

THE GRANITE STATE POLL

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE IMPROVES IN NH

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DURHAM, NH – New Hampshire consumers are increasingly confident about the economy. Confidence in prospects for the New Hampshire and U.S. economies are at the highest levels seen during the Bush Administration.

These findings are based on the latest **Granite State Poll**, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The Granite State Poll is sponsored by the University of New Hampshire. Five hundred forty-two (542) randomly selected adults were interviewed by telephone between April 19 and April 26, 2004. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.3 percent. (For more detailed results, go to www.unh.edu/survey-center/con51104.pdf)

U.S. Business Conditions

Positive reports about economic growth in New Hampshire and the United States have been coming more frequently and consumers in New Hampshire have taken notice. In the most recent Granite State Poll, over half of New Hampshire residents (56%) say they expect businesses in the U.S. will experience good times in the next 12 months, 26 percent anticipate bad times for U.S. businesses, and 18 percent think conditions will be mixed. The percentage of New Hampshire residents who think the U.S. economy will experience good times is higher than at any time during George W. Bush's presidency.

Similarly, Granite Staters have become more bullish about longer term prospects for the U.S. economy. Almost half (45%) of New Hampshire residents believe that the U.S. economy will experience continuous good times over the next 5 years, 38 percent expect periods of widespread unemployment and depression, and 17 percent see a mix of good and bad conditions. This measure of confidence in the economy is also at a new high and represents a 6 percentage point increase since February.

"Consumer confidence is typically a lagging indicator of an economic recovery and New Hampshire residents have finally recognized that the economy is indeed on solid footing," said Andrew Smith, Director of the UNH Survey Center. "This news should brighten the mood in the campaigns of President Bush and Governor Craig Benson."

N.H. Business Conditions

Granite Staters are also increasingly optimistic about concerning business conditions in New Hampshire. When asked what they expect about business conditions in New Hampshire, 58 percent of adults think New Hampshire will have good times economically, 22 percent feel there will be bad times, and 20 percent foresee mixed conditions. This indicator is also at the highest levels measured during the Bush Administration.

Personal Financial Conditions

New Hampshire is optimistic about the state and U.S. economies, in part, because people are feeling better about their families' economic prospects. When asked about their personal financial situations, 45 percent of Granite Staters say they are better off now than they were a year ago, 23 percent say they are worse off, and 32 percent say things are about the

same. This has sharply risen since the Winter Granite State Poll which showed that only 34 percent believed they were better off than a year ago.

Turning to family finances a year from now, most people in New Hampshire think they will be better or at least the same. Thirty-eight percent of New Hampshire residents believe they will be better off financially a year from now, only 8 percent think they will be worse off and 54 percent think they will be about the same.

When asked about making major household purchases, 71 percent of New Hampshire adults feel that it is a good time to buy things such as furniture and appliances, 20 percent think it is a bad time, and 9 percent think it depends. This represents a 13 percentage point rise since February and also represents a record high for the Bush Presidency.

Subgroup Analysis

There are few demographic differences in the economic expectations of New Hampshire residents, but there are meaningful political differences. Republicans and conservatives are consistently more optimistic about current and future economic conditions than are Democrats and liberals. Younger adults are more likely to say they are better off financially than they were a year ago and that they expect to be better off a year from now than are older adults, many of whom have recently retired or expect to retire soon.

Granite State Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from April 19 to April 26, 2004. A random sample of 542 New Hampshire adults was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 4.3 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households, respondent sex, and region of the state. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

Business Conditions in U.S. in 12 Months

"Turning to business conditions in the country as a whole – do you think that during the next twelve months we'll have good times financially, or bad times, or what?"

