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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 OCTOBER 2015

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index[®] (LEI) for the U.S. increased 0.6 percent, The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index[®] (CEI) increased 0.2 percent and The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index[®] (LAG) increased 0.2 percent in October.

- The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. rebounded sharply after declining slightly over the past two months. October's gain was fueled by the financial components and building permits. In the six-month period ending October 2015, the leading economic index increased 1.6 percent (about a 3.1 percent annual rate), slightly slower than its growth of 1.9 percent (about a 3.9 percent annual rate) during the previous six months. In addition, the strengths among the leading indicators have remained widespread.
- The Conference Board CEI for the U.S., a measure of current economic activity, increased in October. The coincident economic index rose by 0.9 percent (about a 1.8 percent annual rate) between April and October 2015, slower than the growth of 1.3 percent (about a 2.5 percent annual rate) over the previous six months. However, 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 at the same pace as the CEI, and as a result the coincident-to-lagging ratio remained unchanged. Real GDP expanded at a 1.5 percent annual rate in the third quarter of the year, after increasing 3.9 percent (annual rate) in the second quarter.
- The Conference Board LEI for the U.S. increased sharply in October, however its six-month change has moderated in recent months. Meanwhile, The Conference Board CEI for the U.S. has been rising slowly through October, and its six-month growth rate has held steady but is slower compared to six months ago. Taken together, the current behavior of the composite indexes and their components suggest that the expansion in economic activity will continue into the new year.

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

The LEI for the U.S. increased 0.6 percent and now stands at 124.1 (2010=100). Based on revised data, this index decreased 0.1 percent in September and decreased 0.1 percent in August. Over the six-month span through October, the leading economic index increased 1.6 percent, with seven out of ten components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 75 percent).

COINCIDENT INDICATORS. Three of the four indicators that make up The Conference Board CEI for the U.S. increased in October. The positive contributors to the index – beginning with the largest positive contributor – were employees on nonagricultural payrolls, personal income less transfer payments* and manufacturing and trade sales*. The negative contributor was industrial production.

The CEI increased 0.2 percent and now stands at 113.0 (2010=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.1 percent in September and increased 0.2 percent in August. During the six-month period through October, the coincident economic index increased 0.9 percent, with all four components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 100 percent).

LAGGING INDICATORS. The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index for the U.S. increased 0.2 percent and stands at 119.3 (2010=100) in October, with five of its seven components advancing. The positive contributors to the index – beginning with the largest positive contributor – were commercial and industrial loans outstanding*, the ratio of consumer installment credit outstanding to personal income*, the change in CPI for services, the ratio of manufacturing and trade inventories to sales*, and the change in the index of labor cost per unit of output, manufacturing*. The negative contributor was the average duration of unemployment (inverted), while the average prime rate charged by banks held steady in October. Based on revised data, the lagging economic index increased 0.6 percent in September and increased 0.2 percent in August.

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" 8:30 am ET on November 18, 2015. 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.

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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 Economic Index		<u>Factor</u>
1	Average weekly hours, manufacturing	0.2733
2	Average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance	0.0328
3	Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials	0.0836
4	ISM® new orders index	0.1603
5	Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl.	
	aircraft	0.0407
6	Building permits, new private housing units	0.0306
7	Stock prices, 500 common stocks	0.0394
8	Leading Credit Index TM	0.0829
9	Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds	0.1108
10	Avg. consumer expectations for business conditions	0.1456
Coincident Eco		
1	Employees on nonagricultural payrolls	0.5278
2	Personal income less transfer payments	0.2047
3	Industrial production	0.1469
4	Manufacturing and trade sales	0.1206
Lagging Econo	omic Index	
1	Average duration of unemployment	0.0373
2	Inventories to sales ratio, manufacturing and trade	0.1256
3	Labor cost per unit of output, manufacturing	0.0501
4	Average prime rate	0.2960
5	Commercial and industrial loans	0.0967
6	Consumer installment credit outstanding to personal income	
	ratio	0.1890
7	Consumer price index for services	0.2053

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 2015, 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 May 1990-December 2013 as the sample period for measuring volatility. A separate set of factors for the February 1959 - December 1977, January 1978 - December 1983 and January 1984 – April 1990 periods are available upon request. The primary sample period for the coincident and lagging economic indexes was February 1959 – December 2013. 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 -0.0682 (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 0.1514.

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 2015:

Thursday, December 17, 2015

For November 2015 data

All releases are at 10:00 AM ET.

