

ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE INDEX

Views on Canadian Economy Start to Sour; Two-in-Five Predict Decline

Fewer Canadians think right now is a good time to buy everyday items or make a major purchase.

[VANCOUVER - May 20, 2008] – The views of Canadian adults on the country's economic situation became more negative this month, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 68 per cent of respondents rate the economic conditions in Canada today as "Very Good" or "Good" (-5), while almost three-in-ten (28%) believe they are "Poor" or "Very Poor" (+4).

Women (35%) are more likely to refer to the country's economic standing in a negative way, along with almost two-in-five Ontarians (38%) and one-in-three Atlantic Canadians (33%).

While almost half of respondents (48%, -6) expect the national economy to remain the same over the next three months, two-in-five (41%) predict a decline, and only six per cent forecast an improvement.

The proportion of respondents who believe the Canadian economy will worsen has increased by 11 percentage points in two months.

For the first time this year, less than half of Canadians (43%, -10) think right now is a good time to buy everyday items, with the highest level of confidence coming in Alberta (47%) and the lowest in Atlantic Canada (38%). Men (52%) clearly hold more buoyant views than women (35%) on this question.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **41% (+11) think the Canadian economy will decline over the next three months**
- » **68% (-5) rate the economic conditions in Canada as very good or good**
- » **72% (-4) are not concerned about the possibility of losing their job**
- » **58% rate their own personal finances as good or very good**
- » **57% are worried about their balance between savings and debt**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From May 9 to May 10, 2008, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,007 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

In another first for 2008, more than half of Canadians (53%) think it is currently a bad time to make a major purchase (+5), with respondents in Quebec (57%), Ontario (53%), Atlantic Canada (52%), and British Columbia (51%) particularly cautious.

In addition, 58 per cent of respondents (-2) provide a positive assessment of their own personal finances. Since March, the proportion of respondents who rate their own economic standing as "Poor" has increased by five percentage points.

When assessing their own personal finances, more than half of respondents (56%, -1) expect no major changes, 18 per cent (+7) anticipate a decline, and 22 per cent (-5) believe an improvement will occur. The mood is particularly dire in Alberta and Atlantic Canada, where 22 per cent and 28 per cent of respondents respectively expect their own economic situation to worsen.

On the topic of debt management, the views of Canadians did not go through any major shifts this month. The survey shows that more than half of respondents (57%, +1) are either greatly or moderately worried about the balance between the amount of savings and the amount of debt they currently have. In Atlantic Canada, Ontario and Alberta, at least 20 per cent of respondents are greatly concerned.

Finally, fewer than three-in-four respondents (72%, -4) are not worried about the possibility of losing their job, but concern about this possibility rose from 16 per cent in March to 21 per cent this month. While less than 10 per cent of respondents in BC are concerned about losing their jobs, the proportion climbs to 24 per cent in Ontario.

Related releases:

03.18.08

Angus Reid Poll: Canadians Content with Economy, Personal Finances and Job Situation
<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=188>

02.19.08

Angus Reid Poll: Canadians Satisfied with Economy, But Three-in-Ten Expect Decline
<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=166>

Economic Index									
How would you rate the economic conditions in Canada today?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Very good	8%	6%	6%	5%	5%	15%	4%	12%	3%
Good	60%	68%	77%	77%	53%	55%	62%	65%	56%
Poor	24%	19%	16%	17%	34%	17%	29%	18%	31%
Very poor	4%	5%	1%	1%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Not sure	4%	2%	0%	1%	4%	10%	1%	2%	6%

Economic Index			
Trend - How would you rate the economic conditions in Canada today?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Very good	8%	10%	12%
Good	60%	63%	64%
Poor	24%	18%	17%
Very poor	4%	4%	3%
Not sure	4%	5%	5%

Economic Index									
How would you rate your own personal finances today?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Very good	8%	7%	16%	4%	6%	9%	10%	9%	7%
Good	50%	47%	43%	54%	54%	48%	44%	52%	47%
Poor	30%	27%	36%	32%	30%	28%	34%	29%	31%
Very poor	10%	14%	2%	8%	9%	13%	12%	7%	13%
Not sure	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%

