

**FLORIDA CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX**  
**January 31, 2006**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA**

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*Consumer Confidence*

Consumer confidence jumped four points from 91 in December to 95 in January. As with the previous month, the gains were broad-based across all five components of the index. The largest increase was in expectations of long term US business conditions which rose six points to 90. Perceptions of short term business conditions rose four points to 88. Perceptions of personal finances compared to a year ago rose one point to 89 and is now four points higher than the same time last year. Expectations about personal finances a year from now rose five points to 100 and perceptions of buying conditions rose five points to 110.

“Consumers continue to be optimistic about the economy here in Florida,” said Chris McCarty, the Survey Director. “We have been experiencing uncharacteristically warm weather this winter and gas prices were edging lower in November and December, although they have been rising since then. Overall, gasoline prices are still slightly higher than they were this time last year. The employment situation here in Florida is better than it has been in decades, at least in terms of people having jobs. The stock market had a pretty good run in January ending near 11,000. This all translates to higher consumer confidence and during the holiday season resulted in a moderate increase in sales, mostly due to sales in November rather than December.”

Employment and wages in Florida have been relatively high over the past several months. Personal income growth has been steady, offsetting higher gasoline prices and energy costs.

“Moving forward we expect a decline in consumer confidence as several factors come to bear on the consumer,” said McCarty. “Energy prices are expected to trend upward at least through the first quarter. Interest rates may not go much higher, but they are unlikely to go lower for quite some time. This has already put pressure on housing prices and sales in some key Florida markets. Homeowners that were expecting quick turnover in their property will no doubt be forced to hold on to it longer. This will be particularly true for those that purchased high-priced condominiums in Florida’s coastal markets. The slowdown in housing will have an effect on other areas of the economy, such as sales of furniture, appliances, and home improvement stores. By the end of 2006 we will see housing prices slowly trending down in some areas, which will affect consumers’ ability to extract home equity. This will ultimately affect spending.”

**FLORIDA ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER SURVEY†**  
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Jan-05 Feb-05 Mar-05 Apr-05 May-05 Jun-05 Jul-05 Aug-05 Sep-05 Oct-05 Nov-05 Dec-05\* Jan-06†

**Consumer Confidence Index**

FLORIDA	93	97	92	91	91	96	95	89	78	80	84	91	95
Men	99	102	96	94	96	99	99	94	85	88	88	96	101
Women	89	92	89	88	87	93	91	86	71	74	80	87	92
Under age 60	96	99	95	96	97	98	97	93	79	82	85	95	97
Aged 60 and over	90	93	88	83	81	91	89	82	74	74	82	83	93
Income under \$30,000	82	82	81	81	77	79	82	75	57	67	72	81	85
Income \$30,000 and over	101	102	98	96	99	101	103	96	86	86	89	97	100

**Personal financial situation now compared to a year ago**

FLORIDA	85	91	88	90	87	90	87	86	80	79	80	88	89
Men	90	98	94	94	95	92	91	88	90	87	84	90	95
Women	80	85	82	87	81	88	85	85	71	73	76	85	84
Under age 60	90	98	96	99	96	95	93	96	86	86	85	93	95
Aged 60 and over	75	77	71	76	72	80	73	65	66	62	71	76	78
Income under \$30,000	65	68	67	73	61	64	66	61	48	51	54	61	61
Income \$30,000 and over	97	100	101	100	102	100	99	99	94	91	91	98	98

**Personal financial situation expected one year from now**

FLORIDA	98	99	93	96	96	98	100	97	90	90	92	95	100
Men	102	102	95	99	99	98	102	94	95	94	93	100	107
Women	94	96	92	93	94	98	98	99	86	87	90	92	95
Under age 60	104	106	103	107	107	104	107	104	98	98	101	105	111
Aged 60 and over	86	83	76	76	76	80	83	81	72	71	75	73	83
Income under \$30,000	91	87	83	86	84	88	95	90	74	81	78	89	101
Income \$30,000 and over	104	105	102	100	104	102	106	103	98	96	100	99	105

**Expected national economic conditions over the next year**

FLORIDA	87	93	83	77	79	84	84	75	56	66	72	84	88
Men	95	100	85	81	86	93	90	83	67	78	74	90	97
Women	81	86	81	74	74	84	79	70	47	58	70	79	81
Under age 60	87	93	82	78	83	90	85	75	53	67	73	87	85
Aged 60 and over	88	96	84	74	69	82	83	76	64	68	72	81	92
Income under \$30,000	77	75	73	69	69	74	71	59	37	61	68	86	80
Income \$30,000 and over	95	100	87	81	83	90	93	80	61	68	73	86	92

**Expected national economic conditions over the next 5 years**

FLORIDA	88	88	84	80	82	88	88	80	70	76	78	84	90
Men	93	93	89	83	90	95	96	89	76	86	84	91	94
Women	84	83	79	78	76	85	83	74	65	69	73	78	87
Under age 60	87	87	80	79	86	89	87	78	68	74	77	86	85
Aged 60 and over	90	90	91	82	76	93	92	84	72	81	80	81	98
Income under \$30,000	76	72	73	65	70	72	78	70	53	65	74	82	80
Income \$30,000 and over	94	93	86	85	90	93	96	84	76	81	78	86	94

**Is this a good time to buy major household items?**

FLORIDA	110	113	114	110	111	113	113	109	91	88	98	105	110
Men	114	115	116	114	113	119	115	117	99	95	107	107	109
Women	106	112	113	107	109	110	112	104	85	83	90	103	111
Under age 60	110	113	112	114	111	111	113	111	89	88	91	104	111
Aged 60 and over	109	117	117	104	113	120	113	103	95	90	110	105	112
Income under \$30,000	99	106	108	111	101	96	100	94	72	78	85	89	105
Income \$30,000 and over	116	115	117	111	116	121	119	114	101	96	103	114	113

\*Revised. †Preliminary.

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS FOR CURRENT MONTH**

Sample Size	436	Race		Gender	
		% Non-white	19	% Male	44
Average age	53	% White	81	% Female	56
Income Characteristics		Hispanic Origin		Region	
% less than \$20,000	14	% Yes	13	% North	23
% \$20,000 to \$29,999	11	% No	87	% Central	15
% \$30,000 to \$49,999	24			% Southeast	25
% over \$50,000	51			% Southwest	37