

THE GRANITE STATE POLL

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

CONFIDENCE IN ECONOMY INCHES UP

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DURHAM, NH – Consumer confidence is inching up as the New Hampshire economy continues to improve. Confidence in the New Hampshire economy is at its highest level in almost two years

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 eleven (511) randomly selected adults were interviewed by telephone between February 4 and February 12, 2004. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.3 percent. (For more detailed results, visit the Survey Center web site at www.unh.edu/survey-center and click on Press Releases.)

U.S. Business Conditions

The U.S. and New Hampshire economies continue to expand, factory production is up, and unemployment is declining and people in New Hampshire are becoming increasingly optimistic about their economic future. In the most recent Granite State Poll, over half of New Hampshire residents (53%) say they expect businesses in the U.S. will experience good times in the next 12 months, 31 percent anticipate bad times for U.S. businesses, and 16 percent think conditions will be mixed. The percentage of NH residents who think the U.S. economy will experience good times is at its highest level since the start of the 2001 recession.

However, Granite Staters are somewhat less expectant concerning the long-term prospects for the U.S. economy. Only 39 percent of New Hampshire residents believe that the U.S. economy will experience continuous good times over the next 5 years, 39 percent expect periods of widespread unemployment and depression, and 22 percent see a mix of good and bad conditions.

“Improving consumer confidence typically is good news for incumbents. Both Governor Benson and President Bush should benefit by perceptions of economic growth,” said Andrew Smith, Director of the UNH Survey Center.

N.H. Business Conditions

Turning to business conditions in New Hampshire, New Hampshire residents are also becoming more optimistic. When asked their expectations about business conditions in New Hampshire over the next 12 months, 54 percent of adults think New Hampshire will have good times economically, 29 percent feel there will be bad times, and 17 percent foresee mixed conditions. Optimism about business conditions in New Hampshire has risen steadily over the past year.

Personal Financial Conditions

When asked about their personal financial situations, 34 percent of Granite Staters say they are better off now than they were a year ago, 28 percent say they are worse off, and 38 percent say things are about the same. The percentage of Granite Staters who say they are worse off than they were a year ago has steadily declined over the past year.

When asked to assess their family's finances a year from now, most people in New Hampshire think their finances will be better or at least the same. Thirty-seven percent of New Hampshire residents believe they will be better off financially a year from now, only 10 percent think they will be worse off and 52 percent think they will be about the same. These figures are largely unchanged over the past year.

When asked about making major household purchases, 58 percent of New Hampshire adults feel that it is a good time to buy things such as furniture and appliances, 28 percent think it is a bad time, and 15 percent think it depends.

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 February 4 to February 12, 2004. A random sample of 511 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)
February 2004 (Latest)	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)
February (Latest)	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)
February 2004 (Latest)	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)
February 2004 (Latest)	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)
February 2004 (Latest)	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)
February 2004 (Latest)	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)

Personal Financial Condition Compared to 1 Year Ago

STATEWIDE	<u>Better Off</u> 34%	<u>About</u> <u>The Same</u> 38%	<u>Worse Off</u> 28%	<u>(N)</u> 503
Registered Democrat	26	41	33	113
Undeclared	25	46	29	185
Registered Republican	51	31	18	114
Not registered	40	26	34	90
Democrat	22	43	35	222
Independent	24	43	33	89
Republican	53	30	17	181
Liberal	27	36	37	115
Moderate	28	45	27	208
Conservative	48	30	22	136
Union household	28	43	29	60
Non-union	35	38	28	439
5 Years or less in NH	40	32	28	75
6 to 10 years	41	37	22	40
11 to 20 years	26	42	32	97
More than 20 years	34	38	28	285
18 to 34	48	31	21	111
33 to 49	41	29	30	170
50 to 64	25	41	34	130
65 and over	16	60	24	76
Male	41	35	24	244
Female	27	41	32	260
High school or less	41	35	24	124
Some college	23	40	37	127
College graduate	39	38	23	151
Post-graduate	32	37	31	99
Less than \$30K	19	40	41	57
\$30K to \$60K	25	40	35	153
\$60K to \$75K	46	32	22	59
\$75K to \$100K	39	39	23	54
More than \$100K	62	21	17	83
Married	34	40	26	347
Divorced/separated	25	40	34	81
Never married	37	27	36	68
Protestant	35	37	28	196
Catholic	33	36	31	154
Other	33	40	27	140
Northern NH	35	39	27	67
Western NH	27	46	26	48
Central/Lakes	36	35	29	79
Hillsborough County	34	38	28	154
Seacoast	34	37	29	156
1st Congressional District	36	34	30	197
2nd Congressional District	33	40	27	306
1st Exec. Council District	35	35	31	98
2nd Exec. Council District	30	42	28	101
3rd Exec. Council District	28	46	26	100
4th Exec. Council District	42	31	28	103
5th Exec. Council District	34	37	29	95

