

# Consumer News & Views

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## *In this Issue...*

- **Consumer Confidence Ticks Up for May to Highest Level in 15 Years.**
- **D.C. Metro Consumer Council Adds Over 2,200 Members with Help on Identity Theft and Avoiding Scams That Target Seniors.**
- **Financial Education Video Features “Essential Checklist When Getting Married.”**
- **ACC Annual Meeting Scheduled for June 14, 2019.**
- **ACC’s “Friend of the Consumer” Award Recognizes Outstanding Businesses.**
- **Apply for the 2019 Green C<sup>SM</sup> Certification Program.**

**Consumer Confidence Ticks Up in May.** The University of Michigan announced that the Consumer Confidence Index improved in May to its highest level in 15 years, as Americans grew more upbeat on the health of the economy and its path in 2019, according to data released Friday.

CNBC reported that the University of Michigan’s preliminary consumer sentiment index rose to 102.4, up from 97.2 in April and well ahead of economist expectations of 97.5.

“Consumers viewed prospects for the overall economy much more favorably, with the economic outlook for the near and longer term reaching their highest levels since 2004,” said Richard Curtin, chief economist for the Surveys of Consumers. “To be sure, negative references to tariffs rose in the past week and are likely to rise further in late May and June.”



The optimistic consumer outlook was mostly recorded before U.S.-China trade deliberations soured earlier this month.

Aggravated trade tensions between the U.S. and China could dampen consumer sentiment going forward, Curtin said, and will likely weigh on subsequent reports in May and June.

“Even apart from the direct impact of tariffs on prices, rising tariffs could cause a more general loss of confidence which could further diminish the pace of consumer spending,” Curtin wrote. “At present, the data point toward moderate spending growth in the year ahead. Nonetheless, the data indicate the corrosive impact of an escalating trade war.”

## D.C. Metro Consumer Council Increases Membership with Strong Consumer Advocacy Program to Help Seniors and ID Theft Victims.

During the two-month period of April-May, the D.C. Metro Consumer Council (DCMCC) increased its membership with a strong campaign focused on protecting consumer identity and helping senior citizens avoid especially via the telephone.

The DCMCC added over 2,210 members during the eight-week period of April 1, 2019 to May 31, 2019 according to the national office of the American Consumer Council (ACC).



Part of the D.C. Metro Consumer Council's efforts involved a hot line to report suspected scams and identity theft. The DCMCC cooperated with local and federal law enforcement agencies to report over 66 scams and 102 identity thefts. By providing seniors with information on how to avoid being scammed over the telephone or via the internet, and not share personal information, DCMCC was able to respond to nearly 3,100 senior inquiries in a seven-week period.

Also, DCMCC provided local consumers with contact information to help them report incidents of identity theft and steps they could take to minimize the use of stolen credit cards and checking account information.

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## New ACC Video Focuses on "Essential Checklist When Getting Married."

The American Consumer Council has released a new video as part of its financial education series. The latest video, which targets Millennials, is entitled, "[Essential Checklist When Getting Married.](#)"

ACC also released two other videos as part of its series to help Millennials feel more confident about their financial dealings. Those videos are: "[Money Topics Every Couple Must Discuss.](#)" The second video is "[What Consumers Should Know About Time Shares Before Signing on the Dotted Line.](#)"



ACC's financial education video series is designed to help consumers, especially Millennials, better manage their finances and get access to financial services. The free series is available online at <http://www.americanconsumercouncil.org/videos.asp> and features certified financial planner and author, Kimberly Curtis, who is a popular author, speaker and the CEO of The Wealth Legacy Institute in Denver, Colorado.

The video series has been well received by Millennials (18-30 year old) and has encouraged over 6,000 Millennials to join credit unions since September 1, 2016.

The other video topics include: [Paying for the Cost of College](#); [Paying Off Debt While Building Wealth](#); [Home-Buying Mistakes to Avoid](#); [Goals to Reach by Age 30](#); [Money Mistakes Everyone Makes](#); and, "[How to Prevent Identity Theft.](#)"

Click on any of the links to watch these videos.

The American Consumer Council's president Thomas Hinton, stated "Millennials (ages 18-30) want timely information delivered through short videos to help them better manage their money and debts. This series answers many of their questions and encourages Millennials to seek out the services of credit unions that are skilled at providing a broad range of financial services at very competitive rates."

According to ACC's research, there are over 75 million Millennials in the United States and nearly 42% have not established any financial services relationship with an insured financial institution.

The American Consumer Council is currently promoting a series of financial education videos for Millennials that will be continue into 2020. ACC expects a strong response to the video series given the number of inquiries ACC has received from its 243,000+ members.

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**ACC Annual Meeting Scheduled for June 14, 2019.** The American Consumer Council will hold its annual membership and business meeting on Friday, June 14, 2019 at 10:00 am at the Park Hyatt Aviara, CA. The meeting is open to all members of ACC. The business agenda for the meeting will be published in May 2019. For more information, please contact ACC's meetings department at 1-800-544-0414.



*The Park Hyatt Aviara, Carlsbad, CA*

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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 2019 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 2019 cycle are now being accepted through June 30, 2019.

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>