

Employee Confidence Index	↑	Macroeconomic Confidence Index	↑	Personal Confidence Index	↑	Job Security	↑	Job Transition	↓
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## Illinois Employment Report: Workers' Confidence Levels on the Mend

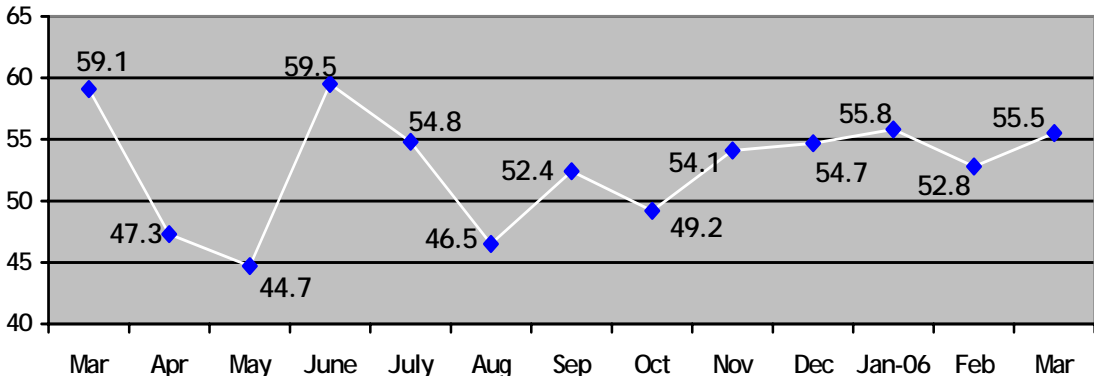
CHICAGO, Ill., April 20, 2006- Overall employee confidence in Illinois rose in March, according to the latest Spherion Employment Report. The Illinois Employee Confidence Index increased to 55.5 in March, rebounding 2.3 points from February. The survey of working adults in Illinois, conducted by Harris Interactive® on behalf of Spherion Corporation (NYSE:SFN), showed that this increase was driven by workers' improved outlook on the economic situation and in their ability to find a new job.

Despite workers' macroeconomic and personal confidence increasing in March, 36 percent of workers reported that they are likely to look for a new job in the next year, decreasing five percentage points from the previous month. *For detailed information on the calculation of the Employee Confidence Index and its subscale measurements, please see the "About the Spherion Employment Report" section below.*

"Workers in Illinois are regaining confidence in the economy and their personal situation after slipping in February. The job market continues to favor the job seeker, as businesses hiring plans increase and candidates receive multiple job offers." said Michael Ruter, managing director of Spherion Professional Services in Chicago. "The Illinois labor market is tightening and the challenge to place skilled workers is heating up. We are continuing to see a demand to fill positions in the technology and finance industries. We are also seeing an increase in requests to fill legal positions."

**Employee Confidence Index:** The overall Illinois Employee Confidence Index was 55.5 in March, up 2.3 points from February. This level is 3.6 points lower than in March 2005. The Index, which measures adult workers' confidence in their personal employment situation and the macroeconomic environment, increased as more workers are confident in their ability to find a new job and fewer workers believe that fewer jobs are available.

