

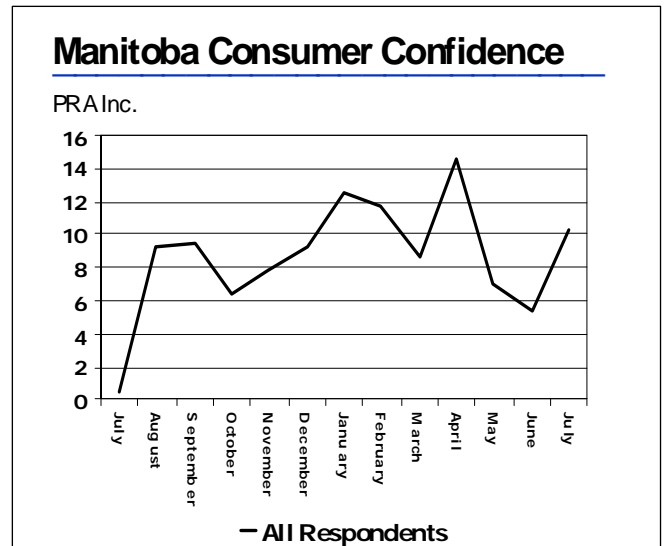
Manitoba Consumer Outlook

For Release: August 23, 2010

Upswing in July consumer confidence

Although Manitobans' consumer confidence fell over the past two months, in July, confidence went up 4.8 points, raising the overall Manitoba index level to 10.2—one of the highest levels of the year.

Still, the predominantly confident outlook comes amidst news of little employment change in the Canadian economy—the national unemployment rate for July increased by 0.1% over the previous month to sit at 8.0%. Yet Manitobans remain far more confident than they did one year ago with their index rating of 10.2, more than 9.5 points higher than in July 2009.



Interpreting the index

The PRA consumer confidence index captures the mood of the general population regarding their finances. The index represents the difference between the percentage of Manitobans expecting to have a better financial situation in the coming year (optimists) and the percentage expecting to have a worse financial situation (pessimists). A positive index means more respondents are optimistic than are pessimistic about their upcoming financial situations.

A series of follow-up questions provide insight into the PRA consumer confidence index. These questions allow respondents to elaborate on why they feel their financial situations will be better or worse in the next year.

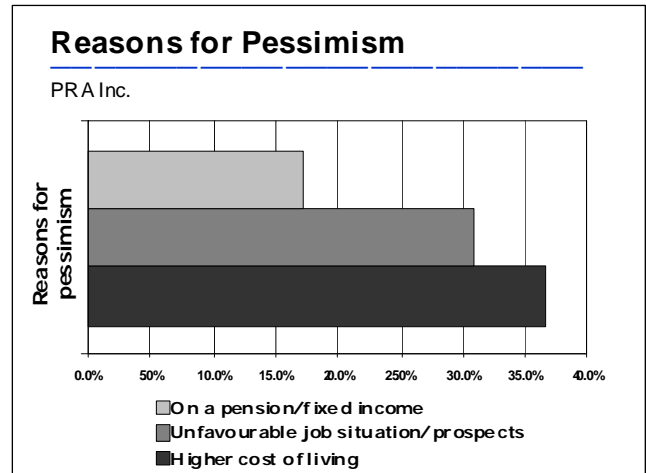
Winnipeg residents boost confidence in Manitoba

Although both Winnipeg and the rest of Manitoba registered an increase in confidence in July, Winnipeggers were the most optimistic with their financial forecasts. The confidence index in Winnipeg exceeded that of the rest of the province by 19.6 points. Although it is not unusual for urban Manitobans to be more confident than their rural counterparts, a difference of nearly 20 points is very unusual. A larger spread was seen two years ago, in July 2008. At that time, like now, those living in rural Manitoba clearly had a different take on the future, with a confidence level 21.8 points below that of Winnipeg.

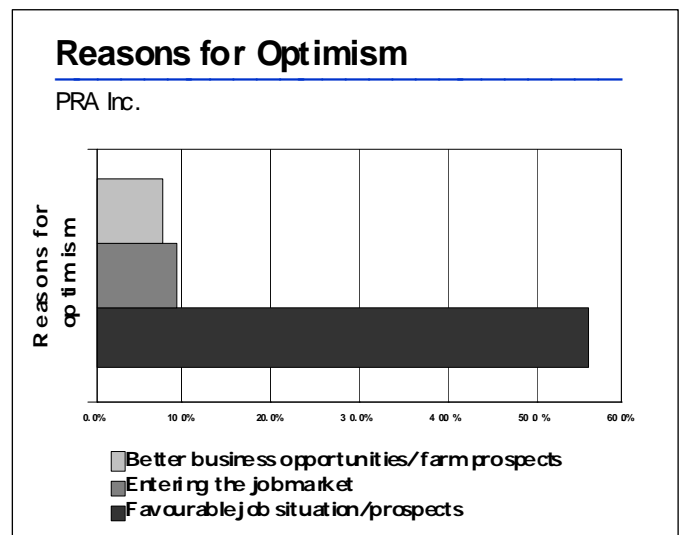
Also, July marks the second straight month where rural confidence was below zero—a situation seen one year ago.

