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## Atlantans remain relatively upbeat

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by [Beth Schapiro](#)

There is no denying that our nation's economy has hit hard times. Real people are losing real jobs and real homes.

A recent scientific poll by The Schapiro Group Inc., an Atlanta-based strategic consulting firm, shows that 58 percent of metro Atlanta residents rate our nation's current economic condition as "poor."

While metro Atlanta residents are down on the state of the national economy, only 33 percent say that the economy of the greater metro Atlanta area is "poor."

Is metro Atlanta's economy faring that much better than the nation as a whole? Economics experts diverge on whether we will be better or worse off than the rest of the nation, so our best gauge of the local economic condition might come from the collective wisdom of our region's populace.

Locals should know, too. We see the foreclosure signs. We hear from friends, family and colleagues about the impact of the current economy. In fact, 60 percent of metro Atlantans say they personally know someone living in Georgia who recently became unemployed or who expects to be unemployed in the next six months. Clearly, the economic downturn has hit close to home.

And yet, metro Atlantans remain relatively upbeat.

Surely the relentless stream of reporting on the slumping economy has taken some toll on psyches. If so, there is a clear loser: elected officials. A plurality of metro Atlantans, 43 percent, say that "the government" is most responsible for the current state of the economy. This percentage is more than those who blame oil and gas prices, the collapse of the housing market, the war in Iraq and corporate greed combined.

Metro Atlantans generally agree on who is to blame, but are somewhat divided on what happens next. About as many residents say they expect their own household's financial situation to get better by the end of this year as those who expect it to get worse, 23 percent and 19 percent, respectively. The majority, 56 percent, expect their financial situation to "stay about the same."

Until we know more of what the national economic downturn will mean for metro Atlanta's economy, perhaps we would do well to take a collective deep breath.

*Schapiro is president of The Schapiro Group Inc., an Atlanta-based strategic consulting firm.*