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CONFIDENCE UP SLIGHTLY IN POST-BUDGET ENVIRONMENT: SURVEY

TORONTO, February 11, 2009 – Although Canadians remain pessimistic, the latest results from TNS Canadian Facts' *Consumer Confidence Index* show that confidence improved in the wake of the federal stimulus budget. The overall *Consumer Confidence Index* now stands at 85.9, which is up from 83.5 last month.

“A slight improvement in consumer confidence is a welcome finding after months of deteriorating perceptions of the economy. It should be noted, though, that our survey fieldwork concluded before Statistics Canada's announcement last Friday that employment fell by 129,000 in January,” said Richard Jenkins, vice-president of TNS Canadian Facts and director of the marketing research firm's monthly tracking study.

The *Present Situation Index*, which captures evaluations of the overall state of the economy and the employment situation, dropped to 78.2 from 79.3 last month, as Canadians continue to see the current environment in negative terms. Only 18 per cent of Canadians think the current economy is at least fairly good (compared to 63% last year) and just 12 per cent think there are many jobs available today (versus 51% last year).

The *Expectations Index*, which measures consumers' estimation of the economy, household income and employment in the next six months, rose for the second consecutive month to 86.5. In January the Index stood at 84.1. Although the rebound is positive, the overall outlook is still pessimistic with more people expecting the economy to get worse (38%) than get better (23%).

The *Buy Index*, which gauges the degree to which people think the current period is a good time to make major purchases, improved dramatically. The index now sits at 95.6 compared to 88.5 in January.

“One of the consequences of the deteriorating economy is that consumers increasingly believe that this is a good time to make major purchases, which probably reflects the increasing retail competition for customers,” added Jenkins.

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 1,016 nationally representative Canadian adults were interviewed between February 2 and 5, 2009. For a survey sample this size, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 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.

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Media Contacts:

Richard W. Jenkins

Vice President, Corporate Director,
Public Opinion Research
Tel: (613) 301-9398
e-mail: richard.jenkins@tns-global.com

David Stark

Vice President, Public Affairs
Tel: (416) 924-5751 x238
e-mail: david.stark@tns-global.com