

Confidence Holds Steady

Consumer confidence treaded water this week, still far higher than usual but well below its January peak.

Seventy-one percent of Americans say the economy is in good shape, 66 percent rate their personal finances positively and 52 percent call it a good time to buy things. Ratings of the buying climate have improved in the last month as gasoline prices moderated.

Positive ratings:	Today	----- Since 12/85 -----		
		Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	71%	80	7	40
Personal Finances	66	70	42	57
Buying Climate	52	57	20	38

INDEX - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +26 on its scale of +100 to -100, down one point from last week. The 14-year-old index reached an all-time high of +38 on Jan. 16

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+26	
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 +58 in higher-income households compared to -18 in the lowest, +43 among college graduates but +1 among high-school dropouts, +30 among whites but -7 among blacks and +32 among men compared to +20 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 the last two weeks. 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	21	8
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-six 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	66%	6	60	34	25	9
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-two say excellent or good, down one 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	52%	3	49	48	33	15
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 1,021 interviews in the week ending July 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.

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

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

07/23/00	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	26	27	23	27	30	38	22	28
State of Economy	42	42	46	46	54	60	38	47
Personal Finances	32	34	30	32	30	40	28	34
Buying Climate	4	6	-6	4	6	14	-6	3

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	32	35	33	36	37	45	30	36
Women	20	19	13	18	22	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	26	35	23	26	35	37	16	25
35 - 44	26	24	15	27	26	37	13	26
45 - 54	32	34	41	34	28	45	11	30
55 - 64	28	21	13	23	17	48	13	29
65 +	17	14	20	24	29	45	12	28
Income:								
Under \$15K	-18	-19	-36	-26	-29	-12	-36	-24
\$15K To \$24.9K	1	0	-6	-5	7	26	-11	2
\$25K To \$39.9K	19	14	14	24	19	33	8	22
\$40K To \$49.9K	24	26	41	35	48	60	24	40
Over \$50K	58	60	55	63	60	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	35	29	17	32	27	48	17	32
Midwest	31	27	23	38	29	40	17	29
South	18	22	24	21	31	31	14	23
West	27	33	26	17	30	43	13	28
Race:								
White	30	31	25	31	34	43	25	32
Black	-7	0	6	-1	-2	25	-15	0
Politics:								
Republican	33	31	40	37	42	55	31	41
Democrat	24	28	7	31	29	38	7	27
Independent	28	26	32	18	25	32	13	22
Education:								
< High School	1	-1	-13	-9	-12	9	-27	-10
High Sch. Grad.	12	16	15	14	24	32	8	19
College +	43	44	38	47	46	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	33	33	31	33	36	44	28	35
Rent	4	10	4	11	13	22	-3	8
Marital Status:								
Single	25	33	9	23	31	36	8	24
Married	33	31	30	31	33	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	-3	4	13	11	11	17	-9	6
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	33	37	28	37	37	44	28	35
Part-Time	32	33	11	29	28	38	7	24
Not Employed	14	10	19	11	18	28	8	18

END