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

Table 1. Gammary Ct 0.0. Gomposite Economic macket											
	2015										
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
Leading index	122.2	122.8	123.5	123.5		123.4	r	123.3		124.1	р
Percent change	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.0		-0.1	r	-0.1	r	0.6	р
Diffusion index	70	70	80	75		55		50		90	•
Coincident index	112.0	112.0	112.2	112.5		112.7	r	112.8		113.0	р
Percent change	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3		0.2	r	0.1	r	0.2	р
Diffusion index	75	50	75	100		100		75		75	
Lagging index	116.6	116.9	117.8	118.2	r	118.4		119.1	r	119.3	р
Percent change	0.1	0.3	8.0	0.3	r	0.2	r	0.6	r	0.2	р
Diffusion index	35.7	64.3	92.9	35.7		64.3		64.3		78.6	
Coincident-lagging ratio	96.1	95.8	95.2	95.2	r	95.2	r	94.7	r	94.7	р
	Oct to	Nov to	Dec to	Jan to		Feb to		Mar to		Apr to	
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct	
Leading index											
Percent change	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.9		2.1		1.5		1.6	
Diffusion index	70	70	70	70		70		70		75	
Coincident index											
Percent change	1.3	0.7	0.6	0.7		0.8		0.9		0.9	
Diffusion index	100	75	75	75		100		100		100	
Lagging index											
Percent change	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.2		2.1		2.2		2.3	
Diffusion index	64.3	78.6	78.6	78.6		78.6		78.6		92.9	

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

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct	_	2015									
Average w orkweek, production workers, fire (Incurs)	Component	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct			
Average weekly initial claims, states unemployment insurance (thousands)* 279.4 275.0 275.0 267.9 275.5 267.4 262.7 Average weekly initial claims, state unemployment insurance (thousands)* 279.4 275.0 275.0 267.9 275.5 267.4 262.7 Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials (mil. 1982 dol.). 36.298 135.632 136.298 137.693		U.S. Leading Economic Index component data									
Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials (mil. 1982 dol)		41.8	41.8	41.8	41.8	41.8	41.7 r	41.8			
Stock prices, 500 common stocks © (index: 1941-43=10)		279.4	275.0	275.0	267.9	275.5	267.4	262.7			
Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft (mil. 1982 dol.) 40410 40053 40652 41371 40796 r 40750 r 41021 r 410		136,298	135,632	136,232 r	137,694	137,817 r	139,505 r	139,595 **			
Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft (mil. 1982 dol.). 40410 40053 40652 41371 40796 r 40750 r 41021 *** Building permits (thous.)	ISM® New Orders Index										
capital goods excl. aircraft (mil. 1982 dol.). 40410 40053 40652 41371 40796 r 40750 r 41021 *** Building permits (thous.). 1,140 1,250 1,337 1,130 1,161 1,105 r 1,150 r Stock prices, 500 common stocks © (index: 1941-43=10). 2,094.86 2,111.94 2,099.28 2,094.14 2,039.87 1,944.40 2,024.81 Leading Credit Index™ (std. dev.')*. -1.01 r -0.32 r -0.48 r -0.18 r -0.31 r -0.47 r -0.89 Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds. 1.82 2.08 2.23 2.19 2.03 2.03 1.95 Avg. Consumer Expectations for Business Conditions (std. dev.')*. 0.45 r 0.10 r 0.50 r 0.18 r 0.29 r 0.06 r 0.06 r LEADING INDEX (2010=100). 122.2 122.8 123.5 123.5 r 123.4 r 123.3 r 124.1 p 124.1 p <td>(percent)</td> <td>53.5</td> <td>55.8</td> <td>56.0</td> <td>56.5</td> <td>51.7</td> <td>50.1</td> <td>52.9</td>	(percent)	53.5	55.8	56.0	56.5	51.7	50.1	52.9			
Building permits (thous.)	Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense										
Stock prices, 500 common stocks © (index: 1941-43=10)	capital goods excl. aircraft (mil. 1982 dol.)	40410	40053	40652	41371	40796 r	40750 r	41021 **			
Condition Con	Building permits (thous.)	1,140	1,250	1,337	1,130	1,161	1,105 r	1,150			
Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds	•	2,094.86	2,111.94	2,099.28	2,094.14	2,039.87	1,944.40	2,024.81			
1.82 2.08 2.23 2.19 2.03 2.03 1.95	Leading Credit Index™ (std. dev.¹)*	-1.01 r	-0.32 r	-0.48 r	-0.18 r	-0.31 r	-0.47 r	-0.89			
Conditions (std. dev. ¹)		1.82	2.08	2.23	2.19	2.03	2.03	1.95			
Description		0.45 r	0.10 r	0.50 r	0.18 r	0.29 r	0.06 r	0.06			
Average w orkw eek, production w orkers, mfg								124.1 p 0.6 p			
w orkers, mfg	A	U.S. Leading Economic Index net contributions									
unemployment insurance .05 .00 .09 09 .10 .06 Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials 04 .04 r .09 r .01 .10 r .01 ** ISM® New Orders Index .01 .01 .01 .02 08 11 05 Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft. 04 .06 .07 06 r .00 r .03 ** Building permits .28 .21 51 .08 15 r .12 Stock prices, 500 common stocks © .03 02 01 10 19 .16			.00	.00	.00	.00	07 r	.07			
goods and materials			.05	.00	.09	09	.10	.06			
Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excl. aircraft			04	.04 r	.09 r	.01	.10 r	.01 **			
capital goods excl. aircraft	ISM® New Orders Index		.01	.01	.02	08	11	05			
Stock prices, 500 common stocks ©			04	.06	.07	06 r	.00 r	.03 **			
Stock prices, 500 common stocks ©	Building permits		.28	.21	51	.08	15 r	.12			
	•										
	• •		.03 r				.04 r				
Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds .23 .25 .24 .22 .22 .22	Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury		.23	.25	.24	.22	.22	.22			
Avg. Consumer Expectations for Business Conditions .01 .07 .03 .04 .01 .01	-		.01	.07	.03	.04	.01	.01			

