

FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. ET, Thursday, June 19, 2014

The Conference Board®
U.S. Business Cycle IndicatorsSM

THE CONFERENCE BOARD LEADING ECONOMIC INDEX® (LEI) FOR THE UNITED STATES AND RELATED COMPOSITE ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR MAY 2014

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index[®] (LEI) for the U.S. increased 0.5 percent, **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index**[®] (CEI) increased 0.3 percent and **The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index**[®] (LAG) increased 0.4 percent in May.

- The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. increased for the fourth consecutive month in May. Positive contributions from all the financial and labor components of the leading economic index more than offset the large negative contribution from building permits. In the six-month period ending May 2014, the LEI increased 2.3 percent (about a 4.7 percent annual rate), slower than the growth of 3.5 percent (about a 7.2 percent annual rate) during the previous six months. In addition, the strengths among the leading indicators remained widespread.
- The Conference Board CEI for the U.S., a measure of current economic activity, also improved. The coincident economic index rose 1.0 percent (about a 2.0 percent annual rate) between November 2013 and May 2014, about the same pace as the 1.2 percent growth (about a 2.4 percent annual rate) for the previous six months. Additionally, the strengths among the coincident indicators have remained very widespread, with all components advancing over the past six months. The lagging economic index continued to increase but at a slightly higher rate than the CEI. As a result, the coincident-to-lagging ratio is down. Real GDP contracted at a 1.0 percent annual rate in the first quarter of the year, after increasing 2.6 percent (annual rate) in the fourth quarter of 2013.
- The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. continued to increase in May, but at a slower pace than in the past several months. Meanwhile, The Conference Board CEI for the U.S. has also been rising steadily through May with all components contributing positively to the index. Taken together, the current behavior of the composite indexes and their components suggest that the expansion in economic activity will continue into the summer months, with some upside potential.

<u>LEADING INDICATORS.</u> Seven of the ten indicators that make up The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. increased in May. The positive contributors – beginning with the largest positive contributor – were the interest rate spread, average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance (inverted), average weekly manufacturing hours, the Leading Credit IndexTM (inverted), stock prices, the ISM® new orders index, and manufacturers' new orders for consumer goods and materials*. The negative contributor was building permits. The manufacturers' new orders for nondefense capital goods excluding aircraft* and average consumer expectations for business conditions held steady in May.

The LEI for the U.S. now stands at 101.7 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.3 percent in April and increased 1.0 percent in March. Over the six-month span through May, the leading economic index increased 2.3 percent, with seven out of ten components advancing (diffusion

index, six-month span equals 70 percent).

<u>COINCIDENT INDICATORS.</u> All four indicators that make up the CEI for the U.S. increased in May. The positive contributors to the index – beginning with the largest positive contributor – were industrial production, employees on nonagricultural payrolls, personal income less transfer payments*, and manufacturing and trade sales*.

The CEI now stands at 109.0 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.2 percent in April and increased 0.4 percent in March. During the six-month period through May, the coincident economic index increased 1.0 percent, with all four components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 100 percent).

<u>LAGGING INDICATORS.</u> The lagging economic index stands at 123.8 (2004=100) in May, with five of its seven components advancing. The positive contributors to the index – beginning with the largest positive contributor – were the change in CPI for services, the average duration of unemployment (inverted), commercial and industrial loans outstanding*, the ratio of consumer installment credit to personal income*, and the change in the index of labor cost per unit of output, manufacturing*. The ratio of manufacturing and trade inventories to sales* and the average prime rate charged by banks held steady in May. Based on revised data, the lagging economic index increased 0.3 percent in April and increased 0.6 percent in March.

DATA AVAILABILITY AND NOTES.

The data series used to compute **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index**[®] (LEI) for the U.S., **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index**[®] (CEI) for the U.S. and **The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index**[®] (LAG) for the U.S. and reported in the tables in this release are those available "as of" 10:00 am ET on June 17, 2014. Some series are estimated as noted below.

* Series in The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. based on our estimates are manufacturers' new orders for consumer goods and materials, and manufacturers' new orders for nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft. Series in The Conference Board CEI for the U.S. that are based on our estimates are personal income less transfer payments and manufacturing and trade sales. Series in The Conference Board LAG for the U.S. that are based on our estimates are manufacturing and trade inventories to sales ratio, the change in labor cost per unit of output, manufacturing, consumer installment credit to income ratio, and the personal consumption expenditure deflator used to deflate commercial and industrial loans outstanding.

The procedure used to estimate the current month's personal consumption expenditure deflator (used in the calculation of commercial and industrial loans outstanding) now incorporates the current month's consumer price index when it is available before the release of The Conference Board LEI for the U.S.

