

Confidence Dips Slightly From Last Week's Record

Consumer confidence is down slightly from last week's record high, although Americans continue to report very strong satisfaction with their personal finances and the national economy.

Confidence is off to a remarkable start this year, posting two record highs this month in the 14-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll - more than were set in all of 1999. This week 78 percent of Americans say the national economy is in good shape; 55 percent call it a good time to buy things; and 70 percent rate their own finances positively, tying the record set in August 1988.

Positive ratings:	----- Since 12/85 ----			
	Today	Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	78%	80	7	39
Personal Finances	70	70	42	56
Buying Climate	55	57	20	37

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +35 on its scale of +100 to -100, down three points from last week. In the first month of 2000 the index has averaged +35, seven points higher than the full-year record of +28 last year. The index has averaged -12 since late 1985, stunted by dismal levels in the early '90s.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+35	
Last week	+38	Record high
1999 average	+28	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-12	

Call the ABC News Polling Unit, ext. 2621, for a chart tracking the ABC/Money index over time.

Confidence has been soaring for two years, lifted by rising incomes, low inflation, low interest rates and the strong job market. Strong confidence in turn has boosted consumer spending, fueling the economy through its long growth cycle. In another sign of

continuing growth, the National Association of Realtors reported this week that 1999 existing homes sales soared 4.6 percent, breaking the record set in 1998.

GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +66 in higher-income households compared to -19 in the lowest; +52 among college graduates but -2 among high-school dropouts; +40 among whites but +6 among blacks; and +42 among men compared to +29 among women.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

NATIONAL ECONOMY- The poll asks: Would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Seventy-eight percent say excellent or good, down two points from last week's record high. The worst rating was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	78%	18	60	22	17	5
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	40	21

PERSONAL FINANCES - The poll asks: Would you describe the state of your own personal finances these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Seventy percent say excellent or good, the same as last week. This ties the record, originally set Aug. 30, 1998, and matched in January, June and September of 1999. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	70%	7	63	30	23	7
Avg. since 12/85	56	5	52	44	31	13

BUYING CLIMATE - The poll asks: Considering the cost of things today and your own personal finances, would you say now is an excellent time, a good time, a not so good time or a poor time to buy the things you want and need? Fifty-five percent say excellent or good, down two points from last week's record high. The worst rating, 20 percent, was set in Fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	55%	4	51	45	33	12
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	35	63	41	21

METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,041 interviews in the month ending Jan. 23 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The ABC/Money index is derived as follows: The negative response to each index question is subtracted from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are then added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

01/23/00	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg

Group	-----							
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	35	38	29	23	29	38	22	28
State of Economy	56	60	50	42	52	60	38	47
Personal Finances	40	40	32	32	30	40	28	33
Buying Climate	10	14	4	-4	4	14	-4	5

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	42	45	41	31	34	45	30	36
Women	29	30	17	15	23	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	32	37	22	19	32	37	16	26
35 - 44	36	35	31	13	23	40	13	29
45 - 54	37	45	36	31	29	45	13	29
55 - 64	48	40	26	31	34	48	13	29
65 +	28	29	29	28	25	37	17	27
Income:								
Under \$15K	-19	-19	-28	-34	-18	-11	-42	-24
\$15K To \$24.9K	26	22	5	5	-12	26	-15	1
\$25K To \$39.9K	16	30	32	9	24	38	8	25
\$40K To \$49.9K	55	54	37	31	48	56	27	43
Over \$50K	66	68	59	59	64	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	48	47	39	31	27	48	21	32
Midwest	32	40	25	28	38	41	20	31
South	28	26	20	20	25	31	14	24
West	38	42	37	13	23	43	13	27
Race:								
White	40	43	35	27	30	43	26	32
Black	6	3	-8	-1	21	22	-11	3
Politics:								
Republican	47	50	55	41	41	55	32	41
Democrat	37	38	25	20	23	38	15	26
Independent	24	26	20	15	27	34	13	23
Education:								
< High School	-2	1	-14	-20	-7	6	-27	-10
High Sch. Grad.	27	29	26	14	21	32	12	21
College +	52	53	43	42	45	53	38	45
Home:								
Own	42	44	36	34	30	44	26	35
Rent	16	19	10	-3	26	26	-3	11
Marital Status:								
Single	32	33	17	8	28	36	8	24
Married	41	44	36	33	34	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	13	13	10	-3	8	18	-9	7
Employ. Status:								

Full-Time	43	44	37	34	38	44	30	36
Part-Time	33	30	19	22	37	38	7	23
Not Employed	24	28	20	9	12	28	8	17

END