

Consumer News & Views

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Can Consumer Confidence Continue to Rise? The Consumer Confidence Index® as measured by The Conference Board each month, rose to 125.4 in January, higher than the 123.1 anticipated by many economists. The January increase follows a surprising decline for the Index which had dropped to 122.1 in December.

"Expectations improved, though consumers were somewhat ambivalent about their income prospects over the coming months, perhaps the result of some uncertainty regarding the impact of the tax plan," Lynn Franco, Director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board, said in a statement.

"Consumers remain quite confident that the solid pace of growth seen in late 2017 will continue into 2018," Franco added.



Thomas Hinton of the American Consumer Council, a non-profit consumer education organization said, "It's somewhat ironic that consumer confidence continues to rise despite the fact our national government is in a near-dysfunctional state. They're not getting much accomplished legislation to repair our infrastructure and we desperately need."

Hinton noted that American consumers continue to spend at near-record levels. There's almost a frantic pace for buying a new home, new car, furniture, clothing and even leisure travel.

Consumers have been on a record spending spree since 2013 and they show no signs of slowing down in 2018.

Despite a few blips in the Consumer Confidence Index®, consumers have spent freely on a broad range of goods and services. Can consumers continue to spend at this pace? And, will consumer confidence continue to rise?

On the positive side, the recent Republican-led tax cuts will give the economy a kick-start boost in early 2018 by putting more money in the pockets of millions of Americans and making it cheaper for businesses to investment. Job growth continues to improve along with modest wage increases.

On the negative side, Baby Boomers are struggling to pay for their children's higher education tuition and Millennials can't afford to buy houses because prices have shot through the roof in most of the top 25 housing markets. And, finally, at some point, our dysfunctional Congress and the Trump Administration's circus act is going to boomerang and cause serious fallout including a decline in consumer confidence.

ACC Releases New Videos to Help Millennials Improve Their Finances. The American Consumer Council has released two new videos to help Millennials better manage their finances and plan for the future. These videos are available to ACC's credit union partners and may be used by others upon written permission from ACC.

Here are the YouTube.com links:

- [How to Create & Build Your Credit History](#)
- [How to Make the Right Choices During a Job Transition](#)



ACC's Friend of the Consumer Award Recognizes Outstanding Businesses.

Is your business consumer-friendly? Does your business deserve greater recognition for its service to consumers? If so, you should apply for the American Consumer Council's Friend of the Consumer Award. Now is the time to apply!

Throughout the year, ACC presents its "Friend of the Consumer" Awards. This prestigious award recognizes manufacturers, retailers, and other businesses that produce or sell products in the United States that meet or exceed federally-mandated standards and are touted by consumers as "consumer friendly."

Each year, ACC awards numerous "Friend of the Consumer" Awards to deserving companies and organizations because they have "demonstrated a commitment to American consumers by providing a specific product or service that fosters consumer confidence and market acceptance."



To apply for the "Friend of the Consumer" Award, complete the online application and return it to ACC with the application fee. Applicants will be notified within 5 days of receipt of their application. Thereafter, a panel of independent judges will review your application and make a formal recommendation within 20 days of receipt of your award application.

For more information, visit: <http://www.americanconsumercouncil.org/awards.asp>

Green CSM Certification Accepting Applications for 2018 Cycle:

If your company or organization would like to increase its credibility with consumers, you should consider applying for the **Green CSM Certification**. Applications for the 2018 cycle are now being accepted through March 31, 2018.

It's a proven fact that consumers want to do business with companies that are eco-friendly and practice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The process is straight-forward and all applicants are recognized by ACC and the Green USA Institute.

All applicants complete the criteria and submit their responses to ACC's Green Consumer Council for review, assessment and feedback. Program details and the **Green CSM Certification** criteria can be viewed at ACC's website located at: <http://americanconsumercouncil.org/greenc.asp>