HH Finances in 12 Months From Now

STATEWIDE	<u>Better Off</u> 37%	<u>Worse Off</u> 10%	<u>About the Same</u> 52%	<u>(N)</u> 488
Registered Democrat	29	14	57	108
Undeclared	37	14	50	178
Registered Republican	48	6	46	113
Not registered	36	5	58	87
Democrat	25	15	61	218
Independent	32	13	54	82
Republican	56	3	41	177
Liberal	23	17	60	111
Moderate	34	10	56	201
Conservative	54	4	41	133
Union household	37	12	51	58
Non-union	37	10	53	426
5 Years or less in NH	45	8	47	74
6 to 10 years	52	15	32	39
11 to 20 years	41	13	46	94
More than 20 years	32	9	59	278
18 to 34	41	4	54	112
33 to 49	45	8	47	170
50 to 64	31	14	55	124
65 and over	25	17	58	68
Male	42	11	47	238
Female	33	10	58	250
High school or less	40	7	52	121
Some college	35	4	61	123
College graduate	37	14	49	148
Post-graduate	37	17	45	92
Less than \$30K	30	13	57	55
\$30K to \$60K	35	11	54	147
\$60K to \$75K	49	6	46	58
\$75K to \$100K	34	14	52	54
More than \$100K	44	9	47	80
Married	38	11	50	333
Divorced/separated	31	12	56	76
Never married	39	3	58	71
Protestant	38	10	52	192
Catholic	39	8	53	147
Other	34	12	53	136
Northern NH	40	10	50	66
Western NH	23	15	61	44
Central/Lakes	34	14	53	73
Hillsborough County	36	9	55	150
Seacoast	44	9	48	155
1st Congressional District	43	9	48	193
2nd Congressional District	34	11	55	295
1st Exec. Council District	35	13	52	94
2nd Exec. Council District	36	14	51	102
3rd Exec. Council District	40	11	49	98
4th Exec. Council District	46	6	49	98
5th Exec. Council District	32	9	58	89

Business Conditions in NH 12 Months From Now

STATEWIDE	<u>Good Times</u> 54%	<u>Some Good- Some Bad</u> 17%	<u>Bad Times</u> 29%	<u>(N)</u> 448
Registered Democrat	36	22	42	98
Undeclared	53	19	28	167
Registered Republican	73	16	11	104
Not registered	53	10	37	77
Democrat	38	22	41	196
Independent	51	18	30	78
Republican	75	11	14	165
Liberal	38	19	43	99
Moderate	50	23	27	186
Conservative	75	9	15	127
Union household	45	20	35	48
Non-union	55	17	28	397
5 Years or less in NH	58	14	28	65
6 to 10 years	60	15	25	40
11 to 20 years	52	19	29	83
More than 20 years	52	18	30	257
18 to 34	55	19	26	96
33 to 49	56	14	29	162
50 to 64	48	20	32	114
65 and over	54	18	28	62
Male	63	15	22	226
Female	44	20	36	221
High school or less	52	14	34	113
Some college	51	20	30	111
College graduate	57	21	22	135
Post-graduate	54	14	32	85
Less than \$30K	43	26	31	47
\$30K to \$60K	49	16	35	139
\$60K to \$75K	61	16	23	52
\$75K to \$100K	53	17	30	45
More than \$100K	66	13	21	75
Married	55	17	28	307
Divorced/separated	51	16	33	71
Never married	49	21	30	62
Protestant	62	14	24	177
Catholic	45	20	35	136
Other	53	20	27	121
Northern NH	59	17	24	60
Western NH	38	11	51	43
Central/Lakes	49	23	29	70
Hillsborough County	55	20	25	136
Seacoast	57	14	29	138
1st Congressional District	59	14	27	173
2nd Congressional District	50	19	30	274
1st Exec. Council District	55	16	28	89
2nd Exec. Council District	53	20	27	94
3rd Exec. Council District	51	17	33	85
4th Exec. Council District	60	15	25	91
5th Exec. Council District	49	19	32	84

Business Conditions in US in 12 Months From Now

STATEWIDE	<u>Good Times</u> 53%	<u>Some Good-Some Bad</u> 16%	<u>Bad Times</u> 31%	<u>(N)</u> 461
Registered Democrat	41	15	44	99
Undeclared	47	19	34	172
Registered Republican	73	13	14	106
Not registered	53	14	33	82
Democrat	37	19	43	202
Independent	48	17	35	82
Republican	74	10	16	166
Liberal	38	20	42	102
Moderate	53	17	29	192
Conservative	72	10	18	128
Union household	54	14	32	52
Non-union	52	16	32	406
5 Years or less in NH	52	15	33	73
6 to 10 years	47	26	27	39
11 to 20 years	49	17	35	87
More than 20 years	55	14	31	259
18 to 34	56	16	28	104
33 to 49	60	10	30	164
50 to 64	44	19	37	114
65 and over	49	19	32	66
Male	59	16	25	231
Female	46	16	38	230
High school or less	50	14	36	120
Some college	55	15	30	111
College graduate	56	16	28	138
Post-graduate	50	17	33	89
Less than \$30K	42	19	40	49
\$30K to \$60K	52	17	32	141
\$60K to \$75K	57	20	24	54
\$75K to \$100K	52	10	37	51
More than \$100K	60	13	27	78
Married	53	16	31	316
Divorced/separated	45	21	34	70
Never married	55	11	34	68
Protestant	57	15	28	181
Catholic	52	16	32	140
Other	49	17	34	127
Northern NH	53	28	19	59
Western NH	36	14	51	42
Central/Lakes	53	14	33	75
Hillsborough County	58	16	26	139
Seacoast	52	12	36	146
1st Congressional District	54	12	33	185
2nd Congressional District	52	18	30	276
1st Exec. Council District	51	20	28	91
2nd Exec. Council District	53	18	29	95
3rd Exec. Council District	53	12	35	93
4th Exec. Council District	54	14	32	94
5th Exec. Council District	53	14	33	82

