

Confidence Advances for Second Straight Week

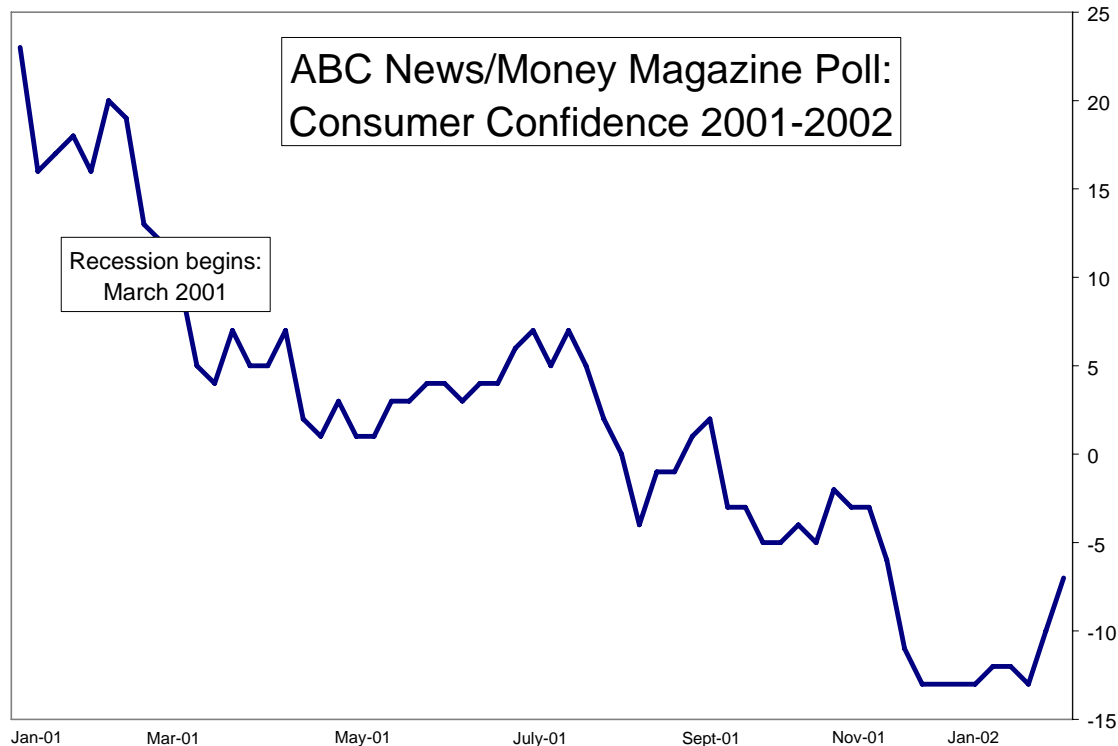
Consumer ratings of current economic conditions bumped up again this week, to their best since mid-December. The improvement follows a gain last week in expectations for the future – two signs that confidence is breaking out of its mid-winter slump.

In terms of current conditions, the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index has gained six points in the last two weeks. Sixty-two percent of Americans now rate their own finances positively, up six points since the beginning of the year.

While just 35 percent of Americans rate the economy positively, that's up four points since January. In the last component of the ABC/Money index, 42 percent say now's a good time to buy things, essentially unchanged since the start of the year.

The index stands at -7 on its scale of +100 to -100. It was -13 two weeks ago.

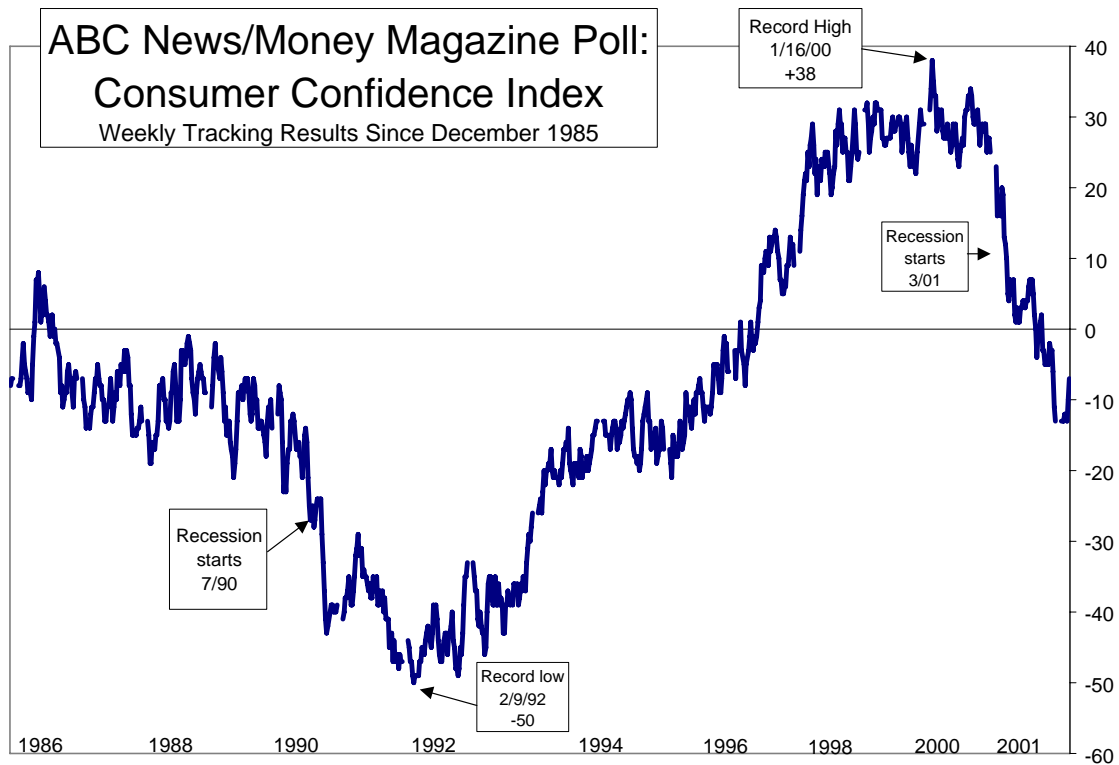
Expectations for the future, measured separately, also have been looking brighter: Last week economic pessimism was its lowest in a year and a half. Twenty-seven percent said the economy was "getting worse," down from 48 percent in mid-November.



