

# Consumer News & Views

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## **Consumer Confidence Slips in May for Second Straight Decline.**

The Conference Board reported that its Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) decline slightly in May. The Index slipped to 117.9 from 119.4 in April and marked a decline for the second straight month. This economic indicator measures present and future consumer confidence in the economy and in income stability. The CCI is arguably one of the most important economic indicators as it influences the decisions of investors, manufacturers, retailers, banks and government agencies. Typically, a higher CCI suggests people will spend money, while a lower CCI suggests people will save or have less money to spend.



The CCI has risen steadily since 2008. At the end of 2016, the CCI reached a 13-year high of 113.7, its highest reading since December 2003. This surge continued into 2017, reaching 124.9 in March. However, continued delays on economic policy have more recently reduced consumer confidence. The CCI fell to 120.3 in April, marking its first decline since inauguration day. It's unclear whether this drop in May signals a trend for the months ahead.

As consumer spending represents the largest contributor to gross domestic product (GDP), changes in consumer confidence can significantly affect manufacturer production schedules, housing starts, bank loan interest rates and more. These changes ultimately affect consumers who tend to spend less when times are uncertain.

## ACC Supports Fallen Heroes Fund for U.S. Military Traumatic Brain Injury Research and Treatment.

The American Consumer Council has announced its support for the Intrepid's Fallen Heroes Fund to support research and treatment for America's military men and women suffering from traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and requiring Psychological Health treatment (PH). The non-profit fund, which has raised nearly \$200 million to support America's military men and women who have suffered serious injuries in combat, is an outgrowth of the famous Intrepid Museum, which preserves the World War II aircraft carrier and serves as a popular museum in New York City's Hudson River.



**The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund** is a leader in supporting the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families. Begun in 2000 and established as an independent, not-for-profit organization in 2003, the Fund has provided nearly \$200 million in support for the families of military personnel lost in service to our nation, and for severely wounded military personnel and veterans. These efforts are funded entirely with donations from the public, and hundreds of thousands of individuals have contributed to the Fund.

**Consumers who want to support the Fund may contribute directly at:** <https://www.fallenheroesfund.org/Donate.aspx>. All proceeds go directly to the Fund and are tax-deductible. For more information on the Fallen Heroes Fund's important programs and services, please read below or visit their website at: <https://www.fallenheroesfund.org/About-IFHF.aspx>.

Here's how this excellent charity supports America's military men and women:

### Family Support

From 2000 to 2005 the Fund provided close to \$20 million to families of United States and British military personnel lost in performance of their duty, mostly in service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Fund provided unrestricted grants to each spouse and dependent child; and to parents of unmarried service members. The payments were coordinated with the casualty offices of the Armed Forces, to ensure all eligible families received these benefits. In 2005 federal legislation substantially increased the benefits granted to these families. With that mission accomplished, the Fund redirected its support toward the severely injured.

### The Center for the Intrepid

In January 2007 the Fund completed construction of the Center for the Intrepid, a \$55 million world-class state-of-the-art physical rehabilitation center at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The Center serves military personnel who have been catastrophically disabled in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and veterans severely injured in other operations and in the normal performance of their duties. The 60,000 square foot Center provides ample space and facilities for the rehabilitation needs of the patients and their caregivers. It includes modern physical rehabilitation equipment and extensive indoor and outdoor facilities.



### **National Intrepid Center of Excellence**

Following the opening of the Center for the Intrepid, the Fund turned toward another critical issue faced by our wounded troops: the treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The Fund addressed this need by constructing the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE). NICoE is a 72,000 square foot, two-story facility located on the Navy campus at Bethesda, Maryland, adjacent to the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, with close access to the Uniformed Services University, the National Institutes of Health, and the Veterans Health Administration. NICoE provides the most advanced services for advanced diagnostics, initial treatment plan and family education, introduction to therapeutic modalities, referral and reintegration support for military personnel and veterans with TBI and psychological health conditions. Further, NICoE conducts research, tests new protocols and provides comprehensive training and education to patients, providers and families while maintaining ongoing telehealth follow-up care with patients across the country and throughout the world. NICoE was dedicated on June 24th, 2010 and has now begun its critically important work.

### **Intrepid Spirit**

In 2013 the Fund launched a new campaign to extend the care provided at NICoE to more service members suffering TBI and psychological health conditions. The Fund will build up to nine "Intrepid Spirit" centers at major military bases around the country. These centers will act as satellites to the central NICoE facility and will allow urgently-needed care to be brought to more troops and closer to home. Construction of all nine centers will cost \$100 million. The first five centers are now in operation and the sixth is now under construction. Raising the remaining funds will guarantee that additional centers can be built and put into operation to support our wounded heroes in uniform.




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### **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>

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### Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification Accepting Applications for 2017 Summer 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 2017 Summer cycle are now being accepted through June 30, 2017.

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>



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**ACC Annual Meeting Scheduled for Friday, June 16, 2017.** The American Consumer Council will hold its annual membership and business meeting on Friday, June 16, 2017 at 10:00 am at The Lodge at Torrey Pines located in

La Jolla, CA. The meeting is open to all members of ACC. For more information, please contact ACC's meeting department at 1-800-544-0414.



**The Lodge at Torrey Pines, La Jolla, CA**