

# Consumer News & Views

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**What Concerns Consumers in 2015?** As a new year begins, consumers have high expectations for an improved economic climate according to the American Consumer Council (ACC).

A recent poll of 1,040 ACC members reveals that consumers are optimistic for job growth and wage increases in 2015. Consumers said their top three concerns for 2015 were (1) auto safety concerns (including airbag recalls and highway/bridges structural improvements); (2) reduced airline travel and lodging costs; and, (3) food safety concerns. A fourth issue that was identified by a growing percentage of consumers with children was "school safety."



**Consumer Confidence Climbs in December 2014.** Consumers are more hopeful for an improved economic climate according to The Conference Board **Consumer Confidence Index**<sup>®</sup>, which had declined in November, but improved in December. The Index now stands at 92.6 (1985=100), up from 91.0 in November.

Lynn Franco, Director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board, noted, "Consumer confidence rebounded modestly in December, propelled by a considerably more favorable assessment of current economic and labor market conditions."



Franco added, "Consumers were moderately less optimistic about the short-term outlook in December, but even so, they are more confident at year-end than they were at the beginning of the year."

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**American Consumer Council Adds 2 State Offices and 2 Regional Offices.** As the American Consumer Council (ACC) begins 2015, it added two new regional offices -- in Sacramento, CA and Overland Park, KS -- and opened two new state consumer council headquarters in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Columbus, Ohio. The expansion brings ACC's regional office total to 30 physical locations, including 25 state consumer council offices with physical locations for members in the following states: Arizona, Arkansas, California (3), Connecticut (2), Maine, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania (2), Kansas, Kentucky, Florida, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Georgia, Utah, Texas (2), Louisiana; South Carolina, Oregon, Indiana, Michigan, and North Carolina.

ACC's office expansion in 2015 will also include the addition of physical offices in Pittsburgh, PA; Boulder, Colorado (which will also serve the Wyoming region) and Tacoma, Washington to bring ACC's physical office locations to 27 states.

ACC continues to operate its three national service centers in Newark, NJ; El Segundo, CA; and the Washington, D.C. area. ACC is headquartered in San Diego, California.



ACC's Ann Arbor, Michigan office is also home to the Michigan Consumer Council

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### **ACC's Friend of the Consumer Award Recognizes Outstanding Businesses in 2015.**

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.

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 25 days of receipt of your award application.

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

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### Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification Accepting Applications for 2015 Spring Cycle:

If your company or organization would like to increase its credibility with consumers, you should consider applying for the **Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification**. Applications for the 2015 Spring cycle are now being accepted through March 31, 2015.

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 C<sup>SM</sup> Certification** criteria can be viewed at ACC's website located at: <http://americanconsumercouncil.org/greenc.asp>