Economic Index			
Trend - How would you rate your own personal finances today?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Very good	8%	8%	8%
Good	50%	52%	54%
Poor	30%	25%	27%
Very poor	10%	12%	9%
Not sure	2%	2%	2%

Economic Index									
Would you say that right now is a good time or a bad time to buy everyday items?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Good time	43%	43%	47%	48%	42%	44%	38%	52%	35%
Bad time	36%	34%	34%	36%	36%	37%	35%	32%	40%
Not sure	21%	23%	19%	16%	22%	19%	27%	16%	26%

Economic Index			
Trend - Would you say that right now is a good time or a bad time to buy everyday items?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Good time	43%	53%	59%
Bad time	36%	28%	24%
Not sure	21%	19%	18%

Economic Index									
Would you say that right now is a good time or a bad time to make a major purchase?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Good time	31%	28%	37%	40%	30%	29%	23%	36%	25%
Bad time	53%	51%	47%	48%	53%	57%	52%	48%	58%
Not sure	16%	21%	15%	12%	16%	13%	25%	16%	17%

Economic Index			
Trend - Would you say that right now is a good time or a bad time to make a major purchase?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Good time	31%	35%	35%
Bad time	53%	48%	47%
Not sure	16%	17%	18%

Economic Index									
Over the next three months, do you think the Canadian economy will improve, remain the same, or decline?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Improve	6%	5%	9%	9%	5%	3%	9%	6%	5%
Remain the same	48%	44%	53%	49%	45%	54%	43%	50%	46%
Decline	41%	45%	34%	33%	43%	38%	46%	40%	41%
Not sure	5%	5%	4%	9%	6%	5%	3%	3%	7%

Economic Index			
Trend - Over the next three months, do you think the Canadian economy will improve, remain the same, or decline?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Improve	6%	10%	12%
Remain the same	48%	54%	54%
Decline	41%	30%	29%
Not sure	5%	6%	5%

Economic Index									
Over the next three months, do you think your personal finances will improve, remain the same, or decline?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Improve	22%	22%	17%	27%	19%	26%	17%	24%	19%
Remain the same	56%	60%	60%	53%	58%	55%	47%	56%	57%
Decline	18%	15%	22%	14%	18%	16%	28%	17%	19%
Not sure	4%	2%	1%	5%	5%	3%	8%	2%	6%

Economic Index			
Trend - Over the next three months, do you think your personal finances will improve, remain the same, or decline?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Improve	22%	27%	28%
Remain the same	56%	57%	59%
Decline	18%	11%	11%
Not sure	4%	5%	2%

Economic Index									
Thinking about the amount of savings and the amount of debt you currently have, would say the balance between them is something you...?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Feel really good about	12%	15%	6%	7%	11%	16%	6%	11%	12%
Are comfortable with	30%	31%	36%	27%	30%	27%	35%	34%	26%
Moderately worry about	37%	39%	36%	42%	34%	40%	39%	41%	34%
Worry a great deal about	20%	15%	20%	18%	24%	15%	20%	14%	24%
Not sure	2%	0%	1%	6%	1%	2%	0%	0%	3%

Economic Index			
Trend - Thinking about the amount of savings and the amount of debt you currently have, would say the balance between them is something you...?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Feel really good about	12%	10%	14%
Are comfortable with	30%	32%	33%
Moderately worry about	37%	39%	37%
Worry a great deal about	20%	17%	15%
Not sure	2%	2%	1%

Economic Index									
How concerned are you about the possibility of losing your job?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Very concerned	6%	2%	8%	2%	7%	8%	8%	5%	8%
Moderately concerned	15%	7%	12%	24%	17%	15%	15%	18%	12%
Not too concerned	26%	30%	29%	27%	25%	27%	19%	28%	24%
Not concerned at all	45%	54%	48%	44%	44%	41%	48%	45%	45%
Not sure	7%	6%	4%	3%	7%	9%	11%	4%	10%

Economic Index			
Trend - How concerned are you about the possibility of losing your job?			
	May 2008	March 2008	February 2008
Very concerned	6%	5%	6%
Moderately concerned	15%	11%	12%
Not too concerned	26%	27%	30%
Not concerned at all	45%	49%	46%
Not sure	7%	8%	6%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**