



TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2012

News of Gas Prices Not So Good

---

## Public Continues to Hear Mixed Economic News

---

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Andrew Kohut**

President, Pew Research Center

**Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock**

Associate Directors

**Scott Keeter**

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel (202) 419-4350

Fax (202) 419-4399

[www.peoplepress.org](http://www.peoplepress.org)

---

## News of Gas Prices Not So Good Public Continues to Hear Mixed Economic News

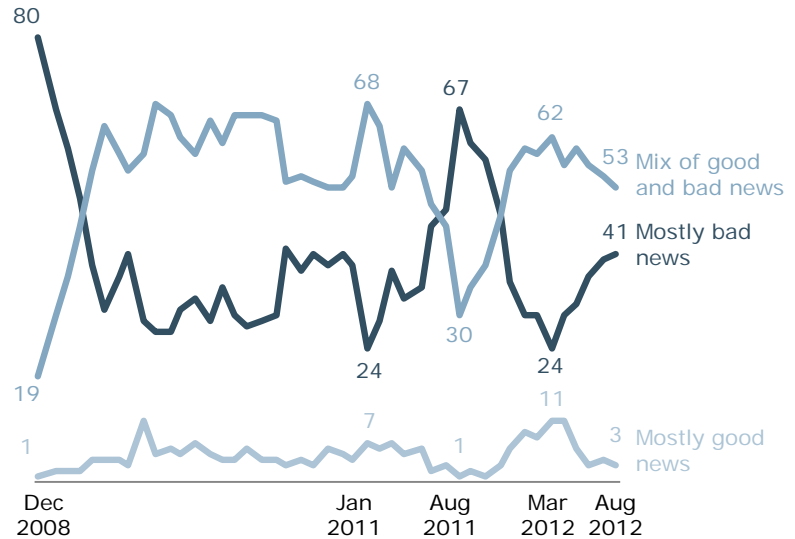
Public views of economic news—both overall and across most sectors—are little changed in recent months. Today, about half of Americans (53%) say they are hearing a mix of good and bad news about the economy, while 41% say they are hearing mostly bad news and just 3% say they are hearing mostly good news.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted August 2-5, 2012 among 1,005 adults, finds

that perceptions of economic news are relatively unchanged from July. However, this represents a rise in the proportion hearing mostly bad news about the economy from earlier in the year, when the unemployment rate dipped.

### Perceptions of Economic News Still Mixed

*What are you hearing about the economy these days?*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 2-5, 2012.

### More Americans Hearing Bad News about Prices, Financial Markets

Currently, 55% report hearing mostly negative news about the job situation. As with economic news overall, public perceptions of news about the job situation are more negative than they were in March of this year but more positive than they were last August.

Public perceptions of news about prices for food and consumer goods has turned more negative over the last few months. Today, a 54% majority reports hearing mostly bad news about consumer prices, up from 45% in July.

Assessments of news about gas prices have worsened since June, mirroring rising costs the pump. About six-in-ten (58%) now say they are hearing mostly bad news about the price of gas; in July—following a drop in gas prices—just 31% said this. But the percentage hearing mostly bad news about gas prices remains lower than the 85% who said this in March, as gas prices were climbing.

In recent months a growing number of Americans say that they have been hearing bad news about financial markets—currently 41% say this, up from 29% in March. But this is much lower than last August—following the debt ceiling standoff—when 69% said they had been hearing mostly bad news about the financial markets.

And public perceptions about news of the housing market have been steady over the course of 2012. Currently, 41% say news about real estate values is mostly bad, nearly identical to the percentage saying this in both March and July (39%).

## More Hearing Bad News About Gas and Consumer Prices

<i>News about...</i>	<b>Aug 2011</b>	<b>Mar 2012</b>	<b>July 2012</b>	<b>Aug 2012</b>
<b>The job situation</b>	%	%	%	%
Mostly bad	74	38	51	55
Mix of good and bad	21	42	38	35
Mostly good	4	17	9	6
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>Gas prices</b>				
Mostly bad	66	85	31	58
Mix of good and bad	26	12	35	28
Mostly good	4	2	31	10
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>Consumer prices</b>				
Mostly bad	62	50	45	54
Mix of good and bad	28	38	40	33
Mostly good	4	7	9	7
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>Financial markets</b>				
Mostly bad	69	29	35	41
Mix of good and bad	25	48	50	44
Mostly good	2	15	6	6
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>Real estate values</b>				
Mostly bad	63	39	39	41
Mix of good and bad	27	42	41	36
Mostly good	4	9	14	11
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 2-5, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## Economic News Appears Mixed to Democrats, Bad to Republicans

Perceptions of economic news continue to differ across party lines, and these partisan divides have grown larger in recent months. Today, six-in-ten Republicans (60%) report that they are hearing mostly bad news about the economy, while 38% say the news is mixed and just 1% say it is mostly good. By contrast, just 31% of Democrats say the economic news they are hearing is mostly negative, while 60% say it is mixed and 6% say it is mostly good.

