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The Butler Center for Business and Economic Research is pleased to announce the results of the Fall 2014 Community Attitude Survey. The results of the survey are used to calculate consumer sentiment which measures the relative amounts of positive to negative attitudes by consumers in our local area with regard to current economic conditions and future expectations. Specifically, we ask five questions similar to those used by national surveys of consumer attitudes such as the University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment and the Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index. Below we present the results from this year's survey and compare them to those from last year.

We measure consumer sentiment for each question on a scale from 0 to 200. A value equal to 100 indicates an equal amount of positive and negative attitudes, a value below 100 indicates relatively more pessimism, and a value above 100 indicates relative optimism. Overall consumer sentiment is then calculated as the average of all five questions. Each of the questions and the corresponding measure of consumer sentiment is presented below.

Survey Question	2013 Consumer Sentiment	2014 Consumer Sentiment
Would you say that you and your household are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?	89.0	102.1
Do you think that a year from now you and your household will be better off financially, worse off, or just about the same?	106.3	132.1
In the country as a whole, do you think that during the next <i>12 months</i> we'll have good times financially or bad times?	78.3	91.1
In the country as a whole, do you think that during the next <i>five years</i> we'll have good times financially or bad times?	86.7	83.0
Do you think now is a good or a bad time for people to buy major household items?	105.2	166.0
Overall	93.1	114.9

The overall measure of consumer sentiment has increased from being pessimistic in 2013 to being optimistic at the end of 2014. Local consumers perceive themselves as better off than a year ago and expect to be better off by the end of 2015. This increase in optimism is reflected by the 58% increase in the view that now is a good time to purchase major household items. Pessimism still persists regarding the national economy with increasing pessimism for the long run health of the US economy.

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