

Confidence Strong and Steady

Consumer confidence held steady this week, in sight of its record high.

Seventy-four percent of Americans say the economy is in good shape, six points from the record set in January. Sixty-eight percent rate their personal finances positively, two points off its peak; and 54 percent call it a good time to buy things, three points off.

Ratings of the buying climate have improved in the last month as gasoline prices moderated, and are now at their highest levels since January.

Positive ratings:	Today	----- Highest	Since 12/85	----- Lowest	Average
National Economy	74%	80		7	40
Personal Finances	68	70		42	57
Buying Climate	54	57		20	38

INDEX - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +31 on its scale of +100 to -100, up one point from last week. The 14-year-old index reached an all-time high of +38 in January, then dipped to +23 in June, apparently in response to rising gasoline prices.

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+31	
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 +61 in higher-income households compared to -14 in the lowest, +44 among college graduates but +13 among high-school dropouts, +34 among whites but +6 among blacks and +37 among men compared to +25 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-four percent say

excellent or good, down one point from 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	74%	14	60	26	19	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-eight percent say excellent or good, up two points 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	68%	6	62	32	23	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-four percent say excellent or good, unchanged 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	54%	4	50	46	31	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 1,020 interviews in the week ending August 6 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>

08/06/00	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
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Group

 GENERAL POPULATION:

Overall Index	31	30	26	25	29	38	22	28
State of Economy	48	50	42	44	46	60	38	47
Personal Finances	36	32	36	32	34	40	28	34
Buying Climate	8	8	0	0	6	14	-6	3

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	37	33	35	33	38	45	30	36
Women	25	27	17	18	19	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	28	26	34	23	35	37	16	25
35 - 44	34	32	20	22	30	37	13	27
45 - 54	31	36	35	45	18	45	11	30
55 - 64	24	25	13	25	30	48	13	29
65 +	33	28	17	18	26	45	12	28
Income:								
Under \$15K	-14	-19	-31	-23	-21	-12	-36	-24
\$15K To \$24.9K	8	9	-4	2	-1	26	-11	2
\$25K To \$39.9K	26	26	14	26	24	33	8	22
\$40K To \$49.9K	26	19	35	26	48	60	19	39
Over \$50K	61	62	59	58	58	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	42	37	23	33	32	48	17	32
Midwest	31	35	28	34	29	40	17	29
South	24	22	19	17	28	31	14	23
West	32	31	37	23	24	43	13	28
Race:								
White	34	33	31	31	33	43	25	32
Black	6	3	-6	-15	0	25	-15	0
Politics:								
Republican	41	42	31	35	35	55	31	41
Democrat	25	25	25	28	27	38	7	27
Independent	29	28	28	19	26	32	13	22
Education:								
< High School	13	8	-6	-6	-20	13	-27	-10
High Sch. Grad.	18	16	18	15	25	32	8	18
College +	44	46	42	42	46	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	37	37	31	31	34	44	28	35
Rent	11	9	11	9	15	22	-3	8
Marital Status:								
Single	33	26	25	24	36	36	8	24
Married	36	38	31	30	30	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	3	2	6	9	12	17	-9	6
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	32	37	34	32	38	44	28	35
Part-Time	35	31	29	26	9	38	7	24
Not Employed	27	19	13	16	19	28	8	18

END