

FLORIDA CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX
October 26, 2004
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA**

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Consumer Confidence

Consumer confidence among Floridians remained unchanged in October registering at 93, the same as in September. This is two points lower than the same time a year ago. Although the overall index did not change, some of the five subcomponents did. Perceptions of personal finances now compared to a year ago fell by four points to 81, one point lower than at the same time a year ago. Also falling were perceptions of US business conditions which fell two points this month to 85, six points lower than the same time last year. These declines were balanced by a three point rise in perceptions of buying conditions, which at 105 is nine points lower than this time last year, and perceptions on long term US business conditions which rose a point to 91.

“Consumer confidence in Florida is definitely cooling compared to its rise earlier in the year,” said Chris McCarty, the Survey Director. “Nationally consumer confidence as measured by the University of Michigan using the same questions dropped sharply in their October preliminary index to 87.5. Although Florida is doing better than the country as a whole, despite the hurricanes, we are beginning to feel the longer term consequences of high priced oil and anemic job growth.”

Job growth during the first part of the year was promising, yet recently there have been troubling signs. Jobless claims for the second week in October were higher than expected, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics determined that the rise could not be attributed to the hurricanes alone. Most economists attribute much of the recent stagnation in the economy to high oil prices, which affect not only prices at the pump, but the prices of most goods, from food to furniture, that require energy to produce. Others point to the growing trade deficit with other countries, particularly Asian countries such as China. Regardless of the causes, most agree we have hit a soft patch and this is reflected in consumer confidence.

“Going forward, many retailers are bracing themselves for a weak holiday season,” said McCarty. “With a colder than normal winter predicted by meteorologists, and higher fuel prices due to the price of oil and overall demand, many consumers will be forced to make some tough choices. While job growth in Florida has outpaced most other states, consumer confidence is now flat, and appears to be declining slightly over time.”

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Oct-03 Nov-03 Dec-03 Jan-04 Feb-04 Mar-04 Apr-04 May-04 Jun-04 Jul-04 Aug-04 Sep-04* Oct-04†

Consumer Confidence Index													
FLORIDA	95	94	96	97	97	94	96	93	95	94	95	93	93
Men	99	103	105	102	100	101	102	97	100	98	105	102	99
Women	91	84	89	91	95	88	90	89	91	92	89	87	87
Under age 60	98	97	98	99	100	96	98	94	99	97	102	97	96
Aged 60 and over	87	86	91	93	91	88	91	91	86	87	81	84	84
Income under \$30,000	84	80	83	86	83	81	84	84	79	80	85	81	81
Income \$30,000 and over	101	101	105	102	103	101	102	100	102	102	103	100	99

Personal financial situation now compared to a year ago													
FLORIDA	82	81	85	85	88	84	86	82	86	83	88	85	81
Men	84	88	94	90	90	89	93	89	89	83	98	92	83
Women	79	74	78	80	86	81	80	77	83	83	82	80	79
Under age 60	86	87	91	89	93	88	94	90	91	90	100	90	87
Aged 60 and over	72	67	71	77	75	75	71	65	72	67	60	71	68
Income under \$30,000	63	57	74	61	64	63	62	67	58	61	69	67	59
Income \$30,000 and over	91	93	95	96	100	96	98	94	98	96	100	97	92

Personal financial situation expected one year from now													
FLORIDA	101	100	100	102	100	101	102	99	104	95	103	100	100
Men	103	106	101	101	98	113	108	98	109	99	113	109	109
Women	99	95	100	103	102	92	96	100	99	93	97	94	91
Under age 60	108	110	108	112	107	110	111	106	111	101	115	110	109
Aged 60 and over	81	80	83	78	84	81	82	85	85	81	77	77	78
Income under \$30,000	96	91	91	90	90	91	96	95	87	85	99	92	90
Income \$30,000 and over	106	106	109	110	105	107	106	106	109	102	107	108	106

Expected national economic conditions over the next year													
FLORIDA	91	92	97	97	97	87	90	85	88	91	89	87	85
Men	94	106	110	105	101	96	96	93	93	95	99	98	92
Women	88	79	86	90	94	81	84	79	85	89	83	79	79
Under age 60	95	94	96	98	100	88	91	81	91	93	91	91	85
Aged 60 and over	83	88	96	98	92	85	88	95	83	88	85	78	85
Income under \$30,000	74	84	83	87	86	79	74	78	71	82	84	77	77
Income \$30,000 and over	100	96	106	101	102	93	98	88	97	98	94	91	89

Expected national economic conditions over the next 5 years													
FLORIDA	85	88	89	92	84	88	87	90	88	94	89	90	91
Men	93	103	105	101	91	96	94	100	95	99	102	98	102
Women	79	74	78	81	79	82	80	83	81	91	81	85	82
Under age 60	90	91	87	89	84	87	84	89	89	93	92	91	94
Aged 60 and over	77	84	94	97	85	87	93	94	84	97	82	91	84
Income under \$30,000	75	76	76	85	70	78	83	80	78	84	74	82	86
Income \$30,000 and over	92	94	98	93	90	93	89	97	91	98	99	93	97

Is this a good time to buy major household items?													
FLORIDA	114	106	107	109	117	108	115	107	109	107	108	102	105
Men	119	114	114	116	118	111	119	107	112	112	115	112	107
Women	110	99	102	102	115	105	111	107	107	105	104	96	104
Under age 60	113	106	106	108	116	106	112	103	110	109	112	102	105
Aged 60 and over	120	111	110	113	118	112	121	114	107	103	101	103	106
Income under \$30,000	110	91	89	109	107	94	106	99	102	89	97	86	93
Income \$30,000 and over	117	114	116	109	121	116	119	113	113	116	118	111	112

*Revised. †Preliminary.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS FOR CURRENT MONTH

Sample Size	427	Race		Gender	
		% Non-white	17	% Male	48
Average age	51	% White	83	% Female	52
Income Characteristics		Hispanic Origin		Region	
% less than \$20,000	17	% Yes	10	% North	21
% \$20,000 to \$29,999	12	% No	90	% Central	20
% \$30,000 to \$49,999	26			% Southeast	26
% over \$50,000	45			% Southwest	33