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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 8/24/97  
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## Consumer Confidence Is Still Setting Records

The number of Americans who say the economy's in good shape rose to a new record this week in the 11-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll, and overall consumer confidence tied the record high it set three weeks ago.

Sixty-two percent now rate the economy positively, compared to an 11-year average of just 32 percent in this weekly poll. Strong ratings of the economy have been the key ingredient in a powerful summerlong surge of confidence.

Sixty-one percent of Americans also rate their own finances positively, three points short of the record set Aug. 3. Forty-six percent call it a good time to spend money, six points from the record set in 1986.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three measures, rose a point this week to +13 on its scale of +100 to -100, tying the high it set Aug. 3.

### ABC/Money Index

|              |     |             |
|--------------|-----|-------------|
| Today        | +13 | ties record |
| 1997 average | +2  |             |
| 1996 average | -11 |             |
| 1991-95      | -33 |             |
| 1986-90      | -9  |             |
| Full average | -19 |             |

Boosted by the growing economy, low unemployment, low inflation and higher per-capita income, the index has jumped from -1 in mid-May to +13 today. Over its lifetime it's averaged just -19, ranging from -9 in the second half of the 1980s to -33 in the first half of the '90s.

GAUGES - Positive ratings of the economy are leading the index; they're 30 points better than their 11-year average. Ratings of the buying climate are 11 points better than average; ratings of personal finances, seven points better.

|                   | Positive Ratings |            |
|-------------------|------------------|------------|
|                   | Today            | 11-yr avg. |
| National Economy  | 62%              | 32%        |
| Buying Climate    | 46               | 35         |
| Personal Finances | 61               | 54         |

GROUPS - Confidence still lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +24 among men but +3 among women; +19 among whites but -13 among blacks; +47 in higher-income households but -39 in the lowest; and +30 among people who've attended college but -16 among high school dropouts.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

NATIONAL ECONOMY- A record 62 percent rate the economy positively, up a point this week. It's averaged 52 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 32 percent. The worst was 93 percent negative in late 1991 and early 1992.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-one percent rate their finances positively, down a point. It's averaged 60 percent this year; the average for the life of the index is 54 percent. The best was 64 percent positive Aug. 3; the worst, 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty-four percent call this a bad time to buy things, down a point this week. It's averaged 59 percent negative this year; the average for the life of the index is 65 percent. The worst was 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986.

|              | National<br>Economy | Personal<br>Finances | Buying<br>Climate |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| This week    | 62% pos             | 61% pos              | 54% neg           |
| 1997 Average | 52% pos             | 60% pos              | 59% neg           |
| Full Average | 68% neg             | 54% pos              | 65% neg           |
| Worst        | 93% neg             | 58% neg              | 80% neg           |
| Best         | 61% pos             | 64% pos              | 52% pos           |

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. Interviewing by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa. This week's results are based on 1,037 interviews in the month ending Aug. 24 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points.

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 Gary Langer.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC polls are available in the ABC News area of America Online (keyword "ABC Polls") and on ABC News' internet site, ABCNEWS.COM.

| 08/24/97            | This<br>Week | Last<br>Week | 4 Wks<br>Ago | 3 Mo.<br>Ago | 1 Yr.<br>Ago | 12 Mo<br>High | 12 Mo<br>Low | 12 Mo<br>Avg |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Group               | -----        | -----        | -----        | -----        | -----        | -----         | -----        | -----        |
| GENERAL POPULATION: |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |
| Overall Index       | 13           | 12           | 9            | 1            | -11          | 13            | -12          | -1           |
| State of Economy    | 24           | 22           | 12           | 6            | -20          | 24            | -20          | -2           |

|                   |    |     |    |     |     |    |     |     |
|-------------------|----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| Personal Finances | 22 | 24  | 24 | 16  | 14  | 28 | 10  | 19  |
| Buying Climate    | -8 | -10 | -8 | -18 | -26 | -4 | -30 | -20 |

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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

|                  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Sex:             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Men              | 24  | 24  | 20  | 11  | 3   | 24  | -5  | 9   |
| Women            | 3   | 1   | -1  | -8  | -24 | 6   | -25 | -10 |
| Age:             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 18 - 34          | 15  | 11  | 7   | -6  | -3  | 15  | -11 | -2  |
| 35 - 44          | -2  | 6   | 3   | 7   | -20 | 9   | -21 | -4  |
| 45 - 54          | 19  | 16  | 9   | 5   | -4  | 19  | -12 | 1   |
| 55 - 64          | 11  | 15  | 11  | 1   | -36 | 21  | -36 | 1   |
| 65 +             | 26  | 14  | 20  | 4   | -8  | 35  | -10 | 4   |
| Income:          |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Under \$15K      | -39 | -33 | -27 | -42 | -52 | -24 | -56 | -41 |
| \$15K To \$24.9K | -18 | -34 | -15 | -15 | -26 | -6  | -35 | -21 |
| \$25K To \$39.9K | 17  | 15  | 1   | 0   | -9  | 17  | -19 | -2  |
| \$40K To \$49.9K | 31  | 30  | 15  | -1  | 12  | 31  | -4  | 8   |
| Over \$50K       | 47  | 45  | 46  | 41  | 18  | 48  | 12  | 34  |
| Region:          |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Northeast        | 11  | 14  | 11  | 4   | -17 | 14  | -17 | -4  |
| Midwest          | 17  | 15  | 9   | 7   | 2   | 18  | -8  | 5   |
| South            | 15  | 14  | 9   | -4  | -14 | 18  | -15 | -2  |
| West             | 7   | 3   | 10  | 0   | -14 | 21  | -23 | -2  |
| Race:            |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| White            | 19  | 19  | 15  | 6   | -6  | 19  | -10 | 4   |
| Black            | -13 | -11 | -10 | -39 | -43 | 0   | -48 | -25 |
| Politics:        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Republican       | 31  | 31  | 20  | 14  | -6  | 31  | -12 | 10  |
| Democrat         | 6   | 8   | 7   | -1  | -12 | 12  | -19 | -1  |
| Independent      | 8   | 3   | 4   | -8  | -12 | 11  | -17 | -7  |
| Education:       |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| < High School    | -16 | -13 | -10 | -24 | -38 | -7  | -47 | -28 |
| High Sch. Grad.  | 2   | 4   | -5  | -10 | -18 | 4   | -20 | -9  |
| College +        | 30  | 26  | 25  | 19  | 4   | 30  | 2   | 15  |
| Home:            |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Own              | 21  | 19  | 13  | 7   | -5  | 21  | -5  | 6   |
| Rent             | -11 | -10 | -2  | -15 | -28 | 2   | -33 | -18 |
| Marital Status:  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Single           | 8   | 7   | 9   | -8  | -7  | 12  | -20 | -3  |
| Married          | 21  | 19  | 13  | 11  | -7  | 21  | -9  | 5   |
| Sep/Wid/Div      | -11 | -9  | -1  | -23 | -32 | 0   | -32 | -18 |
| Employ. Status:  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Full-Time        | 21  | 19  | 14  | 13  | -3  | 21  | -5  | 7   |
| Part-Time        | 8   | 10  | 10  | -7  | -18 | 10  | -29 | -8  |
| Not Employed     | 4   | 3   | 3   | -13 | -21 | 9   | -21 | -9  |