For Release 10:00 AM ET, Thursday, March 19, 2009

**The Conference Board Leading Economic Index™ for the U.S. Declines**

March 19, 2009… The Conference Board Leading Economic Index™ (LEI) for the U.S. declined 0.4 percent in February, following a 0.1 percent increase in January, and a 0.1 percent decline in December.

Says Ken Goldstein, Economist at The Conference Board: “The U.S. Leading Economic Index declined in February, but strengths and weaknesses were roughly balanced among its components. Financial market volatility remains strong, and the credit market freeze is relenting very slowly. The LEI suggests the recession will continue in the near term. A return to strong growth will not likely occur until 2010.”

The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index™ (CEI) for the U.S. declined 0.4 percent, following a 0.6 percent decline in January, and a 0.7 percent decline in December. The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index™ declined 0.4 percent in February, following a 0.3 percent decline in January, and a 0.1 percent decline in December.

**Negative Momentum Eases a Little**

![Graph showing the Leading Economic Index (LEI) and Coincident Economic Index (CEI) for the U.S. from January 2006 to February 2009. The LEI declined from 108 in January to 94 in February. The CEI also declined from 105 in January to 97 in February. The chart highlights the beginning of recession in December 2007.](image-url)