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

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2010: Year of Steady Consumer Worry Ends with Flat NY Trailing National Confidence
Cautious, Concerned Consumers Willing to Spend Carefully
Rising Prices Lead to Two Year High in Gas Price Concern

Loudonville, NY - New York State consumer confidence decreased 1.5 points in December, while the nation's confidence increased 2.9 points, according to the latest poll by the Siena (College) Research Institute (SRI). At 65.6, New York's overall consumer confidence is 8.9 points below the nation's* 74.5 confidence level.

December 2010 Consumer Confidence:	The Nation*	New York State	diff. points	New York State	Metro NYC	Upstate NY
Overall	74.5 (2.9)	65.6 (-1.5)	-8.9	65.6 (-1.5)	68.0 (-2.1)	61.7 (-0.7)
Current	85.3 (3.2)	67.1 (-0.7)	-18.2	67.1 (-0.7)	66.7 (-0.8)	67.8 (-1.2)
Future	67.5 (2.7)	64.7 (-2.0)	-2.8	64.7 (-2.0)	68.9 (-2.9)	57.7 (-0.5)

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

In December, buying plans were up for: *computers*, 1.6 points to 16.3%; *homes*, 0.5 to 4.5%; and *major home improvements*, 1.1 points to 14.5%. Buying plans were down for: *cars/trucks*, 2.0 points to 9.2%; and *furniture*, 2.6 points to 17.0%.

“2010 ends with consumer confidence sitting right on this year’s averages in New York,” according to Dr. Don Levy, SRI’s Director. “Confidence spent the year treading water well above the panic state of late 2008 and early 2009, but well below the point at which optimism equals, let alone exceeds pessimism. Despite New York’s confidence trailing the nation’s overall numbers by nearly nine points, empire state consumers now, after more than a year of steady concern over jobs and the economy, are willing to spend carefully on not only Santa’s list but on needed and perhaps delayed home improvements and technology. Still, we see little evidence that with future confidence flat and soft, New Yorkers are ready to spend more than they feel is absolutely necessary.”

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): December 2010 and 2010 Averages*						
(Groups listed in descending order by Overall December CCI Rating)						
	Overall	2010 Average Overall	Current	2010 Average Current	Future	2010 Average Future
Democrats	72.3 (-2.7)	72.3	71.3 (-3.0)	69.8	73.0 (-2.4)	73.9
Higher income	68.3 (-2.1)	67.8	75.4 (0.0)	73.4	63.7 (-3.5)	64.2
Metro NYC	68.0 (-2.1)	69.0	66.7 (-0.8)	66.5	68.9 (-2.9)	70.6
Under Age 55	67.4 (-1.2)	68.8	66.3 (1.1)	67.0	68.1 (-2.7)	70.0
Men	66.5 (-1.8)	66.1	69.4 (-3.4)	70.2	64.7 (-0.8)	63.5
New York State	65.6 (-1.5)	65.4	67.1 (-0.7)	66.7	64.7 (-2.0)	64.6
Women	64.8 (-1.1)	64.8	65.2 (1.9)	63.8	64.5 (-3.1)	65.4
Age 55+	64.2 (-1.7)	62.8	68.2 (-1.9)	66.5	61.6 (-1.7)	60.4
Lower income	63.7 (1.2)	62.0	59.1 (0.0)	58.4	66.7 (2.0)	64.4
Upstate NY	61.7 (-0.7)	59.7	67.8 (-1.2)	67.2	57.7 (-0.5)	54.9
Republicans	55.1 (-2.9)	59.3	59.1 (-0.4)	64.2	52.6 (-4.3)	56.1

*Average is computed using the twelve (12) monthly computations for each demographic group over the entire year, 2010.

Consumer Confidence and Buying Plans; Summary of Previous 36 Months								
	Consumer Confidence			Buying Plans				
	Overall Index	Current Index	Future Index	Car/Truck	Computer	Furniture	Home	Major Home Improvement
Dec 2007	69.0	76.9	63.9	9.9%	15.5%	17.8%	4.3%	16.0%
Dec 2008	57.1	58.4	56.2	8.4%	10.2%	10.8%	2.5%	13.2%
Dec 2009	65.8	63.7	67.2	10.5%	16.0%	16.6%	4.0%	14.4%
Dec 2010	65.6	67.1	64.7	9.2%	16.3%	17.0%	4.5%	14.5%
3 Year Difference	-3.4	-9.8	0.8	-0.7	0.8	-0.8	0.2	-1.5
Highest	69.1 (Aug 09)	76.9 (Dec 07)	71.8 (Aug 09)	11.7% (May 10)	16.3% (May 10 & Dec 10)	21.0% (Mar 10)	4.7% (Aug 08 & May 10)	18.0% (Mar 10)
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% (Jul 10 & Aug 10)	10.9% (Nov 08)

“No billboard seems to get as much attention as the posted price at the local gas pump. With prices climbing above \$3 and some say headed to over \$4 by the summer, consumer concern hit fifty-eight percent this month. This is the highest we have seen in over two years. Upstaters are most concerned and are for the second consecutive month as concerned about gas as they are about grocery prices,” according to Dr. Levy.

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-four 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 by income, political party, age, location and gender that report a hardship from 1) gasoline prices, 2) food prices, and 3) both gas and food prices.

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			
	Dec 2010	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Sep 2010	Dec 2010	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Sep 2010	Dec 2010	Nov 2010	Oct 2010	Sep 2010
Upstate NY	66%	64%	62%	47%	66%	64%	64%	63%	54%	53%	48%	38%
Republicans	61%	63%	54%	43%	70%	66%	59%	66%	55%	54%	40%	40%
Lower Income	61%	61%	54%	45%	74%	75%	70%	67%	52%	52%	44%	36%
Under age 55	60%	55%	49%	44%	69%	68%	64%	62%	51%	48%	39%	36%
Men	60%	52%	46%	41%	60%	56%	53%	55%	47%	41%	34%	32%
New York State	58%	54%	48%	40%	64%	63%	60%	60%	47%	45%	38%	34%
Women	58%	55%	50%	41%	67%	71%	67%	64%	48%	48%	41%	36%
Age 55+	58%	53%	48%	38%	62%	59%	58%	60%	45%	42%	38%	32%
Higher Income	57%	48%	45%	38%	57%	54%	54%	56%	44%	39%	34%	32%
Democrats	55%	48%	45%	39%	60%	60%	59%	59%	42%	39%	35%	32%
Metro NYC	54%	47%	40%	37%	63%	63%	59%	58%	43%	39%	32%	31%

The SRI survey of Consumer Confidence was conducted in December 2010 by random telephone calls to 792 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. Don Levy, SRI’s Director, at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations and buying plans can be found at www.siena.edu/sri/ccj. 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

