

Confidence Inching Back Up

Consumer confidence moved up another notch this week, as gasoline prices moderated.

Following a decline in gas prices nationwide, 53 percent of Americans now rate the buying climate favorably, the most since early February and four points shy of the record in 14 years of weekly polls. It was six points lower in late June, as gas prices soared.

Sixty-seven percent of Americans also rate their own finances positively, three points shy of the record. Ratings of the national economy (71 percent positive) are farther from the record set in January, nine points.

Positive ratings:	Today	Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	71%	80 on 1/16/00	7 on 2/9/92	40
Personal Finances	67	70 on 1/23/00	42 on 3/14/93	57
Buying Climate	53	57 on 1/16/00	20 on 11/2/90	38

INDEX - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +27 on its scale of +100 to -100, up one point from last week and up from a low for the year of +23 on June 25. The index rose explosively in 1998 and 1999, but has lost steam since peaking at +38 on Jan.16.

Despite this retrenchment, confidence remains very high by historic standards. The index's lifetime average, depressed by recession in the early 1990s, is -10; it dipped as low as -50 in 1992 and averaged -44 that year. This year it's averaging +29.

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+27	
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
2000 average	+29	
1999 average	+28	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-10	

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

GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +60 in higher-income households compared to -19 in the lowest, +44 among college graduates but -1 among high-school dropouts, +31 among whites but 0 among blacks and +35 among men compared to +19 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-one percent say excellent or good, the same as last week. The record, 80 percent, was set on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst rating was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	71%	14	57	29	22	7
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	36	60	40	20

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? Sixty-seven percent say excellent or good, down one point from last week. The record, 70 percent, was set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	67%	7	60	33	25	8
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	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-three say excellent or good, up three points from last week. The record, 57 percent, was set Jan. 16, 2000. The worst rating, 20 percent, was set in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	53%	4	49	47	33	14
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	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 1,029 interviews in the week ending July 16 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.

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>

07/16/00

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:

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Overall Index	27	26	24	29	29	38	22	28
State of Economy	42	42	44	48	50	60	38	47
Personal Finances	34	36	32	36	28	40	28	34
Buying Climate	6	0	-4	2	8	14	-6	3

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Sex:								
Men	35	35	31	36	37	45	30	36
Women	19	17	18	20	19	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	35	34	23	23	33	37	16	26
35 - 44	24	20	20	33	27	37	13	26
45 - 54	34	35	43	27	30	45	11	30
55 - 64	21	13	13	30	23	48	13	29
65 +	14	17	17	33	17	45	12	28
Income:								
Under \$15K	-19	-31	-35	-19	-37	-12	-37	-25
\$15K To \$24.9K	0	-4	-6	-8	2	26	-11	2
\$25K To \$39.9K	14	14	23	18	20	33	8	22
\$40K To \$49.9K	26	35	36	41	50	60	26	40
Over \$50K	60	59	58	66	61	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	29	23	27	34	22	48	17	32
Midwest	27	28	17	40	31	40	17	29
South	22	19	22	20	29	31	14	23
West	33	37	31	22	28	43	13	28
Race:								
White	31	31	30	32	34	43	25	32
Black	0	-6	2	5	-1	25	-15	0
Politics:								
Republican	31	31	40	38	43	55	31	41
Democrat	28	25	18	36	20	38	7	27
Independent	26	28	24	18	29	32	13	22
Education:								
< High School	-1	-6	-20	-7	-15	9	-27	-11
High Sch. Grad.	16	18	20	16	16	32	8	19
College +	44	42	40	48	49	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	33	31	33	36	32	44	28	35
Rent	10	11	3	9	16	22	-3	8
Marital Status:								
Single	33	25	18	23	26	36	8	24
Married	31	31	31	32	33	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	4	6	4	16	10	17	-9	7
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	37	34	33	39	39	44	28	35
Part-Time	33	29	23	21	21	38	7	24
Not Employed	10	13	12	14	13	28	8	17

END