Professional Contacts at The Conference Board: Media Contacts:

Email: indicators@conference-board.org

Website: http://www.conference-board.org/data/bci.cfm

THE CYCLICAL INDICATOR APPROACH. The composite economic indexes are the key elements in an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The leading, coincident, and lagging economic indexes are essentially composite averages of several individual leading, coincident, or lagging indicators. (See page 3 for details.) They are constructed to summarize and reveal common turning point patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component—primarily because they smooth out some of the volatility of individual components.

Historically, the cyclical turning points in The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. have occurred before those in aggregate economic activity, while the cyclical turning points in The Conference Board CEI for the U.S. have occurred at about the same time as those in aggregate economic activity. The cyclical turning points in The Conference Board LAG for the U.S. generally have occurred after those in aggregate economic activity.

U.S. Composite Economic Indexes: Components and Standardization Factors

Leading Econom	ic Index	Factor				
1	Average weekly hours, manufacturing	0.2713				
2	Average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance	0.0336				
3	Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials	0.0830				
4	4 ISM® new orders index					
5	Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl.					
	aircraft	0.0409				
6	Building permits, new private housing units	0.0312				
7	Stock prices, 500 common stocks	0.0392				
8	Leading Credit Index TM	0.0832				
9	Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds	0.1102				
10	Avg. consumer expectations for business conditions	0.1468				
Coincident Eco	onomic Index					
1	Employees on nonagricultural payrolls	0.5159				
2	Personal income less transfer payments	0.2222				
3	Industrial production	0.1436				
4	Manufacturing and trade sales	0.1183				
Lagging Econo	omic Index					
1	Average duration of unemployment	0.0371				
2	Inventories to sales ratio, manufacturing and trade	0.1244				
3	Labor cost per unit of output, manufacturing	0.0500				
4	Average prime rate	0.2922				
5	Commercial and industrial loans	0.0964				
6	Consumer installment credit to personal income ratio	0.1971				
7	Consumer price index for services	0.2028				

Notes:

The component factors are inversely related to the standard deviation of the month-to-month changes in each component. They are used to equalize the volatility of the contribution from each component and are "normalized" to sum to 1. When one or more components are missing, the other factors are adjusted proportionately to ensure that the total continues to sum to 1.

These factors were revised effective with the release in January 2014, and all historical values for the three composite economic indexes were revised at this time to reflect the changes. (Under normal circumstances, updates to the leading, coincident, and lagging economic indexes only incorporate revisions to data over the past six months.) The factors for The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. were calculated using 1984-2012 as the sample period for measuring volatility. A separate set of factors for the 1959-1983 period is available upon request. The primary sample period for the coincident and lagging economic indexes was 1959-2012. For additional information on the standardization factors and the index methodology see: "Benchmark Revisions in the Composite Indexes," *Business Cycle Indicators* December 1997 and "Technical Appendix: Calculating the Composite Indexes" *Business Cycle Indicators* December 1996, or the Web site: http://www.conference-board.org/data/bci.cfm

The trend adjustment factor for The Conference Board LEI for the U.S is -0.0598 (over the 1984 – present) and 0.0904 (over the 1959-1983 period), and the trend adjustment factor for The Conference Board LAG for the U.S is 0.1551.

To address the problem of lags in available data, those leading, coincident and lagging indicators that are not available at the time of publication are estimated using statistical imputation. An autoregressive model is used to estimate each unavailable component. The resulting indexes are therefore constructed using real and estimated data, and will be revised as the unavailable data during the time of publication become available. Such revisions are part of the monthly data revisions, now a regular part of the U.S. Business Cycle Indicators program. The main advantage of this procedure is to utilize in the leading economic index data such as stock prices, interest rate spread, and manufacturing hours that are available sooner than other data on real aspects of the economy such as manufacturers' new orders. Empirical research by The Conference Board suggests that there are real gains in adopting this procedure to make all the indicator series as up-to-date as possible.

NOTICES

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. news release schedule for 2014:

Friday, July 18, 2014

Thursday, August 21, 2014

For July 2014 data

For July 2014 data

For August 2014 data

For September 2014 data

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Thursday, December 18, 2014

For November 2014 data

For November 2014 data

All releases are at 10:00 AM ET.