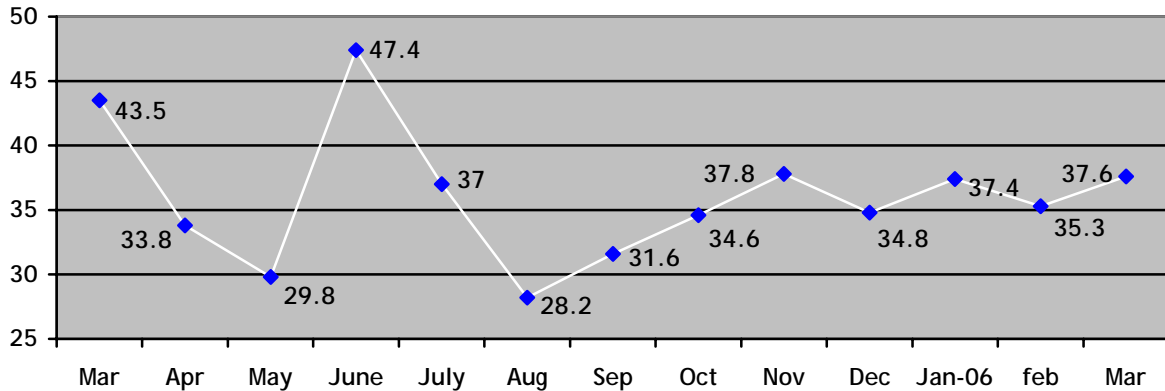
### Employee Confidence Index



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**Macroeconomic Confidence Index:** The Macroeconomic Confidence Index was 37.6 in March, up from 35.3 in the previous month. This increase was due to fewer Illinois workers believing that fewer jobs are available and slightly more workers believing that the economy is strengthening. The Index is 5.1 points lower than in March 2005.

### Macroeconomic Confidence Index



*Note: The data below was used to calculate the Macroeconomic Confidence Index. For the following, respondents were asked to select a point on a scale of 1 to 5 (where a "1" indicates a weak economy or fewer jobs available while a "5" indicates a stronger economy or more jobs available) that best represents their opinions.*

- **Fewer Workers Believe Fewer Jobs Are Available:** 37 percent of adult workers in Illinois believe that fewer jobs are available, down 18 percentage points from February. At the same time, the number of people who are neutral increased by 22 percentage points.

#### Job Availability

<u>March 2006</u>		<u>February 2006</u>	
More Jobs:	15%	More Jobs:	20%
Neutral:	47%	Neutral:	25%
Fewer Jobs:	37%	Fewer Jobs:	55%

- **More Than One-Fifth of Workers Believe the Economy is Strengthening:** 22 percent of adult Illinois workers believe the economy is getting stronger, compared to 21 percent in February.

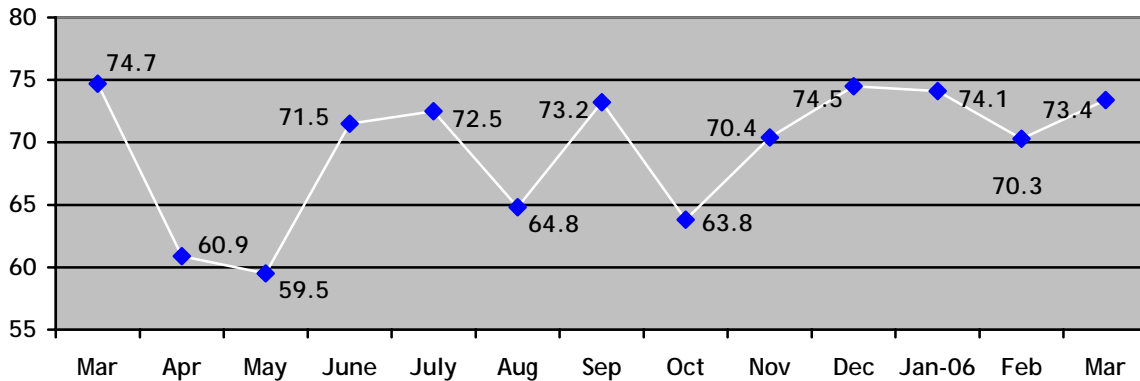
#### Strength of Economy

<u>March 2006</u>		<u>February 2006</u>	
Getting stronger:	22%	Getting stronger:	21%
Staying the same:	28%	Staying the same:	35%
Getting weaker:	50%	Getting weaker:	44%

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**Personal Confidence Index:** The Illinois Personal Confidence Index was 73.4 in March, increasing 3.1 points from February. This rise was a result of more workers reporting confidence in their own ability to find a job. This level is 1.3 points lower than a year ago.

