

ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 8/13/00

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 16, 2000

Confidence Stays Strong

Consumer confidence remained high and strong this week, with Americans' ratings of their personal finances a point away from its record in 14 years of weekly polls.

Sixty-nine percent rate their personal finances positively; the highest, 70 percent, was last reached in January. Seventy-four percent also say the economy's in good shape, six points from its record; and 54 percent call it a good time to buy things, three points off that high.

Positive ratings:	Today	----- Since 12/85 -----		
		Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	74%	80	7	40
Personal Finances	69	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, same as last week. The index reached an all-time high of +38 in January, then dipped to +23 in June, apparently in response to rising gasoline prices, before recovering.

	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.

PARTY TIME - Confidence among Republicans increased sharply in the week leading up to their convention, but there's no such gain among Democrats in this survey. The index stands at +40 among Republicans, compared to +21 among Democrats and +35 among independents. Republicans tend to be better-off financially, and confidence customarily is higher among better-off groups.

Among other groups, the index is +62 in higher-income households compared to -19 in the lowest, +46 among college graduates but +5 among high-school dropouts, +35 among whites but +2 among blacks and +39 among men compared to +23 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, unchanged 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	18	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-nine percent say excellent or good, up 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	69%	5	64	31	21	10
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, the same as 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	32	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 1,041 interviews in the week ending August 13 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>

Group	Week	Week	Ago	Ago	Ago	High	Low	Avg
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	31	31	27	26	25	38	22	28
State of Economy	48	48	42	46	42	60	38	47
Personal Finances	38	36	34	34	30	40	28	34
Buying Climate	8	8	6	-2	2	14	-6	3
OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	39	37	35	35	36	45	30	36
Women	23	25	19	18	14	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	29	28	35	27	24	37	16	25
35 - 44	31	34	24	22	28	37	13	27
45 - 54	32	31	34	38	19	45	11	31
55 - 64	21	24	21	27	22	48	13	29
65 +	40	33	14	14	31	45	12	28
Income:								
Under \$15K	-19	-14	-19	-25	-26	-12	-36	-24
\$15K To \$24.9K	2	8	0	6	-6	26	-11	2
\$25K To \$39.9K	28	26	14	27	20	33	8	23
\$40K To \$49.9K	29	26	26	29	49	60	19	39
Over \$50K	62	61	60	57	58	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	37	42	29	36	25	48	17	32
Midwest	35	31	27	32	26	40	17	29
South	22	24	22	20	27	31	14	22
West	35	32	33	20	18	43	13	29
Race:								
White	35	34	31	33	29	43	25	32
Black	2	6	0	-10	-3	25	-15	0
Politics:								
Republican	40	41	31	40	32	55	31	41
Democrat	21	25	28	24	23	38	7	26
Independent	35	29	26	25	24	35	13	22
Education:								
< High School	5	13	-1	-9	-27	13	-27	-9
High Sch. Grad.	21	18	16	15	20	32	8	18
College +	46	44	44	45	44	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	39	37	33	32	31	44	28	35
Rent	8	11	10	9	10	22	-3	8
Marital Status:								
Single	32	33	33	25	35	35	8	24
Married	38	36	31	32	27	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	0	3	4	2	4	17	-9	6
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	33	32	37	32	33	44	28	35
Part-Time	33	35	33	29	8	38	7	25
Not Employed	27	27	10	17	17	28	8	18

END