Pessimists concerned with living costs while optimists are keen on their job opportunities

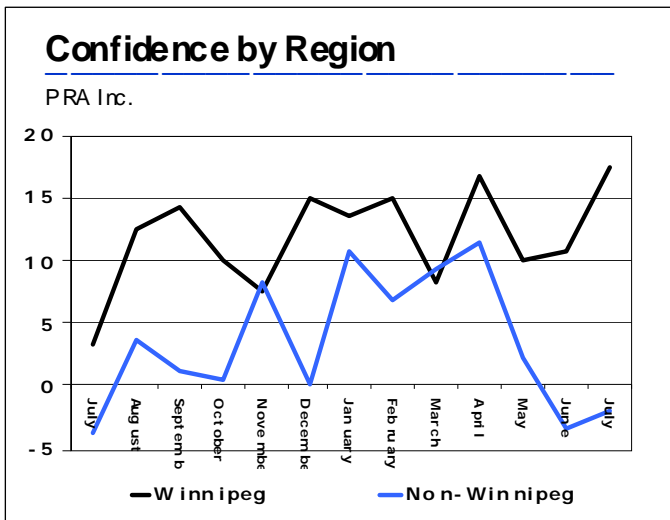
A higher cost of living was on the minds of pessimists this time around, gathering the most mentions from respondents.



Meanwhile, for those looking forward to their financial futures, a positive job situation was the most commonly cited reason for an optimistic outlook. This general sentiment was driven, in part, by recent raises or wage increases, promotions or new jobs, as well as increases in the number of hours worked among respondents.



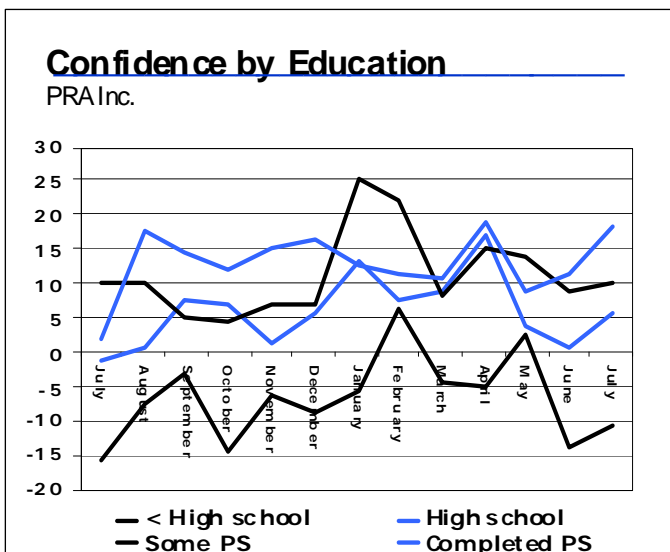
PRA will continue to track these and other developments over the coming months.



Post-secondary graduates sense a positive financial future

In May, confidence for post-secondary graduates may have dwindled slightly but has since grown steadily, with consecutive increases of over 30% for the past three months.

Although each education category increased their level of confidence over the previous month, those individuals who did not have their high school diploma still more often felt pessimistic toward their financial futures with confidence sitting below zero for a second straight month. Except for two months – February and May – this group has continually been predominantly pessimistic over the past twelve months.



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METHODOLOGY

PRA interviews respondents by telephone and selects individuals using random digit dialling. This allows the inclusion of individuals with unlisted or new telephone numbers, ensuring a random sample with the best possible representation of eligible respondents.

Survey dates	July 2009 to July 2010
Interviewing method	Telephone
Sample selection	Random digit dialling
Monthly sample size	Ranges from 800 to 920
Approximate maximum error	±3.5%, 19 times out of 20

As any random sample may not perfectly represent the population, PRA statistically corrects for discrepancies in gender, age, and income to ensure the *Manitoba Consumer Outlook* sample corresponds as closely as possible to Statistics Canada and Revenue Canada population information.

PRA is an independent research and consulting company based in Winnipeg with offices in Ottawa, Edmonton, and Regina. Its main office in Winnipeg houses a research call centre and focus group facilities where clients can observe ongoing research work.

Founded in 1988, the company conducts large- and small-scale quantitative and qualitative research in both official languages. It provides program evaluation, market research, and economic analysis services to government, private business, and non-profit organizations across Canada.

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