

Confidence Continues August Hot Streak

Consumer confidence inched up this week, extending an August advance and putting it on track for its best month since January's record high.

Much of the rise reflects higher optimism about the national economy. Seventy-seven percent say the economy's in good shape, up six points in the last month and now only three points from its record in weekly polls dating to late 1985.

Sixty-nine percent also rate their personal finances positively, one point from its all-time high. And 54 percent call it a good time to buy things, three points off that high.

Confidence peaked in January, dipped during the next few months and remained there until this month's resurgence.

Positive ratings:	Today	Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	77%	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 +33 on its scale of +100 to -100, up two points from last week. So far this month the index has averaged +32, on pace for its best showing since its record-setting performance in January.

ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index - Year 2000							
January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
+34	+30	+29	+27	+27	+26	+27	+32

Confidence has averaged +29 this year, a point above its record 1999 average. Its lifetime average, depressed by recession in the early 1990s, is -10.

ABC/Money Index	
Today	+33
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.

THE DEMOCRATS' TURN – Consumer confidence among Democrats showed a bit of a post-convention bounce this week. The index rose six points among Democrats but remained stable among Republicans and independents. Confidence among Republicans increased sharply in the week leading up to their convention.

Among other groups, the index is +65 in higher-income households compared to -27 in the lowest, +49 among college graduates but -65 among high-school dropouts, +38 among whites but +7 among blacks and +44 among men but +24 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-seven percent say excellent or good, up three points 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	77%	13	64	23	16	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-nine percent say excellent or good, the same as 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%	6	63	31	22	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, 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%	5	49	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 20 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 Daniel Merkle.

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

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

08/20/00	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	33	31	26	29	27	38	22	28
State of Economy	54	48	42	52	42	60	38	47
Personal Finances	38	38	32	34	34	40	28	34
Buying Climate	8	8	4	0	4	14	-6	3

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	44	39	32	34	41	45	30	36
Women	24	23	20	23	12	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	36	29	26	29	27	37	16	25
35 - 44	21	31	26	24	31	37	13	26
45 - 54	35	32	32	33	19	45	11	31
55 - 64	29	21	28	36	30	48	13	29
65 +	43	40	17	20	26	45	12	28
Income:								
Under \$15K	-27	-19	-18	-16	-21	-12	-36	-24
\$15K To \$24.9K	-4	2	1	13	-5	26	-11	2
\$25K To \$39.9K	32	28	19	23	18	33	8	23
\$40K To \$49.9K	33	29	24	34	50	60	19	38
Over \$50K	65	62	58	57	60	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	34	37	35	37	26	48	17	33
Midwest	39	35	31	33	27	40	17	30
South	28	22	18	20	27	31	14	22
West	35	35	27	29	24	43	13	29
Race:								
White	38	35	30	35	31	43	25	32
Black	7	2	-7	-5	1	25	-15	1
Politics:								
Republican	42	40	33	39	36	55	31	42
Democrat	27	21	24	29	20	38	7	27
Independent	34	35	28	28	28	35	13	22
Education:								

< High School	-6	5	1	-7	-23	13	-24	-9
High Sch. Grad.	29	21	12	20	19	32	8	18
College +	49	46	43	46	47	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	42	39	33	36	32	44	28	35
Rent	11	8	4	8	11	22	-3	8
Marital Status:								
Single	39	32	25	27	31	39	8	24
Married	36	38	33	36	31	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	13	0	-3	4	4	17	-9	6
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	37	33	33	34	36	44	28	35
Part-Time	37	33	32	25	7	38	7	25
Not Employed	26	27	14	21	18	28	8	18

END