The Bakersfield Consumer Sentiment Survey

The CSUB compiles the quarterly consumer sentiment data from telephone interviews of a random sample of households in order to help local private and public managers make more informed decisions given consumer perceptions. Index values above 100 indicate optimism, while values below 100 suggest pessimism.

Reviewing the data from 1999 when the CSUB began measuring local consumer sentiment to the present, our confidence level has been lower only 12 percent of the time. This exactly mirrors national trends. The University of Michigan's national index of consumer sentiment is at a level that has been lower just 13 percent of the time since the beginning of 1999.

The Bakersfield Consumer Sentiment Index fell into the pessimistic range during the recessions of 2001 and 2008-2009 and continued into 2010. Consumers stayed optimistic in expansionary years of 1999-2000 and 2002-2007. Our latest data from the fourth quarter of 2010 indicate that the index is, perhaps, on a rebounding trend with continued recovery of the national economy.