



*behavior research center's*

# *Rocky Mountain Poll*

NEWS RELEASE  
RMP 2001-III-16

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CONFIDENCE IN VALLEY ECONOMY  
POSTS FIRST GAIN IN THREE QUARTERS:  
TAX REBATE IN HANDS OF MANY --  
SAVING AND PAYING OLD BILLS TAKE TOP PRIORITY

Phoenix, Arizona, August 22, 2001.

**VIEWS ON THE ECONOMY:** For the first time since the start of the year, more Valley consumers believe the local economy will “get better” than believe it will “get worse” in the coming six months. Perhaps more significant is the finding that the proportion forecasting gloom has shrunk from its all time high of 28 percent in May to only 18 percent today. As of the time of this survey, 22 percent expect the local economy to improve, 18 percent think it will worsen and 57 percent forecast a stable or unchanging situation.

Importantly, the study reveals that it is among working age people where use of their greater disposable income in consumer spending could be most significant in helping to revive the sluggish economy, that attitudes are most favorable. In comparison, 24 percent of retirees expect the economy to worsen and only 23 percent forecast improvement, while among working age adults, 22 percent forecast improvement while only 15 percent see things worsening.

The overall shift toward the positive, however, is the most important aspect of the current mood and may indicate a bottoming out of recent declines in consumer confidence.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 593 adults in Maricopa county conducted between August 8th and 14th, 2001 by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit [www.brcpolls.com](http://www.brcpolls.com) to read this and other recent poll results.

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TAX REBATES: As of the time of this survey, a third of Valley taxpayer households have received their federal rebate checks, but it appears unlikely that many will be running out to make new purchases they might not otherwise make. Three-quarters say they will either put their rebate into a savings account (36%), pay old bills (34%) or use it to purchase basic necessities such as food (5%). Only one in eight indicate they will use the money for a purchase of new consumer goods, travel or luxury items. Just over ten percent say they are unsure what they will do with the rebate, or even if they will be getting one.

Further, of those who have already received their check, the proportion who spent it on paying old bills rose to 47 percent while those putting it into savings shrank to 27 percent, a reflection perhaps that the rebate was too small to warrant using it for a new purchase or even to put away for a rainy day.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2001-III-16), is based on 593 interviews with adults throughout Maricopa county between August 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of +/-4.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results).

**BELOW: Statistical tables.**

STATISTICAL DATA

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*"During the coming six months, do you think the economy here in the Valley will get better, get worse or remain about the same?"*

		GET BETTER	REMAIN SAME	WORSEN	NOT SURE	(NET TO "GET BETTER")
Aug.	2001	22%	57%	18%	3%	(+ 4)
May	2001	19	50	28	3	(- 9)
Feb.	2001	22	52	22	4	( 0)
Nov.	2000	20	61	13	6	(+ 7)
Aug.	2000	20	64	11	15	(+ 9)
May	2000	21	59	14	6	(+ 7)
Feb.	2000	23	63	9	5	(+14)
Nov.	1999	26	57	13	4	(+13)
Aug.	1999	22	59	15	4	(+ 7)
May	1999	21	63	10	6	(+11)
Feb.	1999	26	62	7	5	(+19)
Nov.	1998	24	59	14	3	(+10)
Aug.	1998	21	62	14	3	(+ 7)
May	1998	32	57	9	2	(+23)
Feb.	1998	26	62	7	5	(+19)
Nov.	1997	30	57	9	4	(+21)
Aug.	1997	30	61	6	3	(+24)
May	1997	27	60	10	3	(+17)
Feb.	1997	29	59	9	3	(+20)
Nov.	1996	27	56	12	5	(+15)
Aug.	1996	23	59	14	4	(+ 9)
May	1996	30	52	14	4	(+16)
Feb.	1996	33	51	11	5	(+22)
Nov.	1995	32	50	13	5	(+19)
Aug.	1995	34	54	8	4	(+26)
May	1995	26	55	13	6	(+13)
Feb.	1995	31	53	11	5	(+20)
Nov.	1994	37	48	11	4	(+26)
Aug.	1994	38	53	7	2	(+31)
May	1994	38	48	11	3	(+27)
Feb.	1994	44	43	10	3	(+34)
Nov.	1993	37	48	12	4	(+25)
Aug.	1993	29	46	18	6	(+11)

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*"Have you or anyone in your household received their federal tax rebate check yet?"*

% Yes = 32%

*"If and when you do receive your tax rebate check, which of the following will you most likely do with it? (ORDER RANDOMIZED)"*

|                            | ALL<br>TAXPAYERS | HAVE<br>ALREADY<br>RECEIVED | HAVE NOT<br>YET<br>RECEIVED |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Put in savings             | 36%              | 27%                         | 40%                         |
| Pay bills                  | 34               | 47                          | 29                          |
| Buy something new/Travel   | 12               | 10                          | 12                          |
| Buy basic food/Necessities | 5                | 5                           | 6                           |
| Not sure                   | 13               | 11                          | 13                          |

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