

THE WMUR GRANITE STATE POLL

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE REMAINS STEADY IN NH

By: Andrew E. Smith, Ph.D. 603/862-2226
Dennis M. Junius, M.A.
UNH Survey Center
www.unh.edu/survey-center

FOR RELEASE
August 5, 2004

DURHAM, NH – New Hampshire consumers continue to be positive regarding the economic prospects of the state and of the country. They are also optimistic about their families' economic future.

These findings are based on the latest **WMUR Granite State Poll**,* conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The Granite State Poll is sponsored by the WMUR-TV, Manchester and the University of New Hampshire. Five hundred nine (509) randomly selected adults were interviewed by telephone between July 6 and July 20, 2004. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-4.3 percent. (For more detailed results, go to www.unh.edu/survey-center/con80504.pdf)

U.S. Business Conditions

Both the presidential and gubernatorial elections in November will be fought, in part, over the state of the New Hampshire and U.S. economy. Historically, Presidents and Governors get political credit when the economy is good and blame when the economy is bad, so measures of consumer confidence are an important indicator of political success in November. In the most recent WMUR Granite State Poll, New Hampshire residents continue to be optimistic about economic growth in both the state and the country, which should improve both President Bush and Governor Benson's chances for reelection.

Just over half of New Hampshire residents (52%) 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 21 percent think conditions will be mixed. This is down somewhat since April when 56 percent anticipated good economic times for the U.S.

Granite Staters are somewhat more bullish about long-term prospects for the U.S. economy. Nearly half (49%) of New Hampshire residents believe that the U.S. economy will experience continuous good times over the next 5 years, 36 percent expect periods of widespread unemployment and depression, and 15 percent see a mix of good and bad conditions. This measure of confidence in the economy is at the highest level measured during the Bush administration's tenure and is a 4 percentage point increase since April.

N.H. Business Conditions

Granite Staters are also optimistic about business conditions in New Hampshire – 59 percent of adults think New Hampshire will have good times economically in the next twelve months, 20 percent feel there will be bad times, and 21 percent foresee mixed conditions. This indicator has changed little since April and is also at the highest levels measured during the Bush Administration.

* Users should refer to this copyrighted material as the *WMUR Granite State Poll*.

Personal Financial Conditions

When asked about their personal financial situations, 40 percent of Granite Staters say they are better off now than they were a year ago, 25 percent say they are worse off, and 34 percent say things are about the same. This represents a 5 percentage point decline in since April.

Turning to family finances a year from now, most people in New Hampshire think they 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 9 percent think they will be worse off and 54 percent think they will be about the same. This measure is unchanged since April.

When asked about making major household purchases, 67 percent of New Hampshire adults feel that it is a good time to buy things such as furniture and appliances, 21 percent think it is a bad time, and 12 percent think it depends. This has declined 4 percentage points since April.

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 July 6 to July 20, 2004. A random sample of 509 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?"

	<u>Good Times</u>	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Bad Times</u>	<u>(N)</u>
July 2004 (Latest)	52%	21%	26%	(446)
April 2004	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?"

	<u>Continuous Good Times</u>	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Depression/ Unemployment</u>	<u>(N)</u>
July 2004 (Latest)	49%	15%	36%	(431)
April 2004	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?"

	<u>Good Times</u>	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Bad Times</u>	<u>(N)</u>
July 2004 (Latest)	59%	21%	20%	(444)
April 2004	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?"

	<u>Better Off</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Worse Off</u>	<u>(N)</u>
July 2004 (Latest)	40%	34%	25%	(495)
April 2004	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?"

	<u>Better Off</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Worse Off</u>	<u>(N)</u>
July 2004 (Latest)	37%	54%	9%	(477)
April 2004	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?"