	Good Times	Mixed	Bad Times	(N)
April 2004 (Latest)	56%	18%	26%	(468)
February 2004	53	16	31	(461)
October 2003	48	17	35	(455)
June 2003	49	20	31	(491)
April 2003	48	15	37	(477)
February 2003	31	20	49	(606)
June 2002	37	22	41	(599)
April 2002	52	22	26	(484)
February 2002	49	19	32	(300)
October 2001	25	27	49	(493)

5 Year Economic Outlook - U.S.

"Looking ahead, which would you say is more likely – that in the country as a whole we will have continuous GOOD TIMES during the next FIVE YEARS or so, or that we will have periods of WIDESPREAD UNEMPLOYMENT or DEPRESSION, or what?"

	Continuous Good Times	Mixed	Depression/ Unemployment	(N)
April 2004 (Latest)	45%	17%	38%	(467)
February 2004	39	22	39	(454)
October 2003	42	16	42	(457)
June 2003	40	19	41	(479)
April 2003	43	20	38	(470)
February 2003	32	22	46	(607)
June 2002	31	27	42	(603)
April 2002	41	22	37	(463)

Business Conditions in New Hampshire in 12 Months

"Turning to business conditions in the New Hampshire as a whole – do you think that during the next twelve months we'll have good times financially, or bad times, or what?"

	Good Times	Mixed	Bad Times	(N)
April 2004 (Latest)	58%	20%	22%	(457)
February 2004	54	17	29	(448)
October 2003	52	19	28	(449)
June 2003	50	17	32	(485)
April 2003	48	16	35	(462)
February 2003	41	19	40	(577)
June 2002	52	21	27	(588)
April 2002	58	20	22	(462)

Household Financial Condition Compared to 12 Months Ago

"We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living there are BETTER OFF or WORSE OFF financially than you were a year ago?"

	Better Off	About the Same	Worse Off	(N)
April 2004 (Latest)	45%	32%	23%	(538)
February 2004	34	38	28	(503)
October 2003	36	32	32	(496)
June 2003	35	28	36	(514)
April 2003	36	30	34	(504)
February 2003	30	29	40	(647)
June 2002	38	33	29	(650)
April 2002	40	29	31	(507)

Household Financial Condition 12 Months From Now

"Now, looking ahead – do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially ... or worse off ... or just about the same?"

	Better Off	About the Same	Worse Off	(N)
April 2004 (Latest)	38%	54%	8%	(509)
February 2004	37	52	10	(488)
October 2003	32	59	9	(486)
June 2003	35	54	10	(501)
April 2003	42	49	9	(489)
February 2003	34	55	11	(622)
June 2002	33	57	10	(625)
April 2002	38	55	7	(479)
February 2002	35	56	10	(305)
October 2001	26	62	13	(500)

Good Time to Buy Major Household Item

"Now thinking about the big things people buy for their home – such as furniture, a refrigerator, a stove, television and things like that. Generally speaking, do you think now is a good time or a bad time for people to buy major household items?"

	Good Time	Pro-Con	Bad Time	(N)
April 2004 (Latest)	71%	9%	20%	(487)
February 2004	58	15	28	(462)
October 2003	65	14	21	(468)
June 2003	63	14	23	(475)
April 2003	60	12	28	(487)
February 2003	53	16	31	(600)
June 2002	68	10	22	(613)
April 2002	71	11	18	(480)
February 2002	65	10	26	(298)
October 2001	63	15	22	(506)

