



## **ATTN News Directors/Assignment Editors:**

**The Christmas SPIRIT Index shows changes in consumer’s “mood toward Christmas” and how consumers plan to celebrate Christmas. The Christmas Spirit Foundation has tracked consumer moods over a four-year period, and now presents the data in comparison to the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA). Since the attitude survey is conducted in November, we have used the DJIA closing price for the Thursday prior to Thanksgiving for each year.**

**The poll includes two components:**

- **Your “overall mood” or Spirit of Christmas this year (on a scale of 0 to 100)**
- **Your plans to do one or more of 15 activities this Christmas**

**The Spirit Index represents nationwide figures.**

**The 2008 nationwide Christmas Spirit or overall mood is 59.5 out of 100. Regionally, it is 60.9 in the Northeast; 58.9 in the Midwest; 61.2 in the South; and 56.3 in the West.**

**What is the Spirit of Christmas in your area?**

**Consider inviting your viewers/listeners/readers to take a short quiz and see how their Christmas Spirit measures up against the national index. You could ask just the mood question or one or more of the 15 activity questions.**

**Contact Rick Dungey to receive the specific questions for this poll.**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** For more information on the poll, or to schedule interviews, please contact Rick Dungey at the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation at 636/449-5060 or [dungey@realchristmastrees.org](mailto:dungey@realchristmastrees.org).



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**Christmas Spirit Drops for 2008**

(Chesterfield, MO) The reeling U.S. economy is taking a toll on Christmas Spirit, according to a new Spirit Index survey Harris Interactive conducted on behalf of the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation.

Dampened spirits won't keep people from celebrating the holidays however, as more than 96% of U.S. households say they will celebrate Christmas. This is up from 94% in 2007. And, 31% say they will travel over the holidays, the same as last year, while 78% plan to exchange gifts, down only 1% from 2007.

The Foundation has been monitoring Christmas activities for four years through a Christmas Spirit Index that measures the overall mood at Christmas and 15 leading indicators related to the Christmas holiday celebration in the U.S.

"Overall, the Christmas Spirit Index dropped 6.6% from last year," said Steve Drake, CEO of the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation. "Interestingly, the poll shows the overall Christmas Spirit is higher among married couples and those families with children in the home. On average, people rated their spirit at 59.5 on a scale of 1-100. Households with children aged 6 to 12 reported their spirit as 67.0 on the scale. The Spirit Index poll also showed families with children at home are more likely to engage in many traditional Christmas activities."

Nearly one in three U.S. households reported they had plans to travel out of town to visit family or friends. This is unchanged from 2007 and has been about the same for all five years of the polling data.

Just how will they celebrate and how is the lower Christmas Spirit impacting celebrations?

Key findings from the survey show:

#### Experiential activities

- Exchanging gifts ... 78%; compared to 79% last year
- Listening to Christmas music ... 71%; up 5% from last year
- Send greetings:
  - Mailing cards ... 57%; down 8% from last year
  - E-mailing greetings ... 37% (new question in the 2008 Spirit Index)
- Decorating your home ... 63%; up slightly (2%) from last year
- Decorating a Christmas tree ... 72%; down 3% from last year
- Attending a holiday party ... 53%; about same as last year
- Traveling out of town to visit family/friends ... 31%; same as last year
- Hosting family/friends at home ... 46% (new in 2008)
- Creating a memory scrapbook ... 5%, down from 9% last year

#### Spiritual activities

- Attending a worship service ... 42%; about the same as 2007
- Reading the Bible ... 27%; down 3% from last year
- Taking time for religious reflection ... 20%; down 2% from 2007

