

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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A Spring in Our Steps? Consumer Confidence Surges in Latest State of State Survey; Snyder Positive Ratings Rebound Sharply

Michigan residents are growing more positive about the economy, and the state's governor is benefitting from the sunnier outlook, a new Michigan State University State of the State Survey indicated Wednesday.

"The Michigan economy has added 150,000 jobs since the job market bottomed out at the end of 2009," noted Charles Ballard, MSU economics professor and director of the State of the State Survey. "The improvement in the economy is reflected in the brighter mood in our latest survey."

The findings are based on the latest quarterly phone survey conducted from Feb. 14 to April 15 this year. A total of 963 Michigan adults were questioned in the survey which has an error rating of $\pm 3.16\%$.

MSU's State of the State Survey has been conducted by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research since 1994, and is a project of IPPSR's Office for Survey Research. IPPSR is a unit of MSU's College of Social Science.

In the latest State of the State Survey, Michigan residents gave the economy its highest marks since 2005, Ballard said.

Fifty-four percent of those responding to the survey called their current financial situation excellent or good, Ballard said. Fewer than 30 percent called their circumstances "just fair," 10.1 percent rated their conditions "not so good" and 6.6 percent considered their circumstances "poor" in the winter-spring survey.

In the fall 2011 survey, conducted from mid-September through early November, only 46.2 percent of the those answering the survey called their financial situation "excellent" or "good."

Gov. Rick Snyder's approval ratings rebounded substantially this spring.

"The Governor's ratings went from 19.3 percent positive last fall to 33 percent in the current survey," Ballard said. "This is a very substantial improvement."

President Obama's positive ratings remained about the same as before, Ballard said.

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In the most recent period, 40.6 percent of those responding to the survey gave the president “excellent” or “good” marks. Michigan residents gave Obama 70.7 percent positive rating as the new president began his term in 2009, but his ratings declined steadily in his first year in office. His quarterly performance has since stabilized closer to the 40 percent range, Ballard noted.

About 37 percent of the Michigan residents who responded to the survey also said they believed they were better off in 2012 than they were the year before. Those are the highest ratings since 2005.

They were also upbeat about the year ahead, making this the rosiest forecast since 2004, Ballard said. Fully 61 percent of the survey respondents expect to be better off a year from now.

While those responding to the survey were optimistic about their financial fortunes, they were less upbeat in their annual assessment of trust in their government.

“Trust in state and local government held steady from 2011 to 2012,” Ballard said. “However, trust in the federal government has reached an all-time SOSS low.”

This spring, 35.3 percent of those responding to the survey said they could trust local government nearly all or most of the time, while only 15.9 percent said they could trust state government nearly all or most of the time. Only 11.8 percent said they could trust the federal government all or most of the time.

“Trust in the state government declined substantially in the wake of the budget stalemates of the last decade,” said Ballard. “Similarly, the debt-ceiling spectacle of last summer probably contributed to this latest drop in trust in the federal government.”

For more information about the State of the State Survey, please see www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS/.

Note to media: Please see the full SOSS presentation at www.ippsr.msu.edu.

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