	<u>Good Time</u>	<u>Pro-Con</u>	<u>Bad Time</u>	<u>(N)</u>
July 2004 (Latest)	67%	12%	21%	(456)
April 2004	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 From Now

	Good Times 52%	Some Good- Some Bad 21%	Bad Times 26%	(N) 446
STATEWIDE				
Registered Democrat	27	28	45	80
Undeclared	51	22	27	154
Registered Republican	73	18	9	108
Not registered	53	16	31	95
Democrat	31	29	39	190
Independent	63	15	22	53
Republican	71	16	13	183
Liberal	39	23	37	95
Moderate	45	28	28	169
Conservative	69	15	16	141
Union household	47	27	26	75
Non-union	54	20	26	358
5 years or less in NH	49	30	21	56
6 to 10 years	52	14	34	38
11 to 20 years	54	22	24	94
More than 20 years	52	20	27	242
18 to 34	55	17	27	95
35 to 49	56	21	23	151
50 to 64	52	18	30	128
65 and over	37	36	27	51
Male	57	22	21	225
Female	48	20	32	221
High school or less	51	17	32	122
Some college	54	24	21	108
College graduate	56	25	19	103
Post-graduate	48	19	33	102
Less than \$30K	48	21	30	46
\$30K to \$60K	50	20	30	116
\$60K to \$75K	65	16	19	54
\$75K to \$100K	56	19	24	68
More than \$100K	47	25	27	58
Married	55	21	24	314
Divorced/separated	45	19	36	51
Never married	48	24	28	72
Protestant	59	21	20	174
Catholic	48	29	23	136
Other	47	14	39	119
Attend 1 or more/week	57	21	22	112
1-2 times a month	61	17	22	49
Less often	47	28	25	140
Never	51	16	32	128
Northern NH	47	32	21	56
Western NH	55	18	28	44
Central/Lakes	50	24	26	72
Hillsborough County	52	21	27	135
Seacoast	55	17	28	138
1st Cong. District	54	19	27	237
2nd Cong. District	50	24	26	209
1st E.C. District	59	22	18	91
2nd E.C. District	48	24	28	92
3rd E.C. District	57	17	27	79
4th E.C. District	54	16	30	94
5th E.C. District	46	26	28	84

US 5 Year Economic Outlook

STATEWIDE	<u>Continuous Good Times</u> 49%	<u>Mixed</u> 15%	<u>Widespread Unemployment/ Depression</u> 36%	<u>(N)</u> 431
Registered Democrat	31	19	50	82
Undeclared	45	16	39	146
Registered Republican	65	15	20	101
Not registered	53	10	37	98
Democrat	35	17	48	187
Independent	43	17	40	52
Republican	64	13	23	180
Liberal	34	14	53	97
Moderate	50	21	29	161
Conservative	57	11	32	139
Union household	39	13	48	72
Non-union	50	16	34	347
5 years or less in NH	54	18	27	53
6 to 10 years	52	20	27	38
11 to 20 years	51	8	41	92
More than 20 years	46	17	37	236
18 to 34	53	16	31	97
35 to 49	57	10	33	146
50 to 64	37	21	41	118
65 and over	42	16	42	54
Male	55	15	30	215
Female	43	15	41	216
High school or less	48	11	41	126
Some college	44	18	38	108
College graduate	59	18	23	102
Post-graduate	43	15	42	91
Less than \$30K	35	18	47	48
\$30K to \$60K	42	17	41	123
\$60K to \$75K	54	16	30	51
\$75K to \$100K	56	19	25	61
More than \$100K	54	9	37	60
Married	48	16	35	299
Divorced/separated	41	14	46	53
Never married	54	12	34	73
Protestant	52	17	31	168
Catholic	54	12	34	134
Other	37	18	44	115
Attend 1 or more/week	51	20	29	112
1-2 times a month	54	20	26	52
Less often	54	9	37	126
Never	39	17	44	128
Northern NH	47	20	33	53
Western NH	56	6	39	40
Central/Lakes	52	18	30	71
Hillsborough County	44	11	45	133
Seacoast	51	18	30	135
1st Cong. District	51	16	33	228
2nd Cong. District	47	14	40	203
1st E.C. District	55	19	27	87
2nd E.C. District	51	16	33	89
3rd E.C. District	49	23	28	78
4th E.C. District	45	7	48	86
5th E.C. District	46	13	41	85

