of Directors had authorized the repurchase of 7,581,025 shares from time to time when, in the opinion of management, market conditions warrant. As of October 29, 2005, 1,594,544 shares remain open to purchase.

ITEM 3. DEFAULTS UPON SENIOR SECURITIES

None

ITEM 4. SUBMISSION OF MATTERS TO A VOTE OF SECURITY HOLDERS

None

ITEM 5. OTHER INFORMATION

None

ITEM 6. EXHIBITS

(A)

Exhibit No.	Item
3.1	Registrant's Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Registrant dated March 6, 1987, incorporated by reference to Form S-8 of the Registrant filed February 7, 2000.
3.2	Registrant's By Laws, incorporated by reference to Form S-8 of the Registrant Filed February 7, 2000.
31.1	Rule 13a-14(a)/15d-14(a) Certification of Chief Executive Officer.
31.2	Rule 13a-14(a)/15d-14(a) Certification of Chief Financial Officer.
32.1	Section 1350 Certification of Chief Executive Officer.
32.2	Section 1350 Certification of Chief Financial Officer.

PART II OTHER INFORMATION

THE CATO CORPORATION

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned thereunto duly authorized.

	THE CATO CORPORATION
December 6, 2005	/s/ John P. Derham Cato
Date	John P. Derham Cato Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer
December 6, 2005	/s/ Michael O. Moore
Date	Michael O. Moore Executive Vice President Chief Financial Officer and Secretary
December 6, 2005	/s/ Robert M. Sandler
Date	Robert M. Sandler Senior Vice President Controller

EXHIBIT 31.1

CERTIFICATIONS

I, John P. Derham Cato, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Cato Corporation (the "Company"), certify that:

1. I have reviewed this report on Form 10-Q of The Cato Corporation;

2. Based on my knowledge, this report does not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material fact necessary to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which such statements were made, not misleading with respect to the period covered by this report;

3. Based on my knowledge, the financial statements, and other financial information included in this report, fairly present in all material respects the financial condition, results of operations and cash flows of the registrant as of, and for, the periods presented in this report;

4. The registrant's other certifying officer and I are responsible for establishing and maintaining disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e)) and internal control over financial reporting (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f)) for the registrant and have:

    a) Designed such disclosure controls and procedures, or caused such disclosure controls and procedures to be designed under our supervision, to ensure that material information relating to the registrant, including its consolidated subsidiaries, is made known to us by others within those entities, particularly during the period in which this report is being prepared;

    b) Designed such internal control over financial reporting, or caused such internal control over financial reporting to be designed under our supervision, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;

    c) Evaluated the effectiveness of the registrant's disclosure controls and procedures and presented in this report our conclusions about the effectiveness of the disclosure controls and procedures, as of the end of the period covered by this report based on such evaluation;

    d) Disclosed in this report any change in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting that occurred during the registrant's most recent fiscal quarter (the registrant's fourth fiscal quarter in the case of an annual report) that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the registrant's internal control over financial reporting; and

5. The registrant's other certifying officer and I have disclosed, based on our most recent evaluation of internal control over financial reporting, to the registrant's auditors and the audit committee of registrant's board of directors (or persons performing the equivalent functions):

    a) All significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting which are reasonably likely to adversely affect the registrant's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial information; and

    b) Any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting.

Date: December 6, 2005

/s/ John P. Derham Cato

John P. Derham Cato
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

EXHIBIT 31.2

CERTIFICATIONS

I, Michael O. Moore, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary of The Cato Corporation (the “Company”), certify that:

1. I have reviewed this report on Form 10-Q of The Cato Corporation;

2. Based on my knowledge, this report does not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material fact necessary to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which such statements were made, not misleading with respect to the period covered by this report;

3. Based on my knowledge, the financial statements, and other financial information included in this report, fairly present in all material respects the financial condition, results of operations and cash flows of the registrant as of, and for, the periods presented in this report;

4. The registrant’s other certifying officer and I are responsible for establishing and maintaining disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e)) and internal control over financial reporting (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f)) for the registrant and have:

   a) Designed such disclosure controls and procedures, or caused such disclosure controls and procedures to be designed under our supervision, to ensure that material information relating to the registrant, including its consolidated subsidiaries, is made known to us by others within those entities, particularly during the period in which this report is being prepared;

   b) Designed such internal control over financial reporting, or caused such internal control over financial reporting to be designed under our supervision, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;

   c) Evaluated the effectiveness of the registrant’s disclosure controls and procedures and presented in this report our conclusions about the effectiveness of the disclosure controls and procedures, as of the end of the period covered by this report based on such evaluation;

   d) Disclosed in this report any change in the registrant’s internal control over financial reporting that occurred during the registrant’s most recent fiscal quarter (the registrant’s fourth fiscal quarter in the case of an annual report) that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the registrant’s internal control over financial reporting; and

5. The registrant’s other certifying officer and I have disclosed, based on our most recent evaluation of internal control over financial reporting, to the registrant’s auditors and the audit committee of registrant’s board of directors (or persons performing the equivalent functions):

   a) All significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting which are reasonably likely to adversely affect the registrant’s ability to record, process, summarize and report financial information; and

   b) Any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the registrant’s internal control over financial reporting.

Date: December 6, 2005

/s/ Michael O. Moore

Michael O. Moore
Executive Vice President
Chief Financial Officer and Secretary

EXHIBIT 32.1

CERTIFICATION OF PERIODIC REPORT

I, John P. Derham Cato, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Cato Corporation (the “Company”), certify, pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, 18 U.S.C. Section 1350, that on the date of this Certification:

1. the Form 10-Q of the Company for the quarter ended October 29, 2005 (the “Report”) fully complies with the requirements of Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; and

2. the information contained in the Report fairly presents, in all material respects, the financial condition and results of operations of the Company.

Dated: December 6, 2005

/s/ John P. Derham Cato
John P. Derham Cato
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

EXHIBIT 32.2

CERTIFICATION OF PERIODIC REPORT

I, Michael O. Moore, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary of The Cato Corporation (the “Company”), certify, pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, 18 U.S.C. Section 1350, that on the date of this Certification:

1. the Form 10-Q of the Company for the quarter ended October 29, 2005 (the “Report”) fully complies with the requirements of Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; and

2. the information contained in the Report fairly presents, in all material respects, the financial condition and results of operations of the Company.

Dated: December 6, 2005

/s/ Michael O. Moore
Michael O. Moore
Executive Vice President
Chief Financial Officer and Secretary