### Personal Confidence Index



*Note: The data below was used to calculate the Personal Confidence Index. For the following, respondents were asked to select a point on a scale of 1 to 5 (where a "1" indicates no confidence in either one's ability to find a job or no confidence in the future or one's employer, while a "5" indicates a lot of confidence in one's ability to find a job or the future of one's employer) that best represents their opinions.*

- **Fewer Illinois Workers Are Confident in the Future of Their Employer:** 64 percent of adult workers in Illinois feel confident in the future of their employer, compared to 67 percent in February.

#### Confidence in Future of Current Employer

<u>March 2006</u>		<u>February 2006</u>	
Confident:	64%	Confident	67%
Neutral:	20%	Neutral	24%
Not Confident	16%	Not Confident:	8%

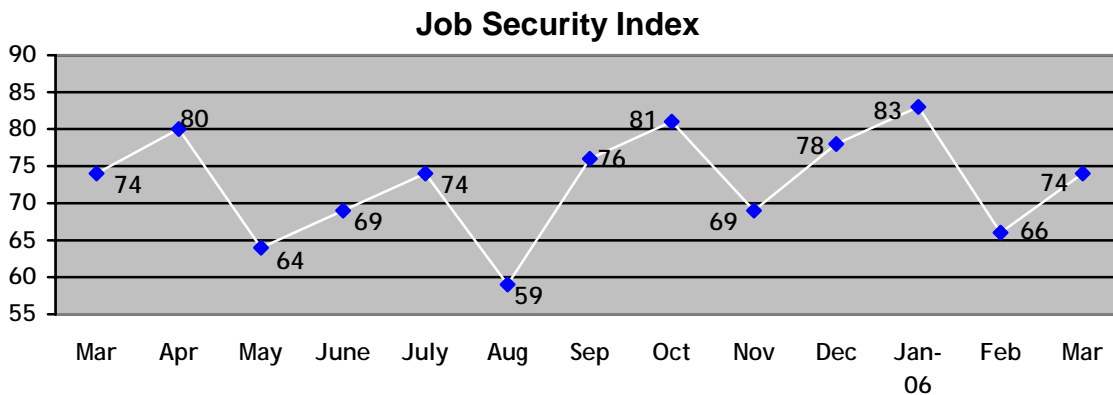
- **More Workers Are Confident in Their Ability to Find New Job:** 55 percent of adult workers in Illinois have confidence in their own ability to find a new job, up 14 percentage points from February.

#### Own Ability to Find New Job

<u>March 2006</u>		<u>February 2006</u>	
Confident:	55%	Confident	41%
Neutral:	36%	Neutral	41%
Not Confident	9%	Not Confident:	19%

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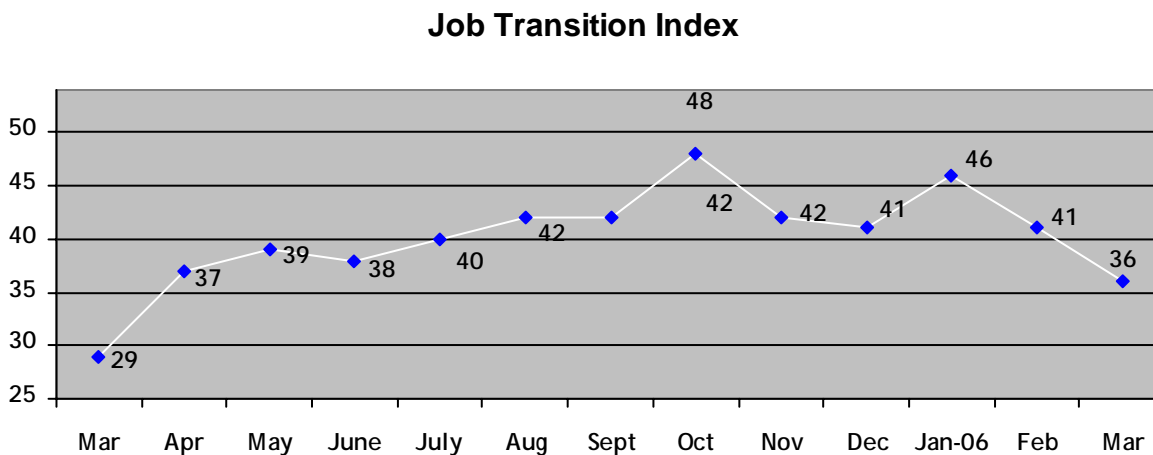
**Job Security Index:** 74 percent of Illinois workers believe it is unlikely that they will lose their job in the next year, increasing eight percentage points from the previous month. This level is the same as a year ago.