Business Conditions in NH 12 Months From Now

	<u>Good Times</u> 59%	<u>Some Good- Some Bad</u> 21%	<u>Bad Times</u> 20%	<u>(N)</u> 444
STATEWIDE				
Registered Democrat	41	33	27	79
Undeclared	57	20	23	155
Registered Republican	73	17	11	112
Not registered	63	18	19	91
Democrat	43	30	27	190
Independent	64	18	17	56
Republican	74	14	13	185
Liberal	41	35	23	98
Moderate	57	22	20	162
Conservative	72	13	16	149
Union household	64	20	16	74
Non-union	58	22	20	361
5 years or less in NH	62	28	10	56
6 to 10 years	66	11	23	36
11 to 20 years	51	31	18	92
More than 20 years	60	18	22	247
18 to 34	55	23	23	94
35 to 49	58	26	16	146
50 to 64	63	14	23	136
65 and over	58	27	16	50
Male	62	22	16	222
Female	57	20	23	223
High school or less	62	15	23	125
Some college	59	18	24	111
College graduate	61	28	11	97
Post-graduate	53	27	20	104
Less than \$30K	49	15	36	47
\$30K to \$60K	58	23	20	122
\$60K to \$75K	72	16	12	54
\$75K to \$100K	65	18	17	61
More than \$100K	50	27	23	60
Married	62	21	17	315
Divorced/separated	53	21	25	51
Never married	48	25	26	69
Protestant	67	18	16	171
Catholic	58	23	20	140
Other	48	26	26	118
Attend 1 or more/week	72	15	13	112
1-2 times a month	69	12	19	52
Less often	51	29	20	140
Never	52	23	25	124
Northern NH	59	28	13	55
Western NH	52	24	24	43
Central/Lakes	54	22	24	73
Hillsborough County	62	19	19	140
Seacoast	63	19	19	134
1st Cong. District	63	19	17	235
2nd Cong. District	55	23	22	209
1st E.C. District	64	22	14	90
2nd E.C. District	52	28	20	93
3rd E.C. District	65	16	19	78
4th E.C. District	64	15	20	93
5th E.C. District	53	25	21	84

Personal Financial Condition Compared to 1 Year Ago

STATEWIDE	<u>Better Off</u> 40%	<u>About</u> <u>The Same</u> 34%	<u>Worse Off</u> 25%	<u>(N)</u> 495
Registered Democrat	26	39	35	99
Undeclared	34	36	29	165
Registered Republican	57	30	12	116
Not registered	46	29	25	108
Democrat	28	35	36	217
Independent	31	38	31	63
Republican	57	30	13	196
Liberal	28	41	31	113
Moderate	43	34	23	182
Conservative	51	28	21	153
Union household	39	28	33	76
Non-union	41	35	24	403
5 years or less in NH	49	36	14	59
6 to 10 years	34	20	46	41
11 to 20 years	48	27	24	104
More than 20 years	37	37	25	273
18 to 34	52	25	24	106
35 to 49	46	33	20	163
50 to 64	37	39	24	140
65 and over	17	40	43	66
Male	48	29	24	239
Female	33	40	27	256
High school or less	34	43	23	142
Some college	33	35	32	122
College graduate	55	24	21	110
Post-graduate	44	32	24	110
Less than \$30K	26	35	39	54
\$30K to \$60K	37	29	34	134
\$60K to \$75K	46	39	15	58
\$75K to \$100K	54	34	12	68
More than \$100K	48	35	17	63
Married	41	34	25	346
Divorced/separated	29	43	28	59
Never married	50	25	26	80
Protestant	43	35	21	184
Catholic	37	39	24	157
Other	43	25	32	133
Attend 1 or more/week	44	34	22	121
1-2 times a month	31	47	23	57
Less often	46	30	24	152
Never	39	33	29	143
Northern NH	36	43	20	68
Western NH	36	43	21	47
Central/Lakes	46	28	26	77
Hillsborough County	40	30	30	151
Seacoast	41	36	24	153
1st Cong. District	41	35	24	261
2nd Cong. District	40	34	27	234
1st E.C. District	45	37	18	105
2nd E.C. District	40	34	26	101
3rd E.C. District	34	37	29	89
4th E.C. District	40	31	28	104
5th E.C. District	41	31	28	91

