CONSUMER CONFIDENCE RATINGS

Judging from the ratings of the last few months, consumer confidence may have bottomed out, albeit at a very low level.

Note: Shaded areas indicate recessions. Quarterly data shown for University of Michigan index. Conference Board data are annual averages for 1959-77 and quarterly data from 1978 to present.

MICHIGAN INDEX OF CONSUMER SENTIMENT

The Index of Consumer Sentiment is a composite number that takes into account the answers to this series of questions:
1. Would you say that you and your family are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?
2. Now, looking ahead—do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same?
3. Now, turning to business conditions in the country as a whole—do you think that during the next twelve months, we'll have good times financially, or bad times, or what?
4. Looking ahead, which would you say is more likely—that in the country as a whole, we'll have continuous good times during the next five years or so, or that we will have periods of widespread unemployment, or depression, or what?
5. About the big things people buy for their homes—I mean furniture, home furnishings, refrigerator, stove, television, and things like that. In general, do you think now is a good time or a bad time to buy such household items?

Note: For data prior to 1962 the base is Fall 1956 = 100. In 1962 and later years, the base is February 1966 = 100, a date selected because the index value on the old base happened to be 100 in February 1966, thus linking the two sets of data.

CONFERENCE BOARD CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX

The Consumer Confidence index is a composite number that takes into account the answers to this series of questions:
1. How would you rate the present general business conditions in your area? Good, normal, or bad?
2. Six months from now, do you think they will be better, same, or worse?
3. What would you say about available jobs in your area right now? Plenty, not so many, or hard to get?
4. Six months from now, will there be more, same or fewer?
5. How would you guess your total family income to be six months from now? Higher, the same, lower?

Note: Survey is a mail survey. 1985 = 100.
Confidence ratings may have headed south, but that region is faring better than other regions (particularly the Northeast) in terms of consumer confidence.