

ECONOMIC PANORAMA

Half of Canadians Say Current Economic Conditions are Good

Most people expect real estate, gas and groceries to become more expensive in the next six months.

[VANCOUVER – Feb. 25, 2010] – Most Canadians rate the current economic conditions as good but a significant proportion of people beg to differ, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,005 Canadian adults, 52 per cent of respondents rate the present economic climate as “good” or “very good”, whereas 45 per cent think conditions are “poor” or “very poor”—only one per cent of Canadians are calling the present situation “very good.”

Since January, the proportion of respondents who deem the economic conditions in Canada as “good” or “very good” increased by four points.

The outlook for personal finances fares better, with 62 per cent of Canadians rating their situation as “good” or “very good”, and 36 per cent rating it negatively (only eight per cent of respondents call their position “very poor”).

Canadians mostly foresee economic conditions to remain unchanged over the course of the next six months (51%), but more than one third (35%) predict an improvement.

Only 14 per cent of respondents across the country think Canada is already out of recession, and just nine per cent predict that the recession will be over by this summer. A fifth of respondents say Canada

KEY FINDINGS

- **52% of Canadians say economic conditions are good**
- **32% think Canada’s economy is in worse shape than China’s**
- **62% rate personal finances positively**
- **38% are worried about the safety of their investments**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From February 23 to February 24, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,013 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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will overcome recession by the end of the year. Forty-three per cent of respondents say the recession will continue until 2011 or persist beyond that point.

Current Concerns

Fears of unemployment have haunted a third of Canadians over the past couple of months, and 38 per cent of respondents admit that they have worried about the value of their investments. Fewer respondents have recently worried about the safety of their savings (still a significant number, at 29%), being able to pay mortgage or rent (20%), or their employer running into serious financial trouble (20%).

Inflation and Debt

Echoing reports that Canada's housing market continues to heat up, a majority of respondents (56%) predict that the price of real estate will increase over the next six months. Most Canadians also foresee a hike in the cost of gasoline (82%) and groceries (77%). About three-in-ten respondents (29%) also think cars will become more expensive in the months to come. Conversely, two-in-five Canadians think the price of a television will go down.

Asked what they would do with a hypothetical handout of \$1,000, Canadians would allocate \$407 to paying down debt, \$163 to cover daily expenses such as groceries or transportation, \$185 to save in a bank account or GIC, \$94 towards a big purchase like a car or home renovation, \$76 to personal gifts or treats, \$43 to mutual funds, and \$33 to invest in individual stocks.

Canada vs. Other Countries

Overall, many Canadians think the national economy compares favourably to that of the United States (75%), the United Kingdom (39%), Japan (30%), and France (30%). However, 32 per cent of respondents think Canada's economy is doing worse than China's. Many people say Canada's current conditions are comparable to those of Australia (31% say they are the same), and Germany (25% say they are the same).

Political Leadership

Canadians place their trust to handle economic matters mostly in Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney (51%), followed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper (43%), and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff (26%). The governing Conservative Party (35%) is only slightly ahead of the opposition Liberal Party (30%) as the preferred group to rein in national debt. The Tories are also ahead of the Liberals on who is better to control inflation (41% and 26%, respectively), and to end the recession (39% and 24%). Both parties are practically tied on the category of job creation (35% Liberals, 34% Conservatives).

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Economic Panorama

How would you rate the economic conditions in Canada today?

| | Region | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Total | BC | AB | MB/SK | ON | PQ | ATL |
| Very good | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% |
| Good | 52% | 51% | 61% | 54% | 51% | 49% | 52% |
| Poor | 40% | 42% | 32% | 40% | 42% | 39% | 41% |
| Very poor | 5% | 4% | 2% | 1% | 4% | 9% | 4% |
| Not sure | 3% | 2% | 6% | 5% | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| Good – net | 52% | 52% | 61% | 55% | 52% | 50% | 52% |
| Poor – net | 45% | 46% | 34% | 40% | 46% | 47% | 45% |

Economic Panorama

How would you rate your own personal finances today?

| | Region | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Total | BC | AB | MB/SK | ON | PQ | ATL |
| Very good | 5% | 7% | 7% | 1% | 4% | 6% | 5% |
| Good | 57% | 57% | 64% | 67% | 58% | 52% | 57% |
| Poor | 29% | 29% | 23% | 25% | 28% | 33% | 25% |
| Very poor | 8% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 8% | 7% | 13% |
| Not sure | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| Good – net | 62% | 64% | 71% | 67% | 62% | 59% | 62% |
| Poor – net | 36% | 36% | 29% | 31% | 36% | 41% | 38% |