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Table 1. Summary of U.S. Composite Economic Indexes

		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·										
	2013			2014								
	Nov	Dec	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May	
Leading index	99.4	99.5	99.4	r	99.9	r	100.9	r	101.2	r	101.7	р
Percent change	0.9	0.1	-0.1	r	0.5	•	1.0	•	0.3	r	0.5	р
Diffusion index	70	40	40		45		70		45		85	•
Coincident index	107.9	107.8	107.8		108.1		108.5	r	108.7	r	109.0	р
Percent change	0.4	-0.1	0.0		0.3		0.4	r	0.2	r	0.3	p
Diffusion index	100	50	50		100		100		75		100	
Lagging index	120.7	121.2	122.1	r	122.2		122.9	r	123.3		123.8	р
Percent change	0.0	0.4	0.7		0.1	r	0.6	r	0.3	r	0.4	р
Diffusion index	35.7	64.3	78.6		50		78.6		78.6		85.7	
Coincident-lagging ratio	89.4	88.9	88.3	r	88.5		88.3	r	88.2	r	88.0	р
	May to	Jun to	Jul to		Aug to		Sep to		Oct to		Nov to	
	Nov	Dec	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May	
Leading index												
Percent change	3.5	3.5	3.0		2.8		2.7		2.7		2.3	
Diffusion index	90	55	65		60		70		65		70	
Coincident index												
Percent change	1.2	1.0	1.0		1.0		1.1		1.1		1.0	
Diffusion index	100	100	100		100		100		100		100	
Lagging index												
Percent change	1.4	1.6	2.3		2.1		2.2		2.2		2.6	
Diffusion index	50	64.3	92.9		64.3		78.6		92.9		78.6	

p Preliminary. r Revised (noted only for index levels and one-month percent changes). c Corrected.

CALCULATION NOTE: The diffusion indexes measure the proportion of the components that are contributing positively. Components that rise more than 0.05 percent are given a value of 1.0, components that change less than 0.05 percent are given a value of 0.5, and components that fall more than 0.05 percent are given a value of 0.0.

The full history of composite and diffusion indexes is available by subscription on our web site at https://www.conference-board.org/data/bcicountry.cfm?cid=1

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Table 2. Data and Net Contributions for Components of the U.S. Leading Economic Index

_	201	13								
Component	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May			
_		U.S	. Leading Eco	nomic Index o	component da	ata				
Average w orkw eek, production w orkers, mfg. (hours)	42.0	41.9	41.7	41.5	42.0	41.9	42.1			
Average weekly initial claims, state unemployment insurance (thousands)*	328.6	352.3	333.8	336.9	320.9	325.2	310.3			
Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials (mil. 1982 dol.)	133,373 r	130,584 r	129,344 r	132,231 r	132,202 r	131,697 r	131,928 ** N	N		
ISM® New Orders Index (percent)	63.4	64.4	51.2	54.5	55.1	55.1	56.9			
Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft (mil. 1982 dol.	42246	41776	40963	40954	42871 r	42245 r	42286 **			
Building permits (thous.)	1,037	1,022	939	1,011	1,000	1,059 r	991			
Stock prices, 500 common stocks © (index: 1941-43=10)	1,783.54	1,807.78	1,822.36	1,817.03	1,863.52	1,864.26	1,889.77			
Leading Credit Index™ (std. dev.¹)*	-1.53 r	-1.85 r	-1.31 r	-1.44 r	-0.93 r	-0.93 r	-1.48			
Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds	2.64	2.81	2.79	2.64	2.64	2.62	2.47			
Avg. Consumer Expectations for Business Conditions (std. dev. 1)	-0.77 r	-0.34 r	-0.25 r	-0.34 r	-0.15 r	0.03 r	0.02			
LEADING INDEX (2004=100) Percent change from preceding month	99.4 0.9	99.5 0.1	99.4 r -0.1 r	99.9 r 0.5	100.9 r 1.0	101.2 r 0.3 r	101.7 p 0.5 p			
Average weekleveek production	U.S. Leading Economic Index net contributions									
Average w orkw eek, production w orkers, mfg		06	13	13	.32	06	.13			
Average w eekly initial claims, state unemployment insurance		23	.18	03	.16	04	.16			
Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials		18 r	08 r	.18 r	.00 r	03 r	.01 **			
ISM® New Orders Index		.18	09	02	01	01	.03			
Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft		05	08	.00	.19 r	06 r	.00 **			
Building permits		05	26	.23	03	.18 r	21			
Stock prices, 500 common stocks ©		.05	.03	01	.10	.00	.05			
Leading Credit Index™		.15 r	.11 r	.12 r	.08	.08 r	.12			
Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds		.31	.31	.29	.29	.29	.27			
Avg. Consumer Expectations for Business Conditions		05	04	05	02	.00 r	.00			

- p Preliminary. r Revised. c Corrected.
- ¹ Standard deviation above or below the mean
- Inverted series; a negative change or value in this component makes a positive contribution to the index.
- ** Statistical Imputation (See page 3 for more details)

N The annual benchmark revision to manufacturers' new orders consumer goods and materials series, one of the LB components, was incorrectly incorporated into the Business Cycle Indicators database in May. The impact of the error, or its correction, on the component's contribution or the April LB was negligible.

