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Monthly New York State Consumer Confidence Index including Gas and Food Analysis

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NY Consumer Confidence Up; Highest Since Summer of 2007

***Plans to Purchase Homes Reach Five Year Peak; Nearly 6% in Real Estate Market
 Gas and Food Worries Lighten; Pump Price Relief Buys Consumer's Current Mood***

Loudonville, NY - New York State consumer confidence increased 2.0 points in May, while the nation's confidence increased 2.9 points, according to the latest poll by the Siena (College) Research Institute (SRI). At 76.6, New York's overall consumer confidence is 2.7 points below the nation's* confidence level of 79.3.

May 2012 Consumer Confidence:	The Nation*	New York State	diff. points	New York State	Metro NYC	Upstate NY
Overall	79.3 (2.9)	76.6 (2.0)	-2.7	76.6 (2.0)	77.9 (1.5)	74.7 (3.3)
Current	87.2 (4.3)	76.2 (5.2)	-11.0	76.2 (5.2)	75.0 (4.5)	78.4 (6.8)
Future	74.3 (2.0)	76.9 (0.0)	2.6	76.9 (0.0)	79.8 (-0.5)	72.3 (1.0)

() reflects the point change from previous month. *National data compiled by the U. of Michigan

In May, buying plans were up for *cars/trucks*, 2.8 points to 12.9%, *furniture*, 0.7 points to 19.5%, *homes*, 1.6 to 5.7%, and *major home improvements* 0.1 points to 16.6%. Buying plans were down for *computers*, 1.3 points to 13.9%.

“Consumer Confidence, up two points this month, not only crossed back over the breakeven point where optimism outweighs pessimism among New Yorkers but the index hit its highest point since the pre-recession days of July 2007,” according to Dr. Doug Lonnstrom, professor of statistics and finance at Siena College and SRI Founding Director. **“Much of the jump comes from consumers’ current outlook, up over five points and while significantly lower than the national number, New Yorkers feel better about the present than they have since Christmas of ’07. Still the future outlook, while just above breakeven, did not move this month among all state residents but higher income New Yorkers and Republicans are more positive about the future. Plans to purchase homes jumped this month to nearly six percent reaching a rate we haven’t seen in five years and is the most encouraging buying signal we’ve seen for some time.”**

Each month since January 1999, the SRI survey establishes a Consumer Confidence index number for New York State consumers. This index number allows a direct comparison of New Yorkers to all Americans (“the nation”) as surveyed by the University of Michigan’s Consumer Sentiment index. The SRI survey measures *current* and *future* consumer confidence, which combined provides the *overall* consumer confidence. SRI further looks at confidence in New York State by region (metro New York City and Upstate), age, income, gender and party.

Consumer Confidence in New York State (index numbers): May 2012			
(Groups listed in descending order by Overall CCI Rating)			
	Overall	Current	Future
Democrats	84.2 (-1.4)	79.2 (-0.4)	87.3 (-2.2)
Higher income	82.8 (5.9)	86.4 (9.8)	80.5 (3.4)
Under Age 55	79.3 (3.1)	79.6 (7.6)	79.1 (0.3)
Men	78.4 (3.7)	78.4 (7.4)	78.3 (1.3)
Metro NYC	77.9 (1.5)	75.0 (4.5)	79.8 (-0.5)
New York State	76.6 (2.0)	76.2 (5.2)	76.9 (0.0)
Women	75.4 (0.9)	75.0 (4.1)	75.7 (-1.1)
Age 55+	75.1 (1.3)	74.3 (3.4)	75.7 (0.0)
Upstate NY	74.7 (3.3)	78.4 (6.8)	72.3 (1.0)
Republicans	69.2 (5.3)	72.8 (8.4)	66.9 (3.4)
Lower income	68.9 (-1.0)	64.1 (0.8)	72.0 (-2.2)

Consumer Confidence and Buying Plans; Summary of Last Five Years								
	Consumer Confidence			Buying Plans				
	Overall Index	Current Index	Future Index	Car/Truck	Computer	Furniture	Home	Major Home Improvement
May 2007	80.2	85.6	76.6	13.9%	13.4%	19.2%	5.3%	20.6%
May 2008	55.7	60.3	52.8	8.5%	10.8%	16.8%	3.7%	16.9%
May 2009	67.6	65.6	68.9	11.0%	10.5%	17.9%	3.0%	13.8%
May 2010	68.0	70.5	66.4	11.7%	16.3%	18.7%	4.7%	17.8%
May 2011	67.6	65.2	69.1	11.2%	14.4%	17.8%	3.2%	14.2%
May 2012	76.6	76.2	76.9	12.9%	13.9%	19.5%	5.7%	16.6%
Highest	82.1 (Jun 07)	90.9 (Jun 07)	77.1 (Mar 12)	13.9% (May 07)	16.3% (Dec 10 & Jan 12)	23.1% (Jun 07)	5.7% (May 12)	20.6% (May 07)
Lowest	51.6 (Oct 08)	49.7 (Oct 08)	49.9 (Jun 08)	7.0% (Aug 10)	7.4% (Oct 08)	10.3% (Nov 08)	2.0% (July 10 & Aug 10)	10.9% (Nov 08)

“The drop in gas prices clearly helped to boost Consumer Confidence, as concern about fuel costs on the family budget declined by nine percentage points, the biggest one month decrease since the fall of 2008. At the same time concern about food prices fell to sixty-five percent, dropping for the second consecutive month and now at the lowest it has been in over a year.

