

## **Buying Climate Still Cool**

The holiday shopping season has begun with half of Americans calling it a good time to spend money – a bit fewer than at this time in either of the last two years.

Exactly 50 percent call it a good time to spend, compared to 55 percent at this time last year and 56 percent at this time in 1998. The question is whether that's enough of a change to influence spending at this critical time for retailers.

Other ratings are the same or higher than at this time in 1999 or 1998, helping to keep overall consumer confidence strong: Seventy-seven percent of Americans rate the national economy positively, and 67 percent say their own finances are in good shape

Positive ratings:	11/26/00	11/28/99	11/29/98
National economy	77%	73	73
Personal finances	67	66	67
Buying climate	50	55	56

**INDEX** - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +29 on its scale of +100 to -100, up one point from last week. The index peaked at +38 last January. It's 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	+29	
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.

**GROUPS** - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +65 in higher-income households compared to -12 in the lowest, +47 among college graduates but -13 among high-school dropouts and +34 among whites but +4 among blacks.

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



Overall Index	29	28	26	32	29	38	23	29
State of Economy	54	54	50	52	46	60	40	50
Personal Finances	34	32	32	38	32	40	30	34
Buying Climate	0	-2	-4	6	10	14	-6	3

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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	31	32	36	43	38	45	30	36
Women	27	23	17	22	21	30	13	22
Age:								
18 - 34	25	25	24	36	19	37	16	27
35 - 44	24	18	24	17	32	37	15	27
45 - 54	32	34	35	33	33	45	11	32
55 - 64	33	37	31	39	42	51	13	31
65 +	36	28	21	39	29	45	12	29
Income:								
Under \$15K	-12	-15	-13	-18	-32	-8	-36	-21
\$15K To \$24.9K	0	-8	-6	-9	6	26	-20	0
\$25K To \$39.9K	15	12	18	26	28	33	12	23
\$40K To \$49.9K	39	41	45	33	43	60	19	39
Over \$50K	65	64	57	63	65	68	54	61
Region:								
Northeast	41	29	25	32	34	48	17	33
Midwest	36	35	30	37	33	46	17	32
South	16	21	23	28	30	31	16	22
West	31	29	28	35	18	43	17	32
Race:								
White	34	32	32	37	34	43	25	34
Black	4	-4	-9	3	-1	25	-15	1
Politics:								
Republican	45	42	43	38	44	55	31	42
Democrat	22	20	24	30	32	38	7	28
Independent	29	25	20	31	15	39	15	24
Education:								
< High School	-13	-20	-19	1	-2	13	-23	-9
High Sch. Grad.	22	18	10	24	21	32	8	19
College +	47	48	51	47	45	53	38	47
Home:								
Own	37	38	34	39	39	44	31	36
Rent	10	2	7	14	4	19	2	9
Marital Status:								
Single	16	20	31	42	27	42	9	26
Married	36	33	31	33	37	44	30	34
Sep/Wid/Div	19	18	1	16	3	27	-3	9
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	34	33	34	34	39	44	28	36
Part-Time	31	38	19	40	32	40	11	26
Not Employed	21	16	17	27	13	29	10	20

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