Business Conditions in US in 12 Months

	<u>Good Times</u> 56%	<u>Some Good-Some Bad</u> 18%	<u>Bad Times</u> 26%	<u>(N)</u> 468
STATEWIDE				
Registered Democrat	36	22	42	81
Undeclared	48	22	31	174
Registered Republican	79	8	13	123
Not registered	58	19	23	90
Democrat	36	21	43	186
Independent	54	20	25	79
Republican	75	13	12	196
Liberal	36	25	39	89
Moderate	52	17	31	184
Conservative	71	15	15	163
Union household	32	17	51	59
Non-union	60	17	23	406
5 years or less in NH	67	14	19	64
6 to 10 years	56	11	33	58
11 to 20 years	57	17	27	100
More than 20 years	52	21	27	242
18 to 34	55	21	24	111
35 to 49	56	19	25	174
50 to 64	52	16	32	110
65 and over	60	9	31	62
Male	63	16	21	236
Female	49	19	32	232
High school or less	57	17	27	149
Some college	54	21	26	100
College graduate	56	20	25	150
Post-graduate	57	11	32	67
Less than \$30K	51	16	34	63
\$30K to \$60K	48	23	29	130
\$60K to \$75K	61	22	17	38
\$75K to \$100K	54	15	31	59
More than \$100K	68	12	20	73
Married	60	17	23	320
Divorced/separated	49	19	32	64
Never married	47	18	35	81
Protestant	60	20	21	157
Catholic	54	16	30	143
Other	53	17	30	158
Attend 1 or more/week	61	18	21	114
1-2 times a month	66	13	21	64
Less often	52	13	36	131
Never	51	23	26	152
Northern NH	47	16	37	64
Western NH	51	15	34	44
Central/Lakes	47	23	30	75
Hillsborough County	63	15	22	136
Seacoast	60	18	22	149
1st Congressional District	58	19	24	239
2nd Congressional District	54	16	29	229
1st Exec. Council District	49	15	36	91
2nd Exec. Council District	45	28	27	100
3rd Exec. Council District	59	15	26	91
4th Exec. Council District	66	16	18	87
5th Exec. Council District	62	12	25	97

US 5 Year Economic Outlook

STATEWIDE	Continuous Good Times 45%	Mixed 17%	Widespread Unemployment/ Depression 38%	(N) 467
Registered Democrat	20	25	55	83
Undeclared	42	17	41	169
Registered Republican	68	13	20	123
Not registered	44	15	41	91
Democrat	22	21	57	184
Independent	38	21	41	77
Republican	71	11	18	199
Liberal	29	17	54	91
Moderate	38	21	41	182
Conservative	64	11	25	163
Union household	36	21	43	62
Non-union	46	17	37	404
5 years or less in NH	48	12	40	62
6 to 10 years	43	22	35	50
11 to 20 years	45	16	39	98
More than 20 years	45	18	38	255
18 to 34	50	11	39	110
35 to 49	45	17	38	190
50 to 64	37	23	40	104
65 and over	52	17	31	55
Male	52	20	28	236
Female	38	14	48	232
High school or less	43	15	42	149
Some college	43	19	38	97
College graduate	52	16	32	155
Post-graduate	36	22	43	66
Less than \$30K	31	22	47	72
\$30K to \$60K	42	23	35	128
\$60K to \$75K	40	14	46	43
\$75K to \$100K	50	8	42	55
More than \$100K	56	17	26	75
Married	48	19	33	309
Divorced/separated	37	20	43	63
Never married	39	9	52	91
Protestant	50	21	29	154
Catholic	44	16	40	149
Other	39	15	46	153
Attend 1 or more/week	50	16	34	115
1-2 times a month	60	20	20	57
Less often	46	15	40	133
Never	33	19	48	153
Northern NH	34	18	48	62
Western NH	46	16	37	42
Central/Lakes	48	12	40	76
Hillsborough County	48	17	35	137
Seacoast	46	20	34	150
1st Congressional District	47	17	36	240
2nd Congressional District	43	17	40	228
1st Exec. Council District	38	17	45	90
2nd Exec. Council District	40	16	44	103
3rd Exec. Council District	47	16	38	91
4th Exec. Council District	52	13	35	88
5th Exec. Council District	48	25	27	92

