News Release

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The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. Increased Slightly in February

Improvement in Index Will Not Continue into March

NEW YORK, March 19, 2020...The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. edged up 0.1 percent in February to 112.1 (2016 = 100), following a 0.7 percent increase in January, and a 0.3 percent decline in December.

“The U.S. LEI rose slightly in February, but it doesn’t reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which began to hit the U.S. economy in full by early March. The slight gain in February came only from half of the LEI components. In particular, the recovery in manufacturing, which looked promising until February, will now be short-lived because of the disruption in global supply chains and falling demand,” said Ataman Ozyildirim, Senior Director of Economic Research at The Conference Board. “Declines in stock prices, consumers’ outlook on economic conditions, manufacturing new orders, average workweek in manufacturing, and rising unemployment claims will begin to negatively impact the economy. As a result, the economy may already be entering into a period of contraction.”

The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index® (CEI) for the U.S. increased 0.3 percent in February to 107.6 (2016 = 100), following a 0.1 percent increase in January, and no change in December.

The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index® (LAG) for the U.S. increased 0.4 percent in February to 109.1 (2016 = 100), following no change in January, and a 0.1 percent decline in December.
The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. Increased Slightly in February
### Summary Table of Composite Economic Indexes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
<th></th>
<th>6-month Aug to Feb</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading Index</td>
<td>111.2</td>
<td>112.0</td>
<td>r 112.1</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>r 0.1</td>
<td>p</td>
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<td>Diffusion</td>
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<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coincident Index</td>
<td>107.2</td>
<td>107.3</td>
<td>107.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
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<td>Diffusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lagging Index</td>
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<td>108.7</td>
<td>109.1</td>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
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<td>50.0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>71.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p Preliminary  r Revised
Indexes equal 100 in 2016
Source: The Conference Board

**About The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S.**

The composite economic indexes are the key elements in an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The leading, coincident, and lagging economic indexes are essentially composite averages of several individual leading, coincident, or lagging indicators. They are constructed to summarize and reveal common turning point patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component – primarily because they smooth out some of the volatility of individual components.

The ten components of The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® for the U.S. include:

- Average weekly hours, manufacturing
- Average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance
- Manufacturers’ new orders, consumer goods and materials
- ISM® Index of New Orders
- Manufacturers’ new orders, nondefense capital goods excluding aircraft orders
- Building permits, new private housing units
- Stock prices, 500 common stocks
- Leading Credit Index™
- Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds
- Average consumer expectations for business conditions

For full press release and technical notes:

For more information about The Conference Board global business cycle indicators:

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