

Consumer News & Views

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Consumer Confidence Improves in April. The University of Michigan announced that the Consumer Confidence Index in its final reading rose to 97.2 in April from 96.9 in the previous estimate and came in slightly better than the market expectation of 97. When asked about their financial prospects for the year ahead, 44% of consumers anticipated improvements compared with just 8% who expected worsening finances. This was the best overall reading since 2004. When asked about longer term financial prospects, 60% reported in the April survey that they expected to be better off financially over the next five years. The data indicate that inflation-adjusted personal consumption expenditures will grow by 2.5% in 2019.



Wyoming Consumer Council Shows Strongest Quarterly Growth Among 177 ACC Chapters.

During the first quarter of 2019, the Wyoming Consumer Council (WYCC) showed the strongest membership growth (based on a percentage of new members) among the American Consumer Council's (ACC) 177 chapters. Wyoming's 13.8% membership growth rate led all ACC chapters followed by Utah (12.6%), Texas (12.2%) and California (11.2%).

The fast growth in Wyoming over the past two years led to the realignment of boundaries for two consumer council chapters based in Wyoming, the Cheyenne Consumer Council and the Laramie Consumer Council, which are part of the Wyoming Consumer Council.



Wyoming's economy has experienced strong growth this year and has already exceeded last year's economy in several key metrics, according to Wyoming's economic analysis division. Based on the latest calculation of the Wyoming Business-Cycle Index, which incorporates several key factors to provide an overall picture of the state's economy, the WBCI has seen year-over-year increases each month and currently sits at 101.23. That number is up from 98.37 in September 2017, which represents considerable growth.

The WBCI is calculated by factoring in four economic indicators: unemployment rate, which gives a sense of the state's overall economic well-being; total private sector weekly wages, which is another broad measure of the state's economic health as earnings account for 67 percent of Wyoming's personal income; sales and use tax collections from the mining sector, which is included because, according to Robinson's report, roughly 36 percent of Wyoming's gross domestic product is attributed to the mining sector; and national park recreation visits, which is designed to gauge Wyoming's other critical industry, tourism.

ACC's president, Thomas Hinton, stated that "Wyoming's fast-paced growth is a clear indication that consumers want to live in places where jobs and the opportunity for financial growth are present. Consumers also want affordable housing and communities where their kids can get an excellent education and be safe. Wyoming fits that description to a tee!"

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.

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

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 2019 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 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 CSM Certification** criteria can be viewed at ACC's website located at: <http://americanconsumercouncil.org/greenc.asp>