HH Finances in 12 Months From Now

STATEWIDE	<u>Better Off</u> 37%	<u>Worse Off</u> 9%	<u>About</u> <u>the Same</u> 54%	<u>(N)</u> 477
Registered Democrat	21	13	67	96
Undeclared	39	12	48	159
Registered Republican	44	3	52	113
Not registered	38	7	55	103
Democrat	31	14	55	209
Independent	35	7	58	57
Republican	43	5	53	190
Liberal	33	13	54	108
Moderate	28	10	62	173
Conservative	50	5	44	151
Union household	34	18	49	77
Non-union	37	8	56	383
5 years or less in NH	52	4	45	61
6 to 10 years	48	23	30	39
11 to 20 years	34	11	55	98
More than 20 years	32	8	60	266
18 to 34	43	8	49	103
35 to 49	45	8	47	159
50 to 64	31	8	62	137
65 and over	13	17	70	59
Male	40	8	53	228
Female	35	10	56	249
High school or less	35	11	54	131
Some college	41	9	50	122
College graduate	43	7	50	110
Post-graduate	25	9	65	104
Less than \$30K	30	10	61	46
\$30K to \$60K	36	13	51	130
\$60K to \$75K	46	4	50	57
\$75K to \$100K	26	10	63	69
More than \$100K	45	9	46	60
Married	38	10	52	333
Divorced/separated	33	4	63	58
Never married	34	10	56	77
Protestant	40	5	55	182
Catholic	36	8	56	150
Other	32	15	53	130
Attend 1 or more/week	44	9	47	124
1-2 times a month	37	6	57	53
Less often	32	9	59	144
Never	33	10	56	141
Northern NH	34	6	60	62
Western NH	38	6	55	47
Central/Lakes	40	11	49	74
Hillsborough County	41	7	52	144
Seacoast	32	11	56	150
1st Cong. District	39	8	53	253
2nd Cong. District	35	10	55	224
1st E.C. District	40	7	53	98
2nd E.C. District	37	8	55	101
3rd E.C. District	29	12	59	88
4th E.C. District	45	6	49	96
5th E.C. District	34	11	55	90

Good Time To Buy Major Household Item

STATEWIDE	<u>Good Time</u> 67%	<u>Pro-Con</u> 12%	<u>Bad Time</u> 21%	<u>(N)</u> 456
Registered Democrat	54	17	29	89
Undeclared	68	9	23	155
Registered Republican	78	15	7	106
Not registered	65	9	26	97
Democrat	57	9	34	199
Independent	63	18	19	59
Republican	80	11	9	179
Liberal	63	12	25	98
Moderate	65	11	24	172
Conservative	74	14	12	148
Union household	67	15	18	76
Non-union	67	11	21	365
5 years or less in NH	70	11	18	53
6 to 10 years	69	14	17	39
11 to 20 years	68	11	21	90
More than 20 years	66	11	23	258
18 to 34	65	8	27	95
35 to 49	69	9	22	152
50 to 64	68	14	17	132
65 and over	65	15	20	58
Male	72	10	18	220
Female	62	14	24	235
High school or less	70	9	21	130
Some college	68	14	18	111
College graduate	65	11	24	103
Post-graduate	64	13	23	101
Less than \$30K	71	9	19	48
\$30K to \$60K	63	13	25	122
\$60K to \$75K	72	6	23	57
\$75K to \$100K	71	15	14	64
More than \$100K	75	8	17	58
Married	67	13	20	324
Divorced/separated	67	10	23	50
Never married	67	8	25	71
Protestant	69	12	19	176
Catholic	67	11	21	152
Other	65	11	25	109
Attend 1 or more/week	69	15	17	120
1-2 times a month	78	3	19	52
Less often	63	16	20	139
Never	67	7	26	125
Northern NH	65	13	22	54
Western NH	63	10	27	43
Central/Lakes	71	8	21	78
Hillsborough County	65	13	22	138
Seacoast	67	13	20	143
1st Cong. District	66	12	22	246
2nd Cong. District	68	12	21	210
1st E.C. District	67	12	22	94
2nd E.C. District	67	12	21	92
3rd E.C. District	68	12	20	82
4th E.C. District	66	12	22	97
5th E.C. District	65	15	20	85