#### Charitable activities

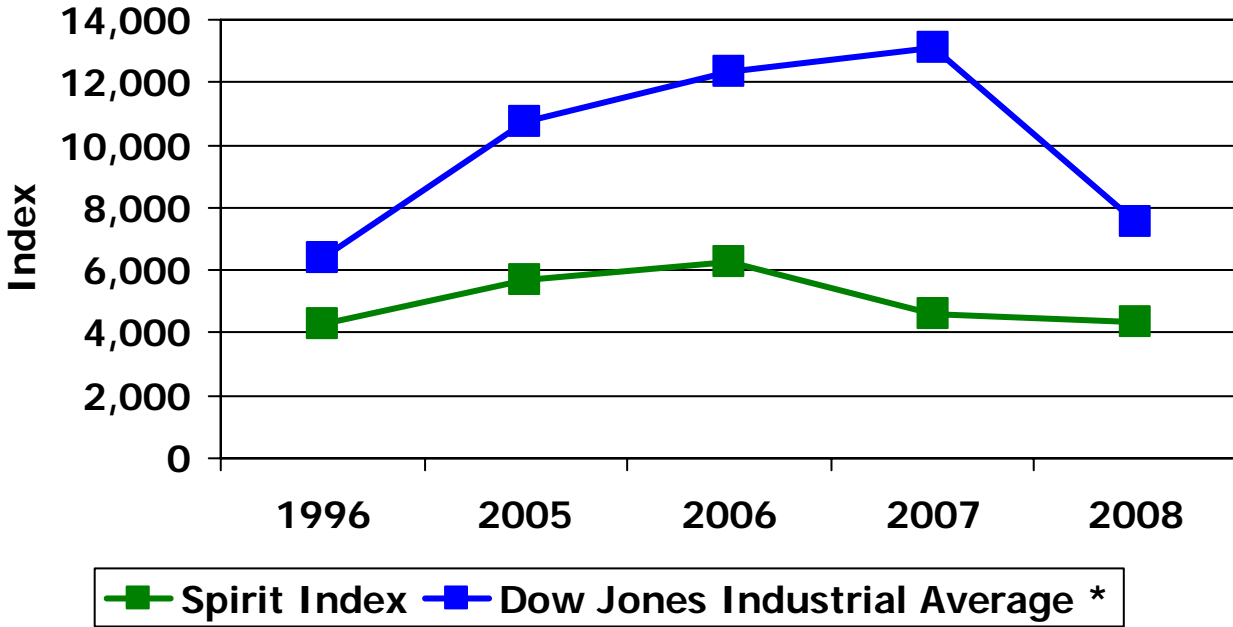
- Giving money to the less fortunate ... 39%; down 2% from 2007
- Volunteering for charity ... 15%; about same as last year
- Purchasing a gift and giving it to some less fortunate ... 36% (new in 2008)

Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between November 12 and 14 among 2,491 adults aged 18 years or older.

#### **About the Christmas Spirit Foundation**

The Christmas SPIRIT Foundation – based in Chesterfield, Mo, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that advances the Christmas spirit for kids, families and the environment. For more details, go to [www.ChristmasSpiritFoundation.org](http://www.ChristmasSpiritFoundation.org).

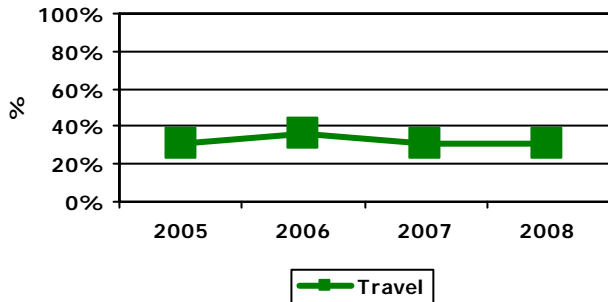
# Christmas SPIRIT Index



Data points on chart

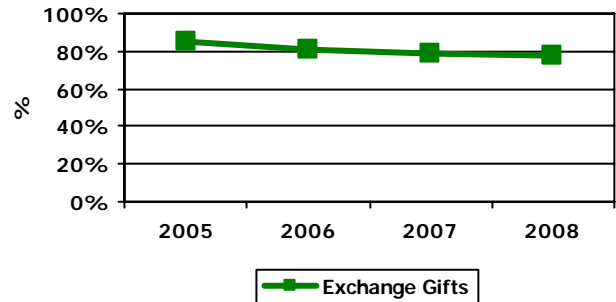
	1996	2005	2006	2007	2008
Christmas Spirit Index	5,724	5,063	6,264	4,623	4,318
DJIA (Dow Jones Industrial Ave)	6,418	10,720	12,306	13,110	7,552

## Travel Out of Town



Are you planning to:	2005	2006	2007	2008
Travel Out of Town	31%	37%	31%	31%

## Exchange gifts



Are you planning to:	2005	2006	2007	2008
Exchange gifts	85.0%	81.0%	79.0%	78%