

**ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 9/19/99**

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## Confidence Dips Slightly

Consumer confidence backed off slightly this week after approaching its record high. But it's still scoring its best year ever in the 13-year-old ABC News/Money magazine poll.

This week 71 percent of Americans rate the economy positively, 33 points above average.

Sixty-nine percent say their own finances are in good shape and 51 percent call it a good time to buy things, both also well above their lifetime averages.

Confidence has been extraordinarily high since the beginning of last year, thanks to low unemployment, rising wages, low interest rates and marginal inflation.

		----- Since 12/85 -----		
Positive ratings:	Today	Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	71%	77	7	38
Personal Finances	69	70	42	56
Buying Climate	51	56	20	37

INDEX - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +27 on its scale of -100 to +100, down three points from last week but vastly above its 13-year average, -13.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+27	
Last week	+30	
Record high	+32	(1/17, 3/7, 3/14)
1999 average	+29	
1998 average	+24	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-13	

Call the ABC News Polling Unit, ext. 2621, for a chart tracking the ABC/Money index over time.

GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +61 in higher-income households compared to -20 in the lowest; +45 among college graduates but -12 among high-school dropouts; +30 among whites but +12 among blacks; and +33 among men compared to +21 among women.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the 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-one percent say excellent or good, down two points from last week. The record, 77 percent, was set Jan. 10 and tied in March, April and July. The worst rating was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	71%	12	59	29	21	8
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	41	21

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, down one point from last week. This record, 70 percent, was set Aug. 30, 1998, and tied this January, June and September. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	69%	6	63	31	23	8
Avg. since 12/85	56	4	52	44	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-one percent say excellent or good, down one point from last week. The record was 56 percent Nov. 29, 1998; the worst rating, 20 percent, was set in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	51%	4	47	49	35	14
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	35	63	41	22

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 1,042 interviews in the month ending Sept. 19 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>

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This Last 4 Wks 3 Mo. 1 Yr. 12 Mo 12 Mo 12 Mo  
 Week Week Ago Ago Ago High Low Avg

Group

GENERAL POPULATION:

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Overall Index	27	30	27	30	25	32	21	28
State of Economy	42	46	42	44	42	54	36	46
Personal Finances	38	40	34	38	34	40	28	33
Buying Climate	2	4	4	8	0	12	-4	4

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Sex:								
Men	33	34	41	34	30	44	30	35
Women	21	25	12	25	20	31	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	26	29	27	31	19	35	17	27
35 - 44	28	32	31	33	27	40	16	29
45 - 54	28	32	19	30	37	41	13	28
55 - 64	24	23	30	30	21	47	12	27
65 +	26	30	26	21	25	37	17	27
Income:								
Under \$15K	-20	-19	-21	-20	-18	-9	-42	-21
\$15K To \$24.9K	-11	-1	-5	1	8	18	-15	-1
\$25K To \$39.9K	29	29	18	31	5	38	5	25
\$40K To \$49.9K	35	35	50	37	46	56	28	43
Over \$50K	61	64	60	61	62	67	52	60
Region:								
Northeast	35	40	26	32	20	40	15	27
Midwest	26	25	27	35	36	41	24	33
South	19	22	27	20	21	31	15	23
West	33	38	24	37	23	43	13	28
Race:								
White	30	33	31	34	29	37	23	31
Black	12	12	1	2	0	22	-9	6
Politics:								
Republican	38	40	36	47	42	49	28	38
Democrat	28	35	20	26	26	35	19	27
Independent	20	19	28	23	14	34	14	24
Education:								
< High School	-12	-9	-23	-11	-13	6	-27	-8
High Sch. Grad.	21	24	19	25	16	31	10	20
College +	45	48	47	47	45	52	36	45
Home:								
Own	31	32	32	36	32	40	26	34
Rent	15	22	11	10	7	26	0	12
Marital Status:								
Single	23	24	31	23	15	36	13	24
Married	33	37	31	35	34	41	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	8	7	4	15	4	18	-3	7
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	33	35	36	39	34	44	26	36
Part-Time	30	38	7	19	23	38	5	22
Not Employed	18	20	18	20	10	26	6	16