- p Preliminary. r Revised. c Corrected.
- 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)
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- Michigan Surveys of Consumers.

 CALCULATION NOTE: The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions of the individual components (because of rounding effects and base value differences).

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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

_				2015							
Component	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct				
			U.S. Coincide	nt Economic Ind	dex component	data					
Employees on nonagricultural payrolls (thousands)	141,365	141,625	141,870	142,093	142,246 r	142,383 r	142,654				
Personal income less transfer payments (ann. rate, bil. chn. 2009 dol.)	11,468	11,487	11,512	11,552 r	11,595 r	11,618 r	11,648 **	*			
Industrial production (index: 2007=100)	107.060	106.680 r	106.680 r	107.511 r	107.607 r	107.377 r	107.212				
Manufacturing and trade sales (mil. chn. 2009 dol.)	1,215,824	1,207,800	1,208,159	1,210,976 r	1,213,183 r	1,216,187 **	1,219,083 **	*			
COINCIDENT INDEX (2010=100) Percent change from preceding month	112.0 0.2	112.0 0.0	112.2 0.2	112.5 0.3	112.7 r 0.2 r	112.8 0.1 r	113.0 0.2	p p			
-	U.S. Coincident Economic Index net contributions										
Employees on nonagricultural payrolls		.10	.09	.08	.06 r	.05	.10	**			
Personal income less transfer payments		.03	.04	.07 r	.08 r	.04 r	.05				
Industrial production		05	.00	.11	.01 r	03	02				
Manufacturing and trade sales		08	.00	.03	.02 r	.03 **	.03				
Average duration of unemployment			U.S. Lagging	Economic Inde	x component d	lata					
(w eeks)*	30.8	30.7	28.1	28.3	28.4	26.3	28.0				
Ratio, manufacturing and trade inventories to sales (chain 2009 dol.)	1.405	1.419	1.427	1.426 r	1.428	1.428 **	1.429 **	*			
Change in index of labor cost per unit of output, mfg. (6-month percent, ann. rate)	-1.6	-1.2	-0.8	-1.9 r	-0.8 r	-0.8 r	-0.7 **	*			
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.)	1,130,659	1,129,245	1,137,933	1,166,578 r	1,159,662 r	1,156,666 r	1,180,186 **	*			
Ratio, consumer installment credit out- standing to personal income (percent)	22.35	22.39	22.48	22.51 r	22.53	22.69 r	22.72 **	*			
Change in CPI for services (6-month percent, ann. rate)	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6				
LA GGING INDEX (2010=100) Percent change from preceding month	116.6 0.1	116.9 0.3	117.8 0.8	118.2 r 0.3 r	118.4 0.2 r	119.1 r 0.6 r	119.3 0.2	p p			
-			U.S. Lagging	1 Economic Inde	x net contributi	ions					
Average duration of unemployment		.01	.33	03	01	.29	23				
Ratio, manufacturing and trade inventories to sales		.12	.07	01 r	.02 r	.00 r	.01 **	*			
Change in index of labor cost per unit of output, mfg		.02	.02	06 r	.06 r	.00 r	.01 **	*			
Average prime rate charged by banks		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00				
Commercial and industrial loans outstanding		01	.07	.24	06	03 r	.19 **	*			
Ratio, consumer installment credit outstanding to personal income		.03	.08	.03 r	.02 r	.13 r	.02 **	*			
Change in CPI for services		02	.04	04	.02	.04	.02				
Change at Or troi sorvices		02	.04	04	.02	.04	.02				

CPI Consumer Price Index. For additional notes see table 2.

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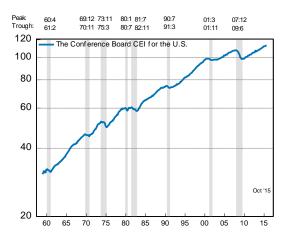
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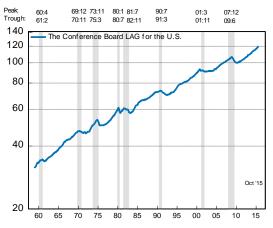
^{*} Inverted series; a negative change in this component makes a positive contribution to the index.

^{**} Statistical Imputation (See page 3 for more details)

U.S. Composite Economic Indexes (2010=100)







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

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