



**SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
**SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY**  
[www.siena.edu/sri](http://www.siena.edu/sri)

*Monthly New York State Consumer Confidence Index including Gas and Food Analysis*

**For Immediate Release: Friday, November 7, 2008**

**For information/comment: Dr. Douglas Lonnstrom: 518-783-2362 (office) or 518-456-6073 (home)**

**For PDF of release, data summary, or trend analysis, visit [www.siena.edu/sri/cci](http://www.siena.edu/sri/cci)**

**NY Index Falls to New Record Low; Current Willingness to Spend Dismal**  
**Consumers Grasp Gas Relief Lifeline**

**Buying Plans All Fall; Computer Demand Lowest Ever; Homes, Furniture Lowest Since '01**

**Loudonville, NY** - New York State consumer confidence decreased 4.7 points in October, while the nation's confidence decreased 12.7 points, according to the latest poll by the Siena (College) Research Institute (SRI). At 51.6, New York's overall consumer confidence is 6.0 points below the nation's\* 57.6 confidence level.

October 2008 Consumer Confidence:	The Nation*	New York State	diff. points	New York State	Metro NYC	Upstate NY
<b>Overall</b>	<b>57.6 (-12.7)</b>	<b>51.6 (-4.7)</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>51.6 (-4.7)</b>	<b>52.5 (-5.6)</b>	<b>49.5 (-2.5)</b>
<b>Current</b>	<b>58.4 (-16.6)</b>	<b>49.7 (-5.3)</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>49.7 (-5.3)</b>	<b>50.4 (-5.0)</b>	<b>47.4 (-5.3)</b>
<b>Future</b>	<b>57.0 (-10.2)</b>	<b>52.8 (-4.4)</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>52.8 (-4.4)</b>	<b>53.8 (-6.1)</b>	<b>50.9 (-0.7)</b>

( ) reflects the point change from previous month. \*National data compiled by the U. of Michigan

In October, buying plans were down for: *cars/trucks*, 0.8 points to 7.9%; *computers*, 3.1 points to 7.4%; *furniture*, 0.8 points to 12.7%; *homes*, 1.0 points to 2.4%; and *major home improvements*, 2.0 points to 12.6%.

**“Tuesday’s election echoed recent Siena Polls: The economy is our number one issue,” according to Dr. Douglas Lonnstrom, professor of statistics and finance at Siena College and SRI Founding Director. “Fewer and fewer New York consumers are ready and willing to spend money in this economy. Falling gas prices serve to soften our continuing free fall, but we’ve reached a low point in current and overall confidence that mirrors an unwillingness to buy big ticket items. Any short term rebound will be difficult if not doubtful. Future confidence dropped in every group most notably among Republicans and Higher income as the election neared.”**

Each month since January 1999, the SRI survey establishes a Consumer Confidence index number for New York State consumers. This index number allows a direct comparison of New Yorkers to all Americans (“the nation”) as surveyed by the University of Michigan’s Consumer Sentiment index. The SRI survey measures *current* and *future* consumer confidence, which combined provides the *overall* consumer confidence. SRI further looks at confidence in New York State by region (metro New York City and Upstate), age, income, gender and party.

<b>Consumer Confidence in New York State (index numbers):</b>			
<b>October 2008</b>			
<b>(Groups listed in descending order by Overall CCI Rating)</b>			
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Future</b>
Republicans	56.6 (-9.0)	58.8 (-7.2)	55.2 (-10.3)
Men	53.7 (-5.7)	52.3 (-9.5)	54.5 (-3.4)
Under Age 55	53.4 (-6.0)	48.5 (-8.8)	56.5 (-4.3)
Metro NYC	52.5 (-5.6)	50.4 (-5.0)	53.8 (-6.1)
<b>New York State</b>	<b>51.6 (-4.7)</b>	<b>49.7 (-5.3)</b>	<b>52.8 (-4.4)</b>
Lower income	51.4 (-3.3)	45.1 (-4.2)	55.5 (-2.7)
Higher income	51.3 (-5.9)	53.1 (-5.7)	50.1 (-6.1)
Age 55+	50.4 (-3.7)	50.1 (-3.0)	50.6 (-4.2)
Democrats	50.1 (-1.5)	45.9 (-0.4)	52.8 (-2.2)
Upstate NY	49.5 (-2.5)	47.4 (-5.3)	50.9 (-0.7)
Women	49.2 (-3.9)	46.3 (-1.9)	51.1 (-5.1)

## Gas and Food Prices Analysis

Sixty percent of all New Yorkers say that current gasoline prices are having a very serious or somewhat serious impact on their financial condition down from 66% last month. Sixty-nine percent of state residents indicate that the amount of money they spend on groceries is having either a very serious or somewhat serious impact on their finances. One half of state residents say that both gasoline and food prices are having either a somewhat or very serious impact on their finances.