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CALCULATION NOTE: The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions

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Table 3. Data and Net Contributions for Components of the U.S. Coincident Economic Index and U.S. Lagging Economic Index

	201	13		2014								
Component	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May					
		ι	J.S. Coinciden	t Economic Ind	ex component o							
Employees on nonagricultural payrolls (thousands)	137,311	137,395	137,539	137,761	137,964	138,246 r	138,463					
Personal income less transfer payments (ann. rate, bil. chn. 2009 dol.)	11,016 r	10,983 r	10,997 r	11,024 r	11,060 r	11,076 r	11,105 **					
Industrial production (index: 2007=100)	101.375	101.557 r	101.368 r	102.455 r	103.312 r	103.048 r	103.659					
Manufacturing and trade sales (mil. chn. 2009 dol.)	1,163,543	1,159,516	1,146,012 r	1,151,088 r	1,162,037 r	1,164,375 **	1,167,889 **					
COINCIDENT INDEX (2004=100) Percent change from preceding month	107.9 0.4	107.8 -0.1	107.8 0.0	108.1 0.3	108.5 r 0.4 r	108.7 r 0.2 r	109.0 p 0.3 p					
-	U.S. Coincident Economic Index net contributions											
Employees on nonagricultural payrolls		.03	.05	.08	.08	.11	.08					
Personal income less transfer payments		07 r	.03	.05	.07 r	.03 r	.06 **					
Industrial production	••••	.03 r	03	.15	.12 r	04 r	.08					
Manufacturing and trade sales		04	14 r	.05 r	.11 r	.02 **	.04 **					
-			U.S. Lagging	Economic Index	component da	ıta						
Average duration of unemployment (weeks)*	37.1	37.1	35.4	37.1	35.6	35.1	34.5					
Ratio, manufacturing and trade inventories to sales (chain 2009 dol.)	1.386	1.396	1.415	1.413 r	1.402 r	1.403 **	1.403 **					
Change in index of labor cost per unit of output, mfg. (6-month percent, ann. rate)	-0.2 r	-1 r	1.3 r	-1.1 r	-1.0 r	-0.7 **	-0.5 **					
Average prime rate charged by banks (percent)	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25					
Commercial and industrial loans outstanding (mil. chn. 2009 dol.)	1,009,024	1,018,573 r	1,017,020 r	1,041,795 r	1,064,899 r	1,073,836 r	1,078,461 **					
Ratio, consumer installment credit out- standing to personal income (percent)	21.52	21.65	21.69 r	21.71 r	21.73 r	21.85 r	21.88 **					
Change in CPI for services (6-month percent, ann. rate)	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.4					
LAGGING INDEX (2004=100) Percent change from preceding month	120.7 0.0	121.2 0.4	122.1 r 0.7	122.2 0.1 r	122.9 r 0.6 r	123.3 0.3 r	123.8 p 0.4 p					
-	U.S. Lagging Economic Index net contributions											
Average duration of unemployment		.00	.17	17	.15	.05	.06					
Ratio, manufacturing and trade inventories to sales		.09	.17	02 r	10 r	.01 **	.00 **					
Change in index of labor cost per unit of												
output, mfg		04	.12	12 r	.01 r	.02 **	.01 **					
Average prime rate charged by banks		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00					
Commercial and industrial loans outstanding		.09	01	.23	.21	.08	.04 **					
Ratio, consumer installment credit out- standing to personal income		.12	.04 r	.02 r	.02 r	.11 r	.03 **					
Change in CPI for services		.00	.08	.04	.06	02	.08					
5.1a.1g5 5/110/ 56/ VI005	••••	.00	.00	.04	.00	.02	.00					

Consumer Price Index. For additional notes see table 2.
Inverted series; a negative change in this component makes a positive contribution to the index. Statistical Imputation (See page 3 for more details)

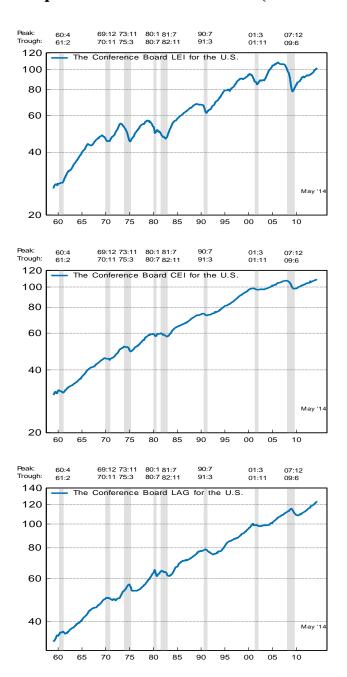
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U.S. Composite Economic Indexes (2004=100)



Shaded areas represent recessions as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

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