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| Economic Panorama - TREND | | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| How would you rate the economic conditions in Canada today? | | | | | |
| | Feb. 2010 | Jan. 2010 | Oct. 2009 | Sept. 2009 | Jul. 2009 |
| Very good | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Good | 52% | 47% | 47% | 46% | 42% |
| Poor | 40% | 39% | 40% | 44% | 47% |
| Very poor | 5% | 6% | 7% | 5% | 7% |
| Not sure | 3% | 7% | 4% | 4% | 3% |
| Good – Net | 52% | 48% | 49% | 47% | 43% |
| Poor – Net | 45% | 45% | 47% | 49% | 54% |

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Economic Panorama

Over the next six months, do you think the Canadian economy will improve, remain the same, or decline?

| | Region | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Total | BC | AB | MB/SK | ON | PQ | ATL |
| Improve | 35% | 32% | 49% | 37% | 39% | 25% | 33% |
| Remain the same | 51% | 55% | 40% | 56% | 49% | 54% | 56% |
| Decline | 11% | 11% | 7% | 3% | 10% | 16% | 11% |
| Not sure | 3% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 0% |

Economic Panorama

In the past couple of months, how often have you worried about each of the following? – *Total Canada*

| | The safety of your savings | The value of your investments | Your employer running into serious financial trouble | Being able to pay your mortgage or rent | You, or somebody in your household becoming unemployed |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Never worried | 44% | 34% | 62% | 60% | 45% |
| Worried once or twice | 26% | 28% | 18% | 20% | 23% |
| Worried occasionally | 19% | 24% | 11% | 9% | 17% |
| Worried frequently | 10% | 14% | 9% | 11% | 16% |
| Not worried – net | 71% | 62% | 80% | 80% | 67% |
| Worried – net | 29% | 38% | 20% | 20% | 33% |

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Economic Panorama

Thinking about the next six months, do you expect the price of each of the following items to go up, stay about the same, or go down? – *Total Canada*

| | Gasoline | Real estate | A new car | A new TV | A week's worth of groceries |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Prices will go up | 82% | 56% | 29% | 17% | 77% |
| Prices will stay the same | 13% | 29% | 47% | 36% | 20% |
| Prices will go down | 2% | 10% | 18% | 40% | 2% |
| Not sure | 3% | 6% | 7% | 7% | 1% |

Economic Panorama

If you were given \$1000 today, what would you do with it? – *Total Canada*

| | |
|--|-------|
| Invest in individual stocks | \$33 |
| Invest in mutual funds | \$43 |
| Pay down debt | \$407 |
| Save (in a bank account or GIC) | \$185 |
| Put towards a big purchase (like a car or home improvements) | \$94 |
| Spend on personal items (gifts, special treats, etc.) | \$76 |
| Cover day to day expenses (groceries, travel costs etc.) | \$163 |

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| Economic Panorama | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| When do you think Canada's economy will get out of recession? | | | | | | | |
| | Region | | | | | | |
| | Total | BC | AB | MB/SK | ON | PQ | ATL |
| It is already out of recession | 14% | 16% | 17% | 10% | 15% | 12% | 19% |
| In the first half of 2010 | 9% | 2% | 11% | 7% | 9% | 15% | 4% |
| In the second half of 2010 | 20% | 22% | 22% | 14% | 22% | 17% | 23% |
| In 2011 | 27% | 23% | 25% | 43% | 29% | 23% | 25% |
| After 2011 | 16% | 21% | 16% | 10% | 14% | 17% | 12% |
| Not sure | 14% | 16% | 8% | 15% | 12% | 17% | 18% |

| Economic Panorama | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------|--------|-------------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| The worldwide recession has affected countries differently. How would you say Canada's economy is doing compared to each of the following countries? – <i>Total Canada</i> | | | | | | | |
| | The United Kingdom | Japan | France | The United States | Australia | Germany | China |
| Canada's economy is doing better | 39% | 30% | 30% | 75% | 16% | 23% | 16% |
| Canada's economy is doing about the same | 23% | 19% | 23% | 13% | 31% | 25% | 20% |
| Canada's economy is doing worse | 5% | 15% | 6% | 4% | 8% | 9% | 32% |
| Not sure | 33% | 36% | 41% | 8% | 46% | 43% | 32% |

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Economic Panorama

How much do you trust each of the following people to do the right thing to help the economy? – Total Canada

| | Stephen Harper, Prime Minister | Michael Ignatieff, Federal Leader of the Opposition | Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of Canada |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Completely trust | 9% | 3% | 7% |
| Moderately trust | 34% | 23% | 44% |
| Moderately distrust | 19% | 27% | 16% |
| Completely distrust | 30% | 32% | 9% |
| Not sure | 8% | 15% | 24% |
| Trust – net | 43% | 26% | 51% |
| Distrust – net | 49% | 59% | 25% |

Economic Panorama

Please indicate which party you think is best able to deal with the following issues – *Total Canada*

| | Rein in the national debt | End the recession | Create jobs | Control inflation |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Conservative Party | 35% | 39% | 34% | 41% |
| Liberal Party | 30% | 24% | 35% | 26% |
| Don't know | 35% | 36% | 30% | 33% |

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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