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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 2/9/97
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CONFIDENCE SOARS
TO A 10-YEAR HIGH

Consumer confidence has soared to its best level in more than 10 years of weekly tracking polls by ABC News and Money magazine, extending a remarkable post-election rally in economic sentiment.

Sixty-two percent of Americans today rate their own finances positively, tying the record in the poll, which began in late 1985. Fifty-one percent give a positive rating to the national economy, a single point short of the record.

A third measure, ratings of the buying climate, still lags; only 39 percent call this a good time to spend money, 13 points below the record. But reluctance to spend could have a positive side, helping to hold down inflation.

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three gauges, stands at +1 on its scale of +100 to -100, up a strong four points this week. That's its best since August 1986; its best ever was +8 in May 1986.

The advance has been striking. Six months ago the index was -13; a year ago, -18; and it averaged a dreary -30 from 1990-95. Even before the last recession, in the second half of the 1980s, it averaged only -9.

Indeed, the ABC/Money index has produced a positive number in only 14 weeks before this one, all between April and August 1986. Its lifetime average, including more than 150,000 random interviews, is -20.

	ABC/Money Index
Today	+1
1996 average	-11
1990-95	-30
1986-90	-9
Full average	-20

COMPONENTS - Views of the national economy have powered this resurgence; at 51 percent positive, they're a whopping 10 points better than their pre-recession average. The record, 52 percent, was set just last Dec. 1.

Ratings of personal finances are five points better than their pre-recession average; at 62 percent positive, they tie the record set in December 1987. Views of the buying climate, trailing at 39 percent positive, equal their average from 1986-90. The record, 52 percent, was set in May 1986.

All three measures are far above their average from 1990-93, when faith in the economy was at its recession-inspired nadir.

Positive ratings for...	Today	1990-93	1986-90
National economy	51	15	41
Buying climate	39	26	39

GROUPS - Confidence customarily lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +9 among men but -5 among women; +7 among whites but -24 among blacks; +37 in higher-income households but -40 in the lowest; and +15 among people who have attended college but -25 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-one percent rate the economy negatively, up three points this week. It averaged 61 percent last year, compared to 85 percent from 1990-93 and 59 percent from 1986-90. The best, 52 percent positive, was Dec. 1, 1996. The worst, 93 percent negative, was in late 1991 and early 1992. The average for the life of the index is 69 percent negative.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-two percent rate their finances positively, up two points this week. It averaged 57 percent last year, compared to 49 percent in the 1990-93 slump and 57 percent before the recession. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993; the best, 62 percent positive Dec. 20, 1987. The full average is 54 percent positive.

BUYING CLIMATE - Sixty-one percent call this a bad time to buy things, down two points this week. It averaged 63 percent last year, compared to 74 percent during the 1990-93 slump and 61 percent before the recession. The worst is 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986. The full average is 66 percent negative.

	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	51% pos	62% pos	61% neg
1996 Average	61% neg	57% pos	63% neg
Recession Average (mid-1990 to 1993)	85% neg	51% neg	74% neg
Pre-Recession Avg. (1986 to mid-1990)	59% neg	57% pos	61% neg
Full Average (1986-now)	69% neg	54% pos	66% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	52% pos	62% pos	52% pos

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. Interviewing by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa. This week's results are based on 1,024 interviews in the month ending Feb. 9 and have an error margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

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.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC polls are available in the ABC News area of America Online.

02/09/97	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	1	-3	-7	-9	-17	1	-18	-9
State of Economy	2	-4	-2	-14	-36	4	-36	-18
Personal Finances	24	20	12	14	14	24	8	15
Buying Climate	-22	-26	-30	-28	-28	-18	-30	-25

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	9	6	7	-2	-2	10	-9	2
Women	-5	-11	-19	-16	-30	-5	-31	-19
Age:								
18 - 34	-8	-8	-5	-9	-11	-1	-23	-9
35 - 44	3	-8	-2	-21	-21	3	-22	-11
45 - 54	-4	-1	-6	-11	-9	12	-27	-8
55 - 64	17	12	-17	12	-40	17	-40	-9
65 +	15	2	-9	-6	-10	15	-22	-7
Income:								
Under \$15K	-40	-45	-45	-39	-51	-32	-58	-47
\$15K To \$24.9K	-16	-16	-31	-34	-30	-12	-40	-29
\$25K To \$39.9K	3	-1	-8	-8	-25	5	-26	-10
\$40K To \$49.9K	15	12	8	14	1	26	-10	7
Over \$50K	37	28	32	12	23	37	12	24
Region:								
Northeast	2	-2	-8	-11	-29	2	-29	-15
Midwest	2	-2	-7	7	-15	10	-15	0
South	2	0	-7	-14	-19	2	-24	-10
West	0	-8	-4	-17	-2	6	-23	-11
Race:								
White	7	2	-1	-9	-13	7	-14	-5
Black	-24	-31	-42	-13	-41	-10	-51	-33
Politics:								
Republican	17	9	4	-12	0	17	-12	2
Democrat	1	-4	-9	0	-27	10	-27	-9
Independent	-7	-8	-10	-12	-14	-4	-25	-14
Education:								
< High School	-25	-33	-36	-42	-43	-20	-47	-36
High Sch. Grad.	-5	-12	-19	-8	-25	-4	-26	-16
College +	15	14	12	2	0	16	-1	6
Home:								
Own	10	6	2	-3	-10	10	-11	-2
Rent	-19	-24	-25	-24	-31	-11	-37	-25
Marital Status:								

Single	-6	-16	-8	-8	-11	0	-26	-12
Married	10	6	-1	-7	-10	10	-11	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-19	-21	-25	-18	-41	-9	-41	-25
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	6	3	6	-5	-10	11	-11	-1
Part-Time	5	1	-13	-24	-24	5	-29	-16
Not Employed	-6	-11	-21	-10	-30	-5	-30	-18