| | 2/24/02 | 2002 average | 2001 average | 16-year average |
|----------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Positive ratings of: | 2/24/02 | | | |
| National economy | 35% | 33 | 50 | 42 |
| Buying climate | 42 | 41 | 43 | 39 |
| Personal finances | 62 | 59 | 63 | 57 |

TREND – The weekly index has averaged –12 since the start of the year, below its 16-year average of -8 but still much higher than its worst year, 1992, when it averaged –44. The index averaged +4 in 2001, down from a record +29 in 2000 – the largest year-to-year drop in this poll’s history.

| ABC/Money Index | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Today | - 7 | |
| Last week | -10 | |
| Two weeks ago | -13 | |
| 2002 average | -12 | |
| 2001 average | +4 | |
| 2000 average | +29 | Best full year |
| 1992 average | -44 | Worst full year |
| Jan. 16, 2000 | +38 | Record high |
| Feb. 9, 1992 | -50 | Record low |
| Average since 12/85 | -8 | |



GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +15 in higher-income households compared to -50 in the lowest, -1 among college graduates while -29 among high-school dropouts, -2 among whites but -43 among blacks and +4 among men while -17 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-five percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, up one point from last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

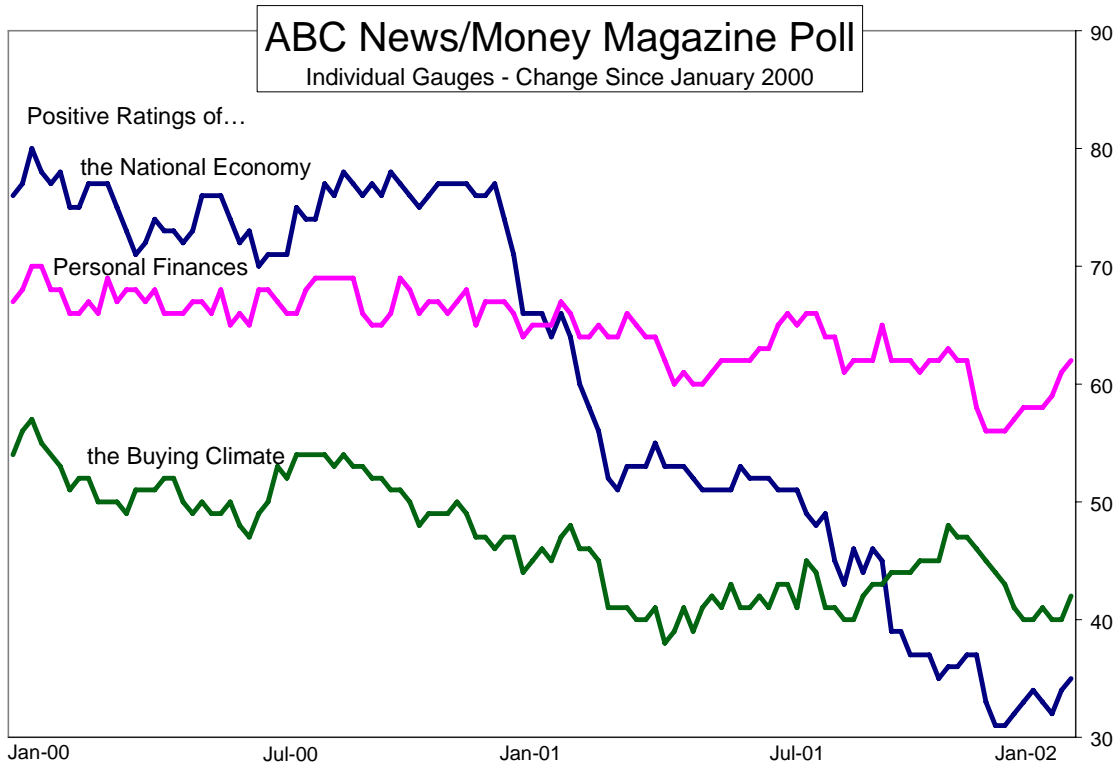
| | Pos. NET | Excel. | Good | Neg. NET | Not good | Poor |
|------------------|----------|--------|------|----------|----------|------|
| This week | 35 | 2 | 32 | 65 | 50 | 15 |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 42 | 4 | 38 | 58 | 39 | 19 |

