



Friday, November 14, 2008

## Poll takes pulse of Atlanta biz leaders

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

President-elect Barack Obama is moving swiftly to organize his administration and address the nation's economic woes. For business decision-makers, those actions cannot come fast enough.

A recent scientific telephone poll by [The Schapiro Group](#), an Atlanta-based strategic consulting firm, shows that 75 percent of metro Atlanta business decision-makers rate our nation's current economic condition as "poor." These business leaders, defined as those who make the final decision for their companies on important business matters, represent 100 of the 786 metro Atlanta respondents to the survey.

Decision-makers are nowhere near as pessimistic about economic conditions in the metro Atlanta area, though. Only 51 percent rate the local economy as "poor."

Economic conditions do not look quite as bad to the general public. Not that they are overly sanguine, but "only" two-thirds of metro Atlantans rate the national economy as "poor." Forty-one percent feel that bleakly about local economic conditions.

Unfortunately, these attitudes represent a loss in confidence since our July 2008 survey, when slightly lower percentages of residents gave a "poor" rating to both national and local economic conditions.

Will the new administration help? Business decision-makers definitely think so. Over half think that Barack Obama as president will both have a positive impact on local economic conditions overall and be positive for their own company's future.

The general public shares that optimism, with 59 percent of residents believing that the new president will have a positive impact on the economy. One way Obama as president could potentially have an immediate impact on the local economy is by giving consumers the confidence they need to start spending again.

In our poll, however, just over half of both residents and decision-makers say that the presidential outcome will not affect their spending plans during the upcoming holiday season. Nineteen percent of all metro Atlantans and 12 percent of decision-makers say they will be more comfortable buying gifts, while one-quarter of local residents and 36 percent of decision-makers indicate they will be less comfortable opening their wallets this holiday season.

The Grinch may have reason to smile now, but that grin may be gone in 2009.

*Schapiro is president of The Schapiro Group Inc.*