Business Conditions in NH 12 Months

STATEWIDE	<u>Good Times</u> 58%	<u>Some Good- Some Bad</u> 20%	<u>Bad Times</u> 22%	<u>(N)</u> 457
Registered Democrat	39	23	37	86
Undeclared	51	24	25	165
Registered Republican	73	17	10	121
Not registered	67	14	19	82
Democrat	39	23	38	178
Independent	63	20	17	78
Republican	71	18	10	194
Liberal	42	24	35	86
Moderate	54	20	26	178
Conservative	68	20	12	162
Union household	35	27	38	59
Non-union	61	19	20	395
5 years or less in NH	68	23	10	55
6 to 10 years	55	14	31	52
11 to 20 years	52	26	22	94
More than 20 years	57	19	24	252
18 to 34	70	16	14	110
35 to 49	55	25	20	174
50 to 64	49	18	33	107
65 and over	56	17	27	57
Male	65	19	16	233
Female	50	21	29	224
High school or less	57	22	21	147
Some college	58	21	21	96
College graduate	61	17	22	150
Post-graduate	48	23	29	61
Less than \$30K	45	20	34	62
\$30K to \$60K	53	24	23	133
\$60K to \$75K	64	17	20	40
\$75K to \$100K	65	21	14	53
More than \$100K	68	13	19	69
Married	60	19	21	310
Divorced/separated	45	24	31	63
Never married	60	18	22	80
Protestant	62	22	16	151
Catholic	63	14	23	141
Other	50	22	28	155
Attend 1 or more/week	64	14	22	114
1-2 times a month	72	14	13	57
Less often	58	19	22	126
Never	47	26	27	151
Northern NH	52	15	33	62
Western NH	60	12	28	39
Central/Lakes	62	20	19	78
Hillsborough County	66	18	17	133
Seacoast	50	27	23	144
1st Congressional District	53	26	22	230
2nd Congressional District	63	14	23	227
1st Exec. Council District	52	16	32	89
2nd Exec. Council District	51	24	24	107
3rd Exec. Council District	54	23	24	85
4th Exec. Council District	59	26	15	83
5th Exec. Council District	72	12	16	90

Personal Financial Condition Compared to 1 Year Ago

STATEWIDE	<u>Better Off</u> 45%	<u>About</u> <u>The Same</u> 32%	<u>Worse Off</u> 23%	<u>(N)</u> 538
Registered Democrat	21	37	42	98
Undeclared	41	33	25	197
Registered Republican	61	30	9	137
Not registered	52	27	21	103
Democrat	28	37	35	221
Independent	41	30	29	92
Republican	64	27	10	216
Liberal	28	34	38	104
Moderate	42	37	22	209
Conservative	61	22	17	181
Union household	38	35	27	72
Non-union	46	31	23	463
5 years or less in NH	44	34	22	71
6 to 10 years	43	25	32	61
11 to 20 years	50	30	20	114
More than 20 years	44	33	24	287
18 to 34	62	20	18	128
35 to 49	50	25	26	204
50 to 64	28	45	26	126
65 and over	30	45	25	69
Male	50	29	21	259
Female	40	34	26	279
High school or less	46	29	25	168
Some college	42	35	22	118
College graduate	51	24	25	168
Post-graduate	33	47	20	80
Less than \$30K	26	36	38	76
\$30K to \$60K	46	30	25	147
\$60K to \$75K	49	36	14	47
\$75K to \$100K	43	32	25	63
More than \$100K	66	23	11	81
Married	49	31	21	357
Divorced/separated	29	39	32	78
Never married	43	30	27	97
Protestant	48	33	19	180
Catholic	45	28	27	170
Other	42	33	25	176
Attend 1 or more/week	46	33	21	130
1-2 times a month	53	30	17	68
Less often	47	24	29	156
Never	38	39	24	173
Northern NH	48	28	24	72
Western NH	33	37	30	50
Central/Lakes	41	37	22	83
Hillsborough County	41	33	26	164
Seacoast	52	28	19	169
1st Congressional District	46	29	25	268
2nd Congressional District	43	34	22	270
1st Exec. Council District	40	30	30	105
2nd Exec. Council District	44	40	16	117
3rd Exec. Council District	56	30	14	101
4th Exec. Council District	48	23	29	102
5th Exec. Council District	36	35	29	109

