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

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Confidence Drops; Weary Consumers Wary of Economy: Slow to Spend
Majority of NY'ers Predict Bad Business Conditions for 2010 and Beyond
Home Buying Looks to Rebound, Cars Down; Gas Prices Pinching Again

Loudonville, NY - New York State consumer confidence decreased 3.0 points in February, while the nation's confidence decreased 0.8 points, according to the latest poll by the Siena (College) Research Institute (SRI). At 65.6, New York's overall consumer confidence is 8.0 points below the nation's* 73.6 confidence level.

| February 2010 Consumer Confidence: | The Nation* | New York State | diff. points | New York State | Metro NYC | Upstate NY |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Overall | 73.6 (-0.8) | 65.6 (-3.0) | -8.0 | 65.6 (-3.0) | 68.9 (-4.0) | 60.2 (-1.9) |
| Current | 81.8 (0.7) | 66.0 (-3.0) | -15.8 | 66.0 (-3.0) | 64.8 (-4.5) | 68.2 (-0.4) |
| Future | 68.4 (-1.7) | 65.5 (-2.9) | -2.9 | 65.5 (-2.9) | 71.5 (-3.6) | 55.0 (-2.9) |

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

In February, buying plans were up for: *computers*, 2.2 points to 13.9%; *homes*, 1.2 points to 4.6% and *major home improvements*, 0.5 points to 14.5%. Buying plans were down for: *cars/trucks*, 2.1 points to 9.5%; and *furniture*, 1.1 points to 16.9%.

“Each index, current, future and overall, fell about three points in New York this month,” according to Dr. Don Levy, SRI's Director. **“Our current outlook now trails the nation by nearly sixteen points. The Toyota news sent another unwanted quake through the already fragile consumer psyche. Right now by three to one, New Yorkers continue to say that their financial landscape has eroded over the last year. And when asked to look forward, only twenty-eight percent think that they will have a better next year. Worse yet is their prediction for the overall economy, fifty-four percent predict one bad year and fifty-one percent see five lean years. It all translates into little willingness to spend and for now, little chance that consumer spending will trumpet a recovery.”**

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): | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| February 2010 | | | |
| (Groups listed in descending order by Overall CCI Rating) | | | |
| | Overall | Current | Future |
| Democrats | 71.7 (-1.8) | 64.8 (-6.1) | 76.1 (0.9) |
| Under Age 55 | 69.6 (-2.7) | 67.5 (-3.0) | 71.0 (-2.5) |
| Metro NYC | 68.9 (-4.0) | 64.8 (-4.5) | 71.5 (-3.6) |
| Higher income | 66.5 (-5.2) | 69.4 (-7.9) | 64.7 (-3.4) |
| Men | 65.6 (-2.3) | 68.2 (-6.1) | 64.0 (0.3) |
| New York State | 65.6 (-3.0) | 66.0 (-3.0) | 65.5 (-2.9) |
| Women | 65.5 (-3.6) | 64.4 (0.0) | 66.2 (-5.8) |
| Lower income | 64.3 (-0.5) | 61.4 (1.5) | 66.2 (-1.7) |
| Republicans | 63.1 (-3.7) | 66.0 (-6.0) | 61.3 (-2.2) |
| Age 55+ | 61.8 (-3.3) | 64.4 (-3.1) | 60.1 (-3.4) |
| Upstate NY | 60.2 (-1.9) | 68.2 (-0.4) | 55.0 (-2.9) |

| Consumer Confidence and Buying Plans; Summary of Previous 24 Months | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | Consumer Confidence | | | Buying Plans | | | | |
| | Overall Index | Current Index | Future Index | Car/ Truck | Computer | Furniture | Home | Major Home Improvement |
| Feb 2008 | 62.4 | 65.6 | 60.3 | 10.1% | 11.1% | 17.4% | 4.0% | 15.4% |
| Feb 2009 | 60.8 | 58.0 | 62.5 | 9.5% | 13.1% | 15.7% | 4.4% | 14.1% |
| Feb 2010 | 65.6 | 66.0 | 65.5 | 9.5% | 13.9% | 16.9% | 4.6% | 14.5% |
| 2 Year Difference | 3.2 | 0.4 | 5.2 | -0.6 | 2.8 | -0.5 | 0.6 | -0.9 |
| Highest | 69.1 (Aug 09) | 69.0 (Jan 10) | 71.8 (Aug 09) | 11.6% (Jan 10) | 16.0% (Dec 09) | 17.9% (May 09) | 4.7% (Aug 08) | 17.9% (Apr 08) |
| Lowest | 51.6 (Oct 08) | 49.7 (Oct 08) | 49.9 (Jun 08) | 7.7% (Jul 08 & Jan 09) | 7.4% (Oct 08) | 10.3% (Nov 08) | 2.2% (Jan 09) | 10.9% (Nov 08) |

“With consumer confidence dropping this month and stagnating over the past eleven, any jump in short term buying plans is welcome news. With spring around the corner and the eight thousand dollar incentive for new buyers, home buying is the highest we’ve seen in a year and a half. But cars and trucks have dropped two points, the lowest since the early fall. With gas prices on the rise, once again more New Yorkers are cringing as they pull up to the pumps and watch those fill-up numbers climb. And few see any relief at the grocery store. Nearly two-thirds of all consumers and over three-quarters of low income residents, feel a hardship there,” according to Dr. Levy.

Gas and Food Price Analysis

Fifty-three percent of all New Yorkers say that current gasoline prices are having a very serious or somewhat serious impact on their financial condition, up three points from last month. 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-four 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 | | | |
| | Feb 2010 | Jan 2010 | Dec 2009 | Nov 2009 | Feb 2010 | Jan 2010 | Dec 2009 | Nov 2009 | Feb 2010 | Jan 2010 | Dec 2009 | Nov 2009 |
| Upstate NY | 61% | 63% | 62% | 66% | 60% | 67% | 61% | 65% | 49% | 50% | 46% | 51% |
| Republicans | 59% | 54% | 57% | 59% | 62% | 62% | 66% | 64% | 47% | 44% | 45% | 48% |
| Higher Income | 54% | 44% | 47% | 45% | 58% | 57% | 57% | 51% | 42% | 36% | 36% | 33% |
| Under age 55 | 53% | 51% | 48% | 52% | 64% | 67% | 63% | 63% | 43% | 43% | 37% | 41% |
| New York State | 53% | 50% | 49% | 52% | 65% | 65% | 63% | 62% | 44% | 41% | 39% | 41% |
| Men | 53% | 50% | 46% | 50% | 62% | 59% | 56% | 54% | 44% | 39% | 34% | 37% |
| Age 55+ | 53% | 49% | 50% | 51% | 66% | 64% | 63% | 60% | 46% | 40% | 41% | 41% |
| Women | 52% | 49% | 52% | 52% | 68% | 70% | 68% | 69% | 45% | 43% | 43% | 44% |
| Lower Income | 51% | 54% | 55% | 59% | 76% | 75% | 74% | 74% | 47% | 47% | 46% | 50% |
| Metro NYC | 47% | 41% | 41% | 42% | 68% | 64% | 64% | 60% | 41% | 35% | 35% | 35% |
| Democrats | 46% | 44% | 43% | 47% | 68% | 68% | 62% | 62% | 39% | 38% | 33% | 37% |

The SRI survey of Consumer Confidence was conducted in February 2010 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. Don Levy, SRI’s Director, at 518-783-2901. 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.