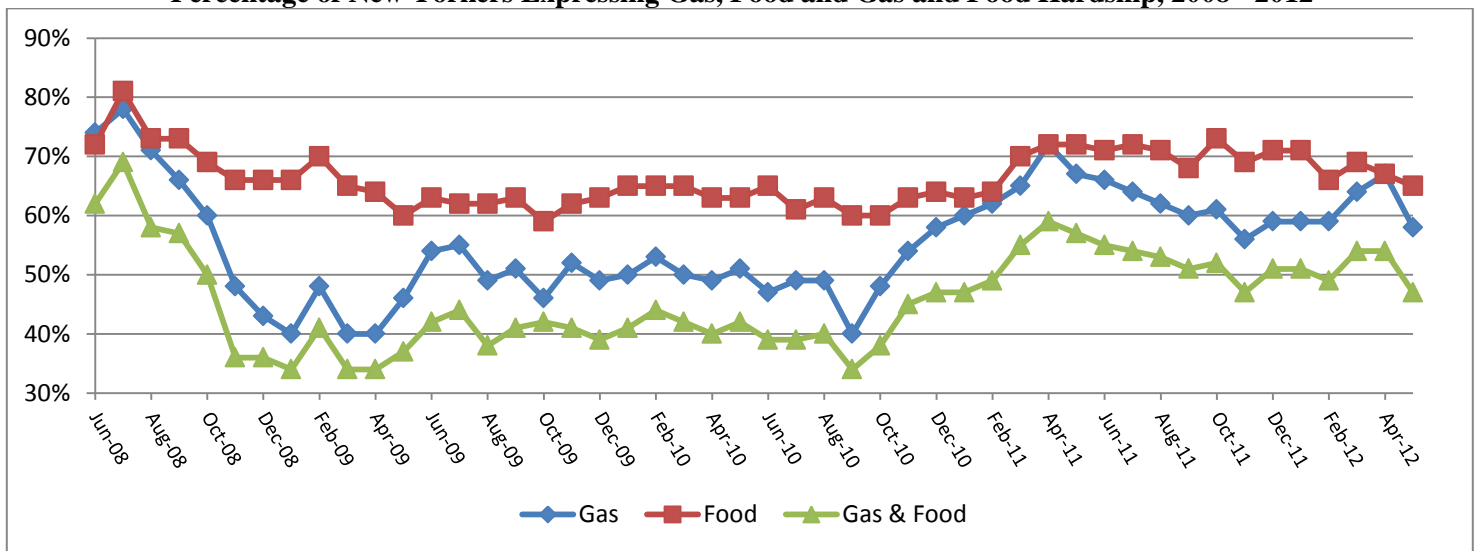
We aren’t out of the woods yet, but we have a host of encouraging signs this month. With the current mood lifting among consumers, home buying showing signs of activity and gas price anxiety lessening, New Yorkers are beginning to put the recession behind them,” according to Dr. Lonnstrom.

Gas and Food Price Analysis

Fifty-eight percent of all New Yorkers say that current gasoline prices are having a very serious or somewhat serious impact on their financial condition. Sixty-five percent of state residents indicate that the amount of money they spend on groceries is having either a very serious or somewhat serious impact on their finances. Forty-seven percent of state residents say that both gasoline and food prices are having either a somewhat or very serious impact on their finances.