US 5 Year Economic Outlook

STATEWIDE	<u>Continuous Good Times</u> 39%	<u>Mixed</u> 22%	<u>Widespread Unemployment/ Depression</u> 39%	<u>(N)</u> 454
Registered Democrat	25	23	52	102
Undeclared	40	22	38	166
Registered Republican	59	21	20	103
Not registered	29	24	48	82
Democrat	25	23	52	202
Independent	36	24	40	85
Republican	59	22	20	159
Liberal	23	20	58	103
Moderate	37	27	36	186
Conservative	57	21	22	127
Union household	40	18	42	53
Non-union	39	23	38	397
5 Years or less in NH	38	19	43	73
6 to 10 years	36	23	41	35
11 to 20 years	48	15	37	88
More than 20 years	37	25	38	255
18 to 34	37	21	41	101
33 to 49	46	17	37	161
50 to 64	29	26	45	114
65 and over	45	24	31	67
Male	45	22	33	232
Female	32	23	45	222
High school or less	44	17	39	114
Some college	38	20	42	116
College graduate	37	21	42	137
Post-graduate	38	33	30	84
Less than \$30K	34	15	51	47
\$30K to \$60K	36	21	43	139
\$60K to \$75K	47	28	25	54
\$75K to \$100K	37	14	49	50
More than \$100K	45	27	28	77
Married	41	23	36	315
Divorced/separated	32	23	45	69
Never married	36	17	47	62
Protestant	40	25	35	176
Catholic	36	23	41	145
Other	42	18	41	120
Northern NH	39	27	34	59
Western NH	30	20	50	40
Central/Lakes	37	22	41	71
Hillsborough County	39	23	38	142
Seacoast	42	20	38	142
1st Congressional District	43	20	37	178
2nd Congressional District	36	24	40	277
1st Exec. Council District	37	23	40	87
2nd Exec. Council District	33	23	44	92
3rd Exec. Council District	44	23	33	92
4th Exec. Council District	38	17	45	93
5th Exec. Council District	40	25	35	85

Good Time To Buy Major Household Item

STATEWIDE	<u>Good Time</u> 58%	<u>Pro-Con</u> 15%	<u>Bad Time</u> 28%	<u>(N)</u> 462
Registered Democrat	43	18	39	106
Undeclared	57	12	31	167
Registered Republican	70	17	13	106
Not registered	61	13	25	82
Democrat	48	13	39	205
Independent	51	23	26	80
Republican	73	12	15	166
Liberal	44	12	44	106
Moderate	60	15	25	192
Conservative	68	16	16	126
Union household	60	8	32	53
Non-union	57	16	27	404
5 Years or less in NH	56	9	35	73
6 to 10 years	57	25	18	38
11 to 20 years	60	17	23	89
More than 20 years	57	14	29	258
18 to 34	54	9	36	107
33 to 49	61	16	22	161
50 to 64	56	13	31	112
65 and over	61	20	20	68
Male	61	17	23	225
Female	55	13	32	237
High school or less	58	16	27	115
Some college	60	12	28	117
College graduate	56	18	26	144
Post-graduate	56	13	31	83
Less than \$30K	52	16	32	47
\$30K to \$60K	51	11	38	140
\$60K to \$75K	68	14	18	55
\$75K to \$100K	56	18	25	52
More than \$100K	75	11	14	79
Married	59	15	26	316
Divorced/separated	59	14	27	73
Never married	50	12	38	65
Protestant	59	16	25	181
Catholic	58	16	26	144
Other	53	13	34	123
Northern NH	66	13	21	58
Western NH	50	14	35	40
Central/Lakes	45	23	32	72
Hillsborough County	60	14	26	144
Seacoast	60	12	28	147
1st Congressional District	61	12	27	186
2nd Congressional District	55	16	28	276
1st Exec. Council District	58	16	27	87
2nd Exec. Council District	48	22	29	97
3rd Exec. Council District	64	7	29	89
4th Exec. Council District	59	14	28	101
5th Exec. Council District	61	13	26	82