**“Lower gas prices have been a welcome relief to all. While the seriousness of the impact is well below July’s near panic, two-thirds of Upstaters and low income consumers continue to feel a serious effect. And 80% of low income residents, down only by 7 points from its crest, cringe at the grocery checkout,” according to Dr. Lonnstrom.**

The following chart shows the percentage of New York State residents by income, political party, age, location and gender that report a hardship from 1) gasoline prices, 2) food prices, and 3) both gas and food prices.

<b>Seriousness of Gas and Food Prices: Percentage of NY'ers -- 2008</b>															
Total percent by category indicating a somewhat or very serious problem.															
	Gasoline					Food					Both Gas and Food				
	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	Aug 2008	July 2008	June 2008	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	Aug 2008	July 2008	June 2008	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	Aug 2008	July 2008	June 2008
Upstate NY	66%	74%	79%	79%	75%	69%	75%	74%	80%	69%	55%	64%	67%	73%	61%
Lower Income	66%	71%	76%	81%	81%	80%	83%	79%	87%	84%	58%	66%	66%	77%	74%
Under age 55	62%	68%	75%	80%	79%	67%	72%	71%	83%	73%	51%	58%	63%	74%	66%
<b>New York State</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Democrats	60%	65%	72%	76%	76%	71%	74%	77%	83%	75%	50%	56%	62%	68%	64%
Men	60%	65%	69%	75%	74%	66%	69%	67%	77%	68%	49%	56%	57%	67%	60%
Women	59%	67%	73%	81%	73%	71%	76%	78%	84%	77%	51%	59%	64%	75%	67%
Age 55+	58%	65%	69%	76%	71%	70%	73%	73%	79%	72%	50%	57%	58%	69%	62%
Republicans	58%	62%	65%	80%	74%	63%	66%	61%	76%	73%	46%	50%	50%	72%	64%
Higher Income	57%	62%	68%	76%	71%	63%	65%	67%	76%	64%	46%	51%	55%	67%	57%
Metro NYC	56%	63%	67%	77%	73%	69%	72%	72%	81%	74%	47%	54%	57%	69%	65%

In order to track consumers’ sense of the seriousness with which gas and food prices are affecting their household budget, SRI computes the “Gas and Food Impact Seriousness Index.” In this index a score of 100 would be generated within any group if equal percentages of respondents said that gas and food were having a ‘somewhat’ or ‘very serious’ impact on their finances as compared to those that said those prices were either having ‘not a very’ or ‘not at all’ a serious impact. Any index score above 100 indicates growing concern over gas and food prices, while a score under 100 would indicate that concerns over gas and food are lessening. This chart shows the Gas and Food Impact Seriousness Index for the last five months.

<b>Gas and Food Impact Seriousness Index</b>					
	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	Aug 2008	July 2008	June 2008
Lower Income	147	156	156	170	166
Upstate NY	135	148	154	161	145
Under age 55	130	142	146	164	153
Men	128	136	137	153	144
<b>New York State</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>147</b>
Democrats	133	141	149	161	152
Women	132	146	153	166	151
Age 55+	130	140	144	156	144
Metro NYC	127	137	141	158	149
Republicans	121	129	127	156	147
Higher Income	120	127	136	152	136

The SRI survey of Consumer Confidence was conducted in October 2008 by random telephone calls to 963 New York State residents over the age of 18. As consumer confidence is expressed as an index number developed after statistical calculations to a series of questions, “margin of error” does not apply. Buying plans, which are shown as a percentage based on answers to specific questions, do have a margin of error of  $\pm 3.2$  points. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Douglas Lonnstrom, Siena College professor of finance and statistics and SRI Founding Director, at 518-783-2362 (office) or 518-456-6073 (home). Survey cross-tabulations and buying plans can be found at [www.siena.edu/sri/ci](http://www.siena.edu/sri/ci)