A majority of independents (54%) also say they are hearing a mix of good and bad economic news; 40% say they are hearing mostly bad news and 2% say they are hearing mostly good news.

In March, majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and independents reported hearing a mix of good and bad economic news. Over the last five months, the percentage of Republicans who report that economic news is current mostly negative has grown 27-points (from 33% to 60%); by comparison, the increase in those who say the news is mostly negative among Democrats (13-points) and independents (17-points) is less pronounced.

### Majority of Republicans Hearing Mostly Bad Economic News

<i>News about the economy...</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>
<b>August 2012</b>	%	%	%	%
Mostly bad	41	60	31	40
Mix of good and bad	53	38	60	54
Mostly good	3	1	6	2
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>March 2012</b>				
Mostly bad	24	33	18	23
Mix of good and bad	62	61	59	66
Mostly good	11	6	22	8
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Aug. 2-5, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted August 2-5, 2012 among a national sample of 1,005 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (600 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 405 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 196 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,005	3.6 percentage points
Republicans	248	7.2 percentage points
Democrats	329	6.3 percentage points
Independents	357	6.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**August 2-5, 2012 OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,005**

**PEW.1 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**  
**NO QUESTION PEW.2**  
**PEW.3-PEW.5 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about recent economic news...

PEW.6 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

	Hearing mostly <u>good news</u>	Hearing mostly <u>bad news</u>	A mix of good and <u>bad news</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
August 2-5, 2012	3	41	53	3
July 5-8, 2012	4	40	55	2
May 31-June 3, 2012	3	37	57	3
May 3-6, 2012	6	32	60	2
April 5-8, 2012	11	30	57	2
March 8-11, 2012	11	24	62	2
February 2-5, 2012	8	30	59	3
January 5-8, 2012	9	30	60	1
December 1-4, 2011	6	36	56	1
November 10-13, 2011	3	48	48	1
October 6-9, 2011	1	58	39	2
September 1-4, 2011	2	61	35	1
August 4-7, 2011	1	67	30	2
July 7-10, 2011	3	49	46	2
June 2-5, 2011	2	46	50	1
May 12-15, 2011	6	35	56	2
March 31-April 3, 2011	5	33	60	2
March 3-6, 2011	7	38	53	2
February 3-6, 2011	6	29	64	1
January 6-9, 2011	7	24	68	1
December 2-5, 2010	4	39	55	1
November 11-14, 2010	5	41	53	2
October 7-10, 2010	6	39	53	2
September 2-6, 2010	3	41	54	2
August 5-8, 2010	4	38	55	3
July 1-5, 2010	3	42	54	1
June 10-13, 2010	4	30	65	1
May 7-10, 2010	4	29	66	1
April 1-5, 2010	6	28	66	*
March 5-8, 2010	4	30	66	1
February 5-8, 2010	4	35	61	*
January 8-11, 2010	5	29	65	1
December 4-7, 2009	7	33	59	1
October 30-November 2, 2009	5	31	62	2
October 9-12, 2009	6	27	66	1
September 3-6, 2009	5	27	68	1
August 7-10, 2009	11	29	59	1
July 2-5, 2009	3	41	56	*
June 12-15, 2009	4	37	59	*
May 8-11, 2009	4	31	64	1
April 9-13, 2009	4	39	56	1
March 13-16, 2009	2	51	46	1
February 13-16, 2009	2	60	37	1
January 16-19, 2009	2	67	30	1
December 5-8, 2008	1	80	19	*

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.7 Thinking about some specific aspects of the nation's economy... Please tell me if you are hearing mostly good news, mostly bad news or a mix of both good and bad news about each of the following. **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

