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CANADIANS START SPRING WITH JUMP IN CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE ECONOMY: SURVEY

TORONTO, March 30, 2007 – Canadians' assessments of the economy have rebounded since February when businesses were struggling with the consequences of a strike at CN, according to the latest consumer confidence poll by TNS Canadian Facts.

“The resilience of consumer sentiment is largely in line with the resilience of the Canadian economy over the past year, which has weathered both short and long term challenges,” said Richard Jenkins, vice-president of TNS Canadian Facts and director of the marketing research firm's monthly *Consumer Confidence Index* tracking study.

The *Present Situation Index*, which captures evaluations of the overall state of the economy and the employment situation, now stands at 115.5, a rise of five points from 110.5 in February. While not as positive as they were in January, Canadians are very upbeat about the current situation. Over half (56%) think the economy is very or fairly good and 49 per cent think there are many or very many jobs available.

The *Expectations Index*, which measures consumers' estimation of the economy, household income and employment six months from now, also rose in March. It stands at 104.5, up from 101.7 in February, and is now at its highest point recorded over the past three years.

The *Buy Index*, which gauges the degree to which people think the current period is a good time to make major purchases, has fluctuated wildly over the past six months. On the strength of positive assessments of the current and future economy, though, the index jumped to its highest point in the past 12 months and now sits at 98.4, up from 92.2 in February.

Consumer Confidence Index tracks Canadians' attitudes about the economy each month and is part of a global study conducted by TNS in 18 countries. Three indices are produced each month to show how confidence in the economy is changing: *Present Situation Index*; an *Expectations Index*; and a *Buy Index*. The Canadian fieldwork is conducted using the firm's national bi-weekly telephone omnibus service, TNS Express Telephone. A total of 1,015 nationally representative Canadian adults were interviewed between March 19 and 22. The survey results are considered accurate to 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

TNS Canadian Facts (www.tns-cf.com) is one of Canada's most prestigious full-service marketing, opinion and social research organizations.

About TNS

TNS is a market information group:

- The world's largest provider of custom research and analysis
- A leader in political and social polling
- A major supplier of consumer panel, media intelligence and TV and radio audience measurement services.

TNS operates across a global network in over 70 countries, allowing us to provide internationally consistent, up-to-the-minute and high quality information and analysis.

The group's employees deliver innovative thinking and excellent service to local and multi-national clients worldwide. In the custom business, they combine in-depth sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of new product development, positioning and segmentation research, brand and advertising research and stakeholder management.

TNS' strategic goal is to be recognized as the global leader in delivering value added information and insights that help our clients to make more effective decisions.

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