



THE CONFERENCE BOARD

FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. KST, Wednesday, June 17, 2009

The Conference Board®
Korea Business Cycle IndicatorsSM
**THE CONFERENCE BOARD LEADING ECONOMIC INDEX™
(LEI) FOR KOREA**
AND RELATED COMPOSITE ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR APRIL 2009

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index™ (LEI) for Korea increased 2.1 percent and **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index™ (CEI)** increased 0.6 percent in April.

- The Conference Board LEI for Korea increased sharply in April, the third consecutive gain. Large positive contributions from real exports, stock prices, index of inventories to shipments (inverted), and letter of credit arrivals more than offset a decline in private construction orders. With this month's gain, the six-month change in the index has become less negative at -3.6 percent (about a -7.1 percent annual rate) in the period through April, up from a -19.4 percent annual rate in December 2008. Moreover, the strengths and weaknesses among the leading indicators have become balanced during this period.
- The Conference Board CEI for Korea, a measure of current economic activity, also increased in April. Industrial production has risen sharply for three straight months through April, and wholesale and retail trade continued contributing positively to the index this month. The six-month change in the index has become less negative at -1.0 percent (a -2.0 percent annual rate) in the period through April, up from a -7.7 percent annual rate at the end of last year. At the same time, real GDP grew at a 0.5 percent annual rate in the first quarter of 2009, up from the 18.8 percent annual rate of decline in the fourth quarter of 2008.
- After declining sharply in late 2008, The Conference Board LEI for Korea has risen for three consecutive months. In addition, The Conference Board CEI for Korea has also increased this year. Taken together, the recent improvement in both composite economic indexes point to stabilization in the pace of the downturn in economic activity, and, if sustained, a resumption in growth late this year. However, the expansion in economic activity is likely to remain weak in the near term.

LEADING INDICATORS. Six of the seven components that make up The Conference Board LEI for Korea increased in April. The positive contributors – from the largest positive contributor to the smallest – were real exports FOB, stock prices, the (inverted) index of inventories to shipments, letter of credit arrivals, the (inverted) yield of government public bonds, and value of machinery orders. Private construction orders declined in April.

With the 2.1 percent increase in April, The Conference Board LEI for Korea now stands at 103.4 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.3 percent in March and increased 0.9 percent in February. During the six-month span through April, the leading economic index decreased 3.6 percent, with three of the seven components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 50.0 percent).

COINCIDENT INDICATORS. Three of the four components that make up The Conference Board CEI for Korea increased in April. The positive contributors— in order from the largest positive contributor to the smallest – were industrial production, the wholesale and retail sales component, and total employment. Monthly cash earnings* declined in April.

With the 0.6 percent increase in April, The Conference Board CEI for Korea now stands at 106.6 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.9 percent in March and increased 0.5 percent in February. During the six-month span through April, the coincident economic index decreased 1.0 percent, with one of the four components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 25.0 percent).

DATA AVAILABILITY. The data series used to compute **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index™ (LEI)** and **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index™ (CEI)** for Korea reported in this release are those available “as of” 10 A.M. (ET) on June 12, 2009.

* The series in the coincident economic index based on The Conference Board’s estimates is monthly cash earnings. There is no forecasted series in the leading economic index.

About The Conference Board

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Summary Table of Composite Economic Indexes

	<u>Feb</u>	<u>2009</u> <u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>6-month</u> <u>Oct to Apr</u>
Leading Economic index (LEI)	101.0 r	101.3	103.4	
Percent Change	0.9 r	0.3 r	2.1	-3.6
Diffusion	42.9 r	57.1 r	85.7	50.0
Coincident Economic Index (CEI)	105.1 r	106.0 p	106.6 p	
Percent Change	0.5 r	0.9 p	0.6 p	-1.0 p
Diffusion	25.0	75.0	62.5	25.0

n.a. Not available p Preliminary r Revised

Indexes equal 100 in 2004

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The next release is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2009 at 10:00 A.M. (KST)

In the U.S – Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at 9:00 P.M (ET)