	Hearing mostly <u>good news</u>	Hearing mostly <u>bad news</u>	A mix of good and <u>bad news</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The financial markets				
August 2-5, 2012	6	41	44	9
July 5-8, 2012	6	35	50	8
May 31-June 3, 2012	5	47	42	6
March 8-11, 2012	15	29	48	8
November 10-13, 2011	4	50	41	5
August 4-7, 2011	2	69	25	4
June 2-5, 2011	5	40	45	9
May 12-15, 2011	11	33	45	11
March 31-April 3, 2011	13	30	51	6
March 3-6, 2011	12	33	47	8
February 3-6, 2011	17	31	46	6
December 2-5, 2010	13	38	44	4
September 2-6, 2010	9	43	40	8
July 1-5, 2010	4	46	44	6
May 7-10, 2010	6	41	49	3
April 1-5, 2010	15	30	50	6
March 5-8, 2010	11	26	59	4
January 8-11, 2010	16	32	47	6
October 30-November 2, 2009	12	33	48	7
August 7-10, 2009	20	31	43	6
June 12-15, 2009	9	43	45	3
b. Real estate values				
August 2-5, 2012	11	41	36	11
July 5-8, 2012	14	39	41	7
May 31-June 3, 2012	14	43	36	6
March 8-11, 2012	9	39	42	10
November 10-13, 2011	6	55	32	7
August 4-7, 2011	4	63	27	6
June 2-5, 2011	7	56	28	9
May 12-15, 2011	9	45	35	11
March 31-April 3, 2011	6	48	38	8
March 3-6, 2011	8	46	36	10
February 3-6, 2011	8	51	34	7
December 2-5, 2010	6	62	28	4
September 2-6, 2010	6	57	32	5
July 1-5, 2010	9	49	35	7
May 7-10, 2010	12	41	42	5
April 1-5, 2010	12	44	38	6
March 5-8, 2010	8	45	42	5
January 8-11, 2010	11	43	40	5
October 30-November 2, 2009	13	43	37	6
August 7-10, 2009	11	40	41	7
June 12-15, 2009	11	45	40	3
c. Prices for food and consumer goods				
August 2-5, 2012	7	54	33	5
July 5-8, 2012	9	45	40	6
May 31-June 3, 2012	7	46	40	7
March 8-11, 2012	7	50	38	6
November 10-13, 2011	5	52	36	7
August 4-7, 2011	4	62	28	5
June 2-5, 2011	5	58	30	6

## PEW.7 CONTINUED...

	Hearing mostly <u>good news</u>	Hearing mostly <u>bad news</u>	A mix of good and <u>bad news</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
May 12-15, 2011	3	58	32	6
March 31-April 3, 2011	3	59	34	4
March 3-6, 2011	7	62	26	5
February 3-6, 2011	7	49	39	5
December 2-5, 2010	16	41	39	5
September 2-6, 2010	12	35	42	10
July 1-5, 2010	9	32	48	10
May 7-10, 2010	8	37	46	9
April 1-5, 2010	10	35	46	9
March 5-8, 2010	9	34	50	7
January 8-11, 2010	12	37	45	6
October 30-November 2, 2009	12	39	42	7
August 7-10, 2009	10	36	46	9
June 12-15, 2009	9	39	46	6
d. The job situation				
August 2-5, 2012	6	55	35	4
July 5-8, 2012	9	51	38	3
May 31-June 3, 2012	8	55	35	2
March 8-11, 2012	17	38	42	3
December 1-4, 2011	10	51	37	2
November 10-13, 2011	5	64	28	2
August 4-7, 2011	4	74	21	2
June 2-5, 2011	5	58	34	3
May 12-15, 2011	9	51	37	3
March 31-April 3, 2011	12	43	42	2
March 3-6, 2011	10	50	37	3
February 3-6, 2011	9	52	37	2
December 2-5, 2010	6	66	27	1
September 2-6, 2010	5	65	28	2
July 1-5, 2010	5	64	30	1
May 7-10, 2010	9	52	38	2
April 1-5, 2010	9	56	33	2
March 5-8, 2010	5	59	35	1
January 8-11, 2010	6	61	31	2
October 30-November 2, 2009	3	68	27	2
August 7-10, 2009	6	61	32	1
June 12-15, 2009	1	71	27	1
e. Gas prices				
August 2-5, 2012	10	58	28	5
July 5-8, 2012	31	31	35	2
May 31-June 3, 2012	19	48	31	2
March 8-11, 2012	2	85	12	2
November 10-13, 2011	9	47	36	8
August 4-7, 2011	4	66	26	4
June 2-5, 2011	8	68	23	2
May 12-15, 2011	1	84	14	1
March 31-April 3, 2011	1	88	10	1
March 3-6, 2011	1	90	7	2
February 3-6, 2011	2	77	18	3