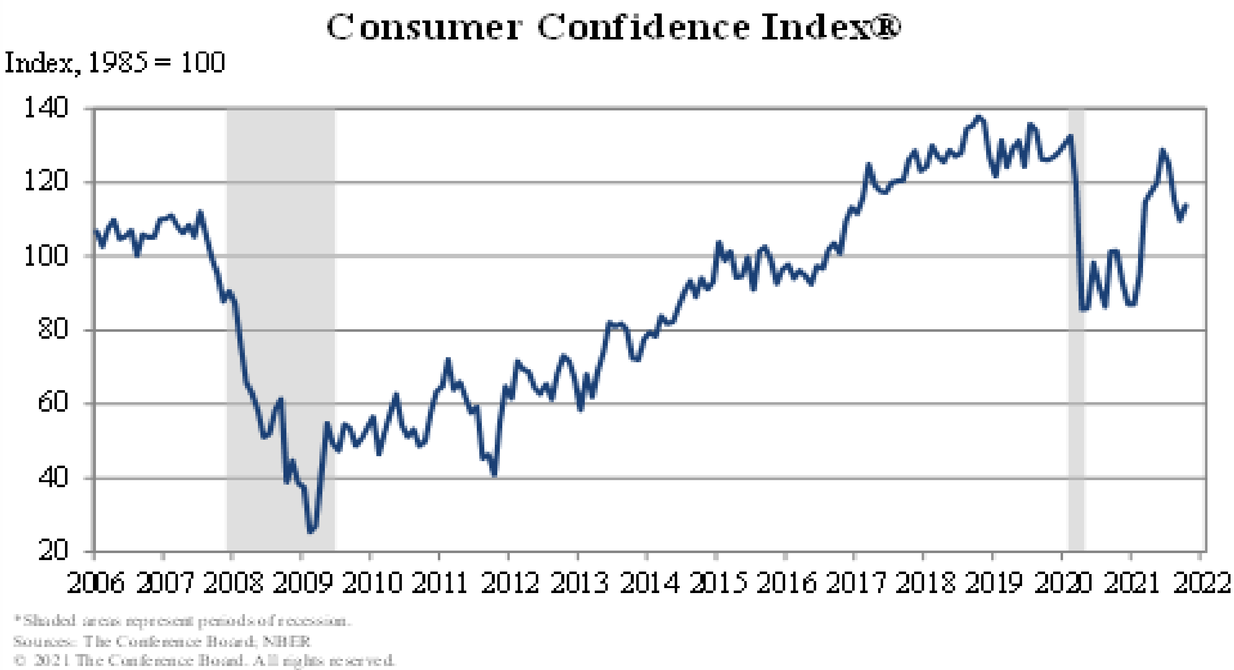
A PERSONAL PORTFOLIO REVIEW WITH AN EYE TOWARD LEADING INDICATORS



UNITED STATES INFLATION RATE

A picture being worth 1,000 words, