

As Temperatures Drop and Energy Prices Rise, Nearly One Half (45%) of American Homeowners 'Concerned' About Ability to Pay for Heat this Winter

***Two in Three (67%) Say They've Taken Steps
To Make Their Home More Energy Efficient***



Ipsos Public Affairs

Public Release Date: Thursday, November 13, 2008, 6:00 AM EST

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

Ipsos Public Affairs conducts national and international public opinion polling on behalf of The Associated Press, the world's oldest and largest news organization. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. We provide boutique-style customer service and work closely with our clients, while also undertaking global research. To learn more, visit: www.ipsos-na.com/pa/us/

For copies of other news releases, please visit: www.ipsos-na.com/news/.

As Temperatures Drop and Energy Prices Rise, Nearly One Half (45%) of American Homeowners 'Concerned' About Ability to Pay for Heat this Winter

Two in Three (67%) Say They've Taken Steps To Make Their Home More Energy Efficient

New York, NY – As the winter draws near and temperatures drop, a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Plough and Hearth reveals that nearly one half (45%) of American homeowners say they're 'concerned' (16% extremely/29% very) about their ability to pay for heating their home this winter. Only three in ten (28%) are 'not at all concerned', and another 26% are 'not very concerned'.

Furthermore, a similar proportion (47%) says that they are 'likely' (15% extremely/43% very) to cut back in other areas of their spending in order to pay for the rising cost of heating their home. Just 25% are 'not at all likely' to cut back in other areas, while 27% are 'not very likely'.

Among those who will cut back, likely items to be on the chopping block include holiday gifts and spending (76%), car fuel (42%) groceries (36%), entertainment (14%), non-essential items (9%), mortgage payments (7%), eating out (5%), travel (3%) or something else (9%).

Likely at least partially a result of the high energy prices, two in three Americans (67%) say they've already taken steps this year to make their home more energy efficient. Still, one in three (33%) say they have not. Interestingly, those who are concerned about their ability to pay for their heating this bill are no more likely than those who are not concerned to have taken this step, suggesting that concern for the environment is just as likely to cause Americans to become more energy efficient as other causes, such as the effect that going green has on their pocketbooks.

Common tactics to increase efficiency include using energy efficient light bulbs (74%), lowering the temperature at which the furnace comes on (69%), insulating windows and doors (69%), and purchasing products with the energy-star label (66%). One in ten (8%) homeowners have completed all of these tasks.

In a similar vein, eight in ten (79%) now say that they have energy-efficient light bulbs in their home, while only slightly fewer (75%) have energy-efficient appliances. Six in ten (57%) have programmable thermostats. Just 6% say they don't have any of these products in their home. Looking ahead, though, three in ten (28%) intend to install some sort of energy-efficient product in their home at some point this year.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted from September 18 to 29, 2008. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1011 American homeowners were interviewed by telephone via Ipsos' U.S. Telephone Express omnibus. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population adult homeowners in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Concern About Paying the Heating Bill...

While nearly one half (45%), overall, are concerned about their ability to pay for heating their home this winter, some Americans are more concerned than others:

- Homeowners living in the Northeast (58%) are most concerned, followed by those living in the South (44%), the West (43%) and the Midwest (39%).
- Women (52%) homeowners are significantly more likely than men (39%) to be concerned about their ability to pay for the heating bill this winter.
- Middle-aged (50%), 35 to 54, and older Americans (49%), aged 55+, are more likely than younger homeowners (36%), aged 18 to 34, to be concerned about paying for heat this winter.
- Those whose family earns less than \$25,000 a year are most concerned (63%), followed by those whose family earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 (59%) and those whose family earns in excess of \$50,000 a year (29%).

Cutting Back to Pay for Rising Cost of Heat...

Nearly one half (47%) of Americans say that they are likely to cut back on other areas of their spending to pay for the rising price of heating their home:

- Women (55%) are more likely than men (39%) to say they'll cut back on other areas of their spending to pay for the rising costs of heating their homes.
- Those whose family earns less than \$25,000 a year have the highest propensity to say they're likely to do this (63%), followed by those whose family earns between \$25,000 and \$50,000 (60%) or those who earn more than \$50,000 a year (31%).
- Those in the Northeast (59%) are much more likely than Americans in the Midwest (47%), West (44%) or south (43%) to say they'll cut back on spending in other areas.
- Women (42%) are more likely than men (28%) to say they'll cut down on the amount they spend on groceries. Men (19%) are more likely than women (10%) to say they'll cut down on the amount they spend on entertainment and going out.



American Homes Going Green...

Two in three (67%) homeowners say they've already taken steps this year to make their home more energy efficient. Some are more likely than others to have taken these steps, and in many cases the approach is different:

- Younger homeowners (72%) are more likely than middle-aged (69%) or older (59%) homeowners to say they've already done this.
- Those in the Northeast (70%) are slightly more likely than those in the West (68%), South (67%) or Midwest (62%) to indicate that they've taken these steps.
- Among those that have taken steps, women (80%) are more likely than men (68%) to say they're now using energy-efficient light bulbs, and they are also more likely (76%) than men (62%) to say they've turned down the thermostat.
- Among those that have taken steps to increase their home's efficiency, Northeasterners (83%) are most likely to say they're now using energy-efficient bulbs, and they're also the most likely (74%) to say they've adjusted the thermostat and purchased Energy-Star appliances (77%). However, Midwesterners are most likely to say they've insulated their windows and doors (79%).
- Overall, homeowners in the West (84%) are most likely to say they use energy-efficient light bulbs, when compared to Americans living in the Northeast (81%), South (80%) or Midwest (72%). But, Midwesterners are most likely to say they're using energy-efficient appliances (80%), followed by Westerners (77%), Northeasterners (77%) and Southerners (72%).
- Looking ahead, younger homeowners (36%) are more likely than middle-aged (31%) or older homeowners (18%) to suggest that they plan on installing energy-efficient products in their home this year.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

***Sean Simpson
Research Manager
Ipsos Public Affairs
416-572-4474***

Releases are available at: <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>

About Ipsos

Ipsos is a leading global survey-based market research company, owned and managed by research professionals that helps interpret, simulate, and anticipate the needs and responses of consumers, customers, and citizens around the world. Member companies



assess market potential and interpret market trends to develop and test emergent or existing products or services, and build brands. They also test advertising and study audience responses to various media, and measure public opinion around the globe. They help clients create long-term relationships with their customers, stakeholders or other constituencies. Ipsos member companies offer expertise in advertising, customer loyalty, marketing, media, and public affairs research, as well as forecasting, modeling, and consulting and offers a full line of custom, syndicated, omnibus, panel, and online research products and services, guided by industry experts and bolstered by advanced analytics and methodologies. The company was founded in 1975 and has been publicly traded since 1999. In 2007, Ipsos generated global revenues of €927.2 million (\$1.27 billion U.S.). Visit www.ipsos.com to learn more about Ipsos offerings and capabilities.