HH Finances in 12 Months

STATEWIDE	<u>Better Off</u> 38%	<u>Worse Off</u> 8%	<u>About</u> <u>the Same</u> 54%	<u>(N)</u> 509
Registered Democrat	23	18	59	90
Undeclared	38	12	50	184
Registered Republican	46	0	53	134
Not registered	38	4	58	100
Democrat	25	14	61	198
Independent	35	9	56	90
Republican	50	3	47	213
Liberal	32	11	56	98
Moderate	33	12	55	198
Conservative	48	4	48	174
Union household	26	23	50	66
Non-union	39	6	55	440
5 years or less in NH	54	8	38	68
6 to 10 years	44	10	47	58
11 to 20 years	35	9	56	110
More than 20 years	34	8	58	270
18 to 34	48	5	47	123
35 to 49	42	5	52	200
50 to 64	28	14	58	114
65 and over	24	16	60	62
Male	40	6	54	249
Female	35	11	54	261
High school or less	35	8	57	165
Some college	40	10	50	111
College graduate	42	7	51	155
Post-graduate	32	10	58	76
Less than \$30K	28	10	62	72
\$30K to \$60K	46	8	46	141
\$60K to \$75K	29	8	63	44
\$75K to \$100K	46	10	44	58
More than \$100K	57	3	40	79
Married	38	8	53	339
Divorced/separated	31	10	59	74
Never married	38	9	54	92
Protestant	42	7	51	174
Catholic	39	10	51	157
Other	31	9	60	167
Attend 1 or more/week	48	7	44	116
1-2 times a month	40	11	49	68
Less often	34	6	60	149
Never	32	10	58	167
Northern NH	33	16	51	68
Western NH	32	7	61	44
Central/Lakes	36	8	56	81
Hillsborough County	38	5	57	155
Seacoast	42	9	49	161
1st Congressional District	39	9	52	254
2nd Congressional District	37	8	56	255
1st Exec. Council District	34	14	52	96
2nd Exec. Council District	32	8	60	113
3rd Exec. Council District	48	10	42	96
4th Exec. Council District	43	4	54	97
5th Exec. Council District	34	7	59	103

Good Time to Buy Major Household Item

STATEWIDE	<u>Good Time</u> 71%	<u>Pro-Con</u> 9%	<u>Bad Time</u> 20%	<u>(N)</u> 487
Registered Democrat	57	12	31	89
Undeclared	67	9	24	182
Registered Republican	86	8	6	125
Not registered	70	9	21	91
Democrat	60	12	27	201
Independent	60	11	29	77
Republican	85	5	11	202
Liberal	54	7	38	94
Moderate	71	9	20	188
Conservative	78	9	13	169
Union household	52	19	29	64
Non-union	73	8	19	422
5 years or less in NH	65	9	26	66
6 to 10 years	74	5	21	59
11 to 20 years	70	10	20	102
More than 20 years	71	10	19	258
18 to 34	71	6	24	118
35 to 49	77	6	17	195
50 to 64	63	11	26	104
65 and over	63	21	17	61
Male	76	10	13	236
Female	65	8	27	251
High school or less	71	11	19	154
Some college	73	8	19	106
College graduate	71	7	22	158
Post-graduate	66	14	20	68
Less than \$30K	62	15	23	67
\$30K to \$60K	71	9	20	137
\$60K to \$75K	82	10	7	39
\$75K to \$100K	69	5	26	59
More than \$100K	80	8	13	77
Married	73	9	18	327
Divorced/separated	65	11	24	66
Never married	66	8	26	90
Protestant	70	12	18	164
Catholic	77	7	16	157
Other	66	8	26	154
Attend 1 or more/week	71	15	15	120
1-2 times a month	88	2	10	58
Less often	68	8	25	142
Never	67	8	25	157
Northern NH	70	9	20	66
Western NH	54	7	40	46
Central/Lakes	68	10	22	73
Hillsborough County	72	8	19	142
Seacoast	75	10	15	161
1st Congressional District	74	8	18	252
2nd Congressional District	67	11	22	236
1st Exec. Council District	65	10	25	93
2nd Exec. Council District	71	8	21	108
3rd Exec. Council District	72	12	16	96
4th Exec. Council District	76	8	16	90
5th Exec. Council District	69	8	24	96