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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 9/3/96
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CONFIDENCE STRONG AND STABLE

Consumer confidence, marking its best year since 1989, remained stable and comparatively strong this week amid a passel of positive economic news.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index was unchanged at -11 on its scale of +100 to -100. It's been there for four weeks straight, and has hovered between -13 and -7 (a nearly seven-year high) since late May.

The index has averaged -13 this year, not far from its pre-recession average of -9 in the second half of the 1980s. From 1990-93, depressed by the recession and its aftermath, it averaged a dismal -39. And just 36 percent of Americans today say the economy is getting worse - the fewest in a year.

The ABC/Money index is less detailed than some other indicators, but much more current. It peaked in July. July data for the Index of Leading Economic Indicators, just released Tuesday, also shows a new high.

Among other recent economic reports, the government last week revised its second-quarter GDP estimate to an annual rate of 4.8 percent. Growth also is reported in manufacturing and in new home sales.

VOTE - These results have strong political implications. Bill Clinton rode economic discontent to election in 1992. The easing of that discontent today is the single most important factor in his lead over Bob Dole and Ross Perot.

	ABC/Money Index
Today	-11
8/30/92	-46
1996 average	-13
1995	-15
1994	-19
1993	-37
1992	-44
1991	-37
1990	-24
1989	-11
Since mid-'90	-29
1990-93	-39
1986-90	-9

INDICES - The ABC/Money index is based on ratings of personal finances, the national economy and the buying climate. In the only positive gauge, 57 percent say their finances are in good shape, unchanged this week.

As usual, the other gauges are much more negative, albeit far better than in the early 1990s. Sixty percent rate the national economy negatively and 63 percent call it a bad time to buy things, down two points this week.

	Today	1990-93	1986-90
Negative on national economy	60	85	59

Negative on buying climate	63	74	61
Positive on personal finances	57	49	57

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +3 among men but -24 among women; +18 in higher-income households but -52 in the lowest; -6 among whites but -43 among blacks; and +4 among people who have attended college but -38 among high school dropouts.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Sixty percent rate the economy negatively, unchanged this week. It's averaged 64 percent this year, compared to 85 percent from 1990-93 and 59 percent from 1986-1990. The worst, 93 percent, was in late 1991 and early 1992; the best, 50-50, was April 27, 1986. The average for the life of the index is 69 percent negative.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-seven percent rate their finances positively, down a point. It's averaged 57 percent this year, compared to 49 percent in the 1990-93 slump and 57 percent before the recession. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993; the best, 62 percent positive Dec. 20, 1987. The full average is 54 percent positive.

BUYING CLIMATE - Sixty-three percent call this a bad time to buy things, down two points. It's averaged 63 percent this year, compared to 74 percent during the 1990-93 slump and 61 percent before the recession. The worst is 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986. The full average is 66 percent negative.

	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	60% neg	57% pos	63% neg
1996 Average	64% neg	57% pos	63% neg
Recession Average (mid-1990 to 1993)	85% neg	51% neg	74% neg
Pre-Recession Avg. (1986 to mid-1990)	59% neg	57% pos	61% neg
Full Average (1986-1995)	69% neg	54% pos	66% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	50% pos	62% 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 is done by ICR/AUS Consultants of Media, Pa. This week's results are based on 1,043 interviews in the month ending Sept. 1 and have an error margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. The question on expectations was conducted Aug. 21-Sept. 1; that result has a five-point error

margin.

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.

09/01/96	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	-11	-11	-13	-10	-11	-7	-21	-14
State of Economy	-20	-20	-24	-26	-30	-18	-38	-28
Personal Finances	14	16	10	18	18	20	8	13
Buying Climate	-26	-30	-26	-22	-22	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	3	3	-1	3	1	7	-11	-1
Women	-24	-24	-24	-22	-22	-18	-33	-24
Age:								
18 - 34	-3	-7	-23	-6	-11	-3	-23	-11
35 - 44	-20	-14	-4	-13	0	4	-23	-12
45 - 54	-4	-11	-11	-9	-15	-4	-36	-16
55 - 64	-36	-25	-12	-18	-9	-2	-40	-16
65 +	-8	-10	-3	-9	-23	9	-34	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-52	-48	-51	-57	-57	-43	-61	-52
\$15K To \$24.9K	-26	-25	-35	-17	-34	-12	-48	-34
\$25K To \$39.9K	-9	-14	-18	-9	-8	-2	-26	-14
\$40K To \$49.9K	12	10	6	2	-1	21	-31	1
Over \$50K	18	18	25	19	21	32	12	23
Region:								
Northeast	-17	-18	-22	-21	-20	-11	-34	-21
Midwest	2	-3	3	3	8	11	-21	-5
South	-14	-10	-11	-8	-19	-5	-24	-15
West	-14	-16	-23	-17	-12	6	-23	-13
Race:								
White	-6	-8	-9	-4	-9	-2	-15	-9
Black	-43	-39	-41	-32	-38	-23	-56	-40
Politics:								
Republican	-6	-3	1	7	-2	11	-8	1
Democrat	-12	-10	-14	-11	-17	-6	-28	-18
Independent	-12	-15	-18	-19	-17	-10	-26	-18
Education:								
< High School	-38	-28	-36	-39	-39	-28	-51	-41
High Sch. Grad.	-18	-22	-22	-14	-22	-10	-30	-21

College +	4	2	2	4	7	11	-6	3
Home:								
Own	-5	-4	-6	1	-7	1	-15	-7
Rent	-28	-30	-31	-36	-25	-20	-37	-29
Marital Status:								
Single	-7	-14	-26	-15	-2	-1	-26	-12
Married	-7	-4	-5	-4	-8	-1	-18	-8
Sep/Wid/Div	-32	-32	-27	-31	-36	-18	-45	-34
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-3	-5	-5	1	-2	7	-14	-4
Part-Time	-18	-21	-22	-19	-16	-4	-35	-18
Not Employed	-21	-18	-21	-23	-24	-16	-34	-26