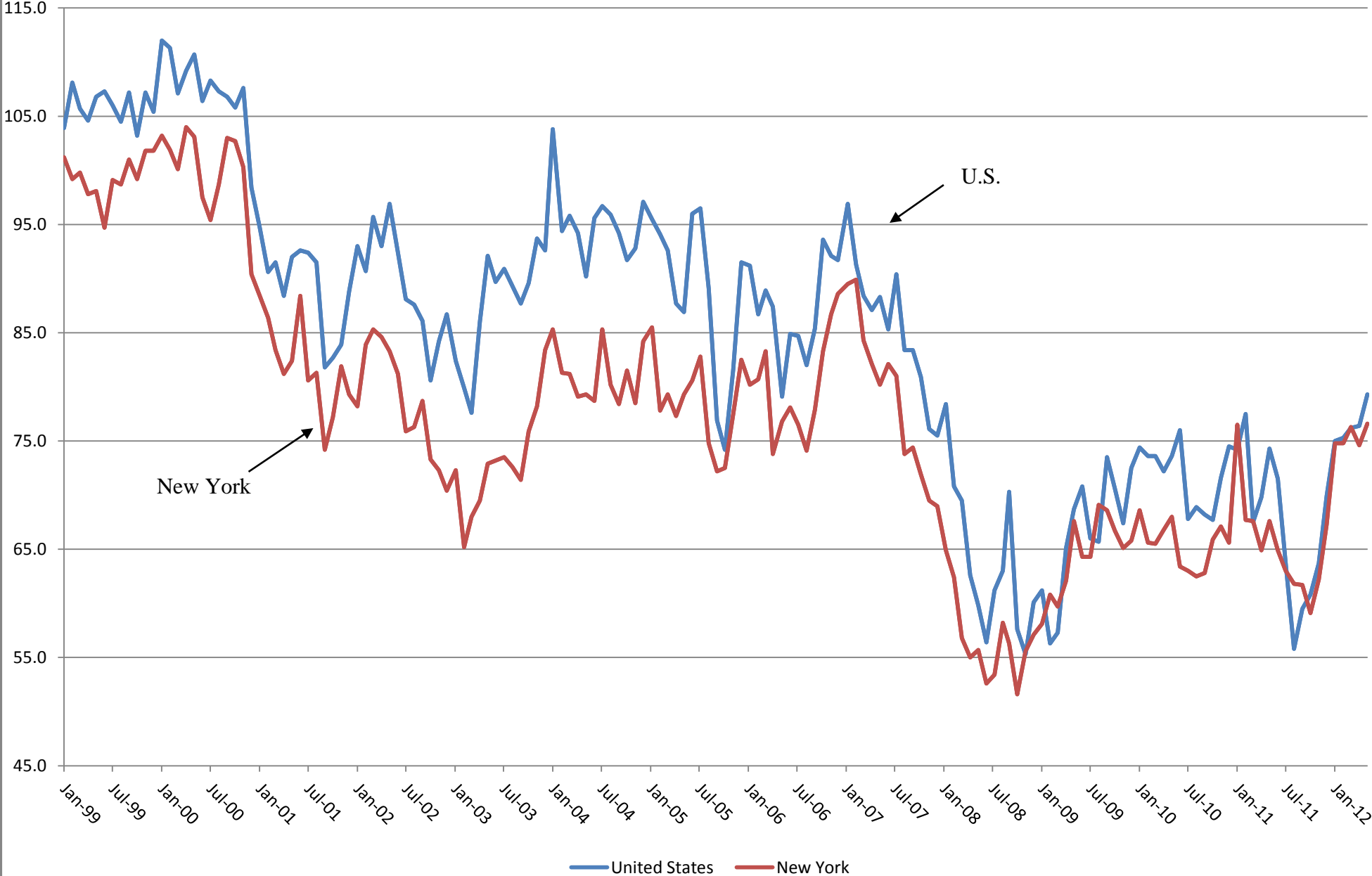
The following chart shows the percentage of New York State residents that report a hardship from 1) gasoline prices, 2) food prices, and 3) both gas and food prices from June 2008 through May 2012.

Percentage of New Yorkers Expressing Gas, Food and Gas and Food Hardship, 2008 - 2012



The SRI survey of Consumer Confidence was conducted in May 2012 by random telephone calls to 801 New York State residents over the age of 18. As consumer confidence is expressed as an index number developed after statistical calculations to a series of questions, “margin of error” does not apply. Buying plans, which are shown as a percentage based on answers to specific questions, do have a margin of error of ± 3.5 points. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Douglas Lonnstrom, Siena College professor of finance and statistics and SRI Founding Director, at 518-783-2362 (office) or 518-456-6073 (home). Survey cross-tabulations and buying plans can be found at www.siena.edu/sri/cci. SRI is an independent, non-partisan research institute. SRI subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.

Index of Consumer Sentiment, U.S. and New York, 1999-Present



Seriousness of Gas and Food Prices: Percentage of NY'ers												
Total percent by category indicating a somewhat or very serious problem.												
	Gasoline				Food				Both Gas and Food			
	May 2012	Apr 2012	Mar 2012	Feb 2012	May 2012	Apr 2012	Mar 2012	Feb 2012	May 2012	Apr 2012	Mar 2012	Feb 2012
Upstate NY	67%	77%	73%	67%	68%	69%	70%	69%	55%	62%	59%	56%
Republicans	67%	75%	70%	65%	65%	72%	69%	68%	53%	61%	58%	55%
Under age 55	62%	73%	65%	61%	69%	71%	67%	69%	50%	59%	54%	51%
Lower Income	59%	70%	67%	66%	74%	75%	77%	77%	53%	60%	57%	57%
Men	58%	71%	66%	58%	60%	63%	66%	60%	46%	55%	53%	46%
New York State	58%	67%	64%	59%	65%	67%	69%	66%	47%	54%	54%	49%
Women	58%	65%	64%	61%	68%	69%	73%	72%	48%	54%	56%	51%
Higher Income	56%	66%	62%	55%	55%	60%	60%	57%	42%	51%	51%	43%
Age 55+	55%	64%	65%	59%	62%	64%	71%	64%	45%	51%	55%	48%
Metro NYC	52%	61%	60%	55%	62%	65%	69%	65%	43%	49%	51%	45%
Democrats	51%	57%	62%	51%	59%	62%	68%	63%	40%	47%	62%	41%

Siena College Research Institute May 2012

Full table available on website: www.siena.edu/sri/ci