*Likelihood of losing job or job elimination in next 12 months*

<u>March 2006</u>		<u>February 2006</u>	
Likely:	10%	Likely:	23%
Neither unlikely nor likely:	16%	Neutral	10%
Unlikely:	74%	Not Confident:	66%

**Job Transition Index:** Decreasing for the second consecutive month, the Job Transition Index fell to 36 percent in March, down five percentage points from the previous month. The Index level is seven percentage points higher than in March 2005.



*Likelihood of looking for new job in the next 12 months*

<u>March 2006</u>		<u>February 2006</u>	
Likely:	36%	Likely:	41%
Neither unlikely nor likely:	10%	Neither unlikely nor likely:	11%
Unlikely:	54%	Unlikely:	48%

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### About the Spherion Employment Report

As part of the Spherion® Emerging Workforce® Series of employment surveys, the monthly Spherion Employment Report provides a snapshot of the latest workforce trends across the country and is issued in conjunction with state and national labor market releases. Three key indices are measured: the Spherion Job Security Index, which captures how likely respondents think it is that they will lose their job or that their job will be eliminated in the next 12 months; the Spherion Job Transition Index, which captures how likely respondents are to look for a new job in the next 12 months and the Employee Confidence Index that measures employees' overall confidence in the economy, their employer and their ability to find other employment. The Employee Confidence Index is calculated from the results of four components that reflect these aspects of employee confidence. For each component item a 'score' is calculated by taking the difference of the percentage of positive responses and the percentage of negative responses. These four scores are then averaged to indicate an overall level of employee confidence and is scaled from 0 (no confidence) to 100 (complete confidence). A reading above 50 indicates a positive confidence level.

### Methodology

The March 2006 Spherion Employment Report is based on data from the Harris Interactive QuickQuery<sup>SM</sup> online omnibus conducted monthly by Harris Interactive® on behalf of Spherion Corporation. A U.S. sample of 2972 employed adults aged 18 years and older, of whom 167 are employed in Illinois (for February n=120), was interviewed in a series of two polls conducted between March 8-10 and March 14-16, 2006. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, income, education and region were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting adjusted for respondents' propensity to be online. In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. population of employed adults had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the Illinois state sample results is plus or minus 9 percentage points of what they would be if the entire Illinois employed adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. This online sample is not a probability sample.

### About Spherion

Spherion Corporation is a leader in the staffing industry in North America, providing value-added staffing, recruiting and workforce solutions. Spherion has helped companies improve their bottom line by efficiently planning, acquiring and optimizing talent since 1946. To learn more, visit [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com).

### About Harris Interactive®

Harris Interactive Inc. ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), based in Rochester, New York, is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest and the fastest-growing market research firm in the world, most widely known for *The Harris Poll*® and for its pioneering leadership in the online market research industry. Long recognized by its clients for delivering insights that enable confident business decisions, the Company blends the science of innovative research with the art of strategic consulting to deliver knowledge that leads to measurable and enduring value.

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EOE M/F/D/V

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