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-two percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up one point from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

| | Pos. NET | Excel. | Good | Neg. NET | Not good | Poor |
|------------------|----------|--------|------|----------|----------|------|
| This week | 62 | 6 | 56 | 38 | 26 | 12 |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 57 | 5 | 53 | 43 | 30 | 12 |

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-two percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, up two points from last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

| | Pos. NET | Excel. | Good | Neg. net | Not good | Poor |
|------------------|----------|--------|------|----------|----------|------|
| This week | 42 | 4 | 38 | 58 | 41 | 17 |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 39 | 3 | 36 | 61 | 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 1,023 interviews in the month ending Feb. 24, 2002 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work 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.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

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

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

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| 02/24/02 | 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 | -7 | -10 | -12 | -2 | 13 | 13 | -13 | 0 |
| State of Economy | -30 | -32 | -32 | -28 | 20 | 20 | -38 | -10 |
| Personal Finances | 24 | 22 | 16 | 26 | 28 | 32 | 12 | 24 |
| Buying Climate | -16 | -20 | -20 | -4 | -8 | -4 | -24 | -15 |
| ----- | | | | | | | | |
| OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS | | | | | | | | |
| Sex: | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 4 | 1 | -2 | 4 | 19 | 19 | -6 | 6 |
| Women | -17 | -19 | -21 | -7 | 6 | 7 | -21 | -6 |
| Age: | | | | | | | | |
| 18 - 34 | 2 | 0 | -4 | 3 | 14 | 21 | -8 | 6 |
| 35 - 44 | -13 | -16 | -10 | -3 | 24 | 24 | -16 | 0 |
| 45 - 54 | -7 | -12 | -17 | -9 | 9 | 19 | -22 | -4 |
| 55 - 64 | -16 | -10 | -18 | -5 | 0 | 14 | -30 | -4 |
| 65 + | -12 | -17 | -14 | 0 | 8 | 9 | -22 | -7 |
| Income: | | | | | | | | |
| Under \$15K | -50 | -54 | -49 | -36 | -25 | -22 | -54 | -39 |
| \$15K To \$24.9K | -28 | -31 | -31 | -17 | -27 | -14 | -40 | -25 |
| \$25K To \$39.9K | -6 | -4 | -12 | -5 | 4 | 11 | -24 | -7 |
| \$40K To \$49.9K | 10 | -2 | -9 | 5 | 26 | 26 | -14 | 5 |
| Over \$50K | 15 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 41 | 41 | 3 | 25 |
| Region: | | | | | | | | |
| Northeast | -6 | -9 | -12 | -5 | 27 | 27 | -17 | -2 |
| Midwest | -15 | -9 | -13 | -1 | 11 | 13 | -15 | 2 |
| South | -2 | -5 | -10 | -1 | 6 | 8 | -13 | 0 |
| West | -7 | -17 | -13 | -2 | 13 | 17 | -21 | -1 |
| Race: | | | | | | | | |
| White | -2 | -5 | -7 | -2 | 17 | 17 | -8 | 4 |
| Black | -43 | -43 | -31 | -8 | -18 | -8 | -46 | -29 |
| Politics: | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | 8 | 9 | 13 | 16 | 31 | 34 | 5 | 21 |
| Democrat | -19 | -23 | -23 | -12 | 3 | 3 | -29 | -11 |
| Independent | -7 | -7 | -12 | -4 | 7 | 9 | -19 | -5 |
| Education: | | | | | | | | |
| < High School | -29 | -34 | -43 | -18 | -25 | -15 | -49 | -31 |
| High Sch. Grad. | -5 | -4 | -12 | -8 | 5 | 6 | -18 | -6 |
| College + | -1 | -5 | -1 | 7 | 28 | 28 | -5 | 13 |
| Home: | | | | | | | | |
| Own | -3 | -5 | -8 | 1 | 19 | 19 | -10 | 5 |
| Rent | -17 | -19 | -21 | -8 | -6 | 2 | -27 | -14 |
| Marital Status: | | | | | | | | |
| Single | -9 | -9 | -7 | -5 | 3 | 15 | -19 | 0 |
| Married | 1 | -1 | -5 | 3 | 22 | 22 | -7 | 6 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sep/Wid/Div | -37 | -38 | -39 | -18 | -13 | -10 | -42 | -24 |
| Employ. Status: | | | | | | | | |
| Full-Time | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 21 | 21 | -4 | 9 |
| Part-Time | -2 | -6 | -11 | -5 | 20 | 20 | -15 | -2 |
| Not Employed | -17 | -22 | -27 | -8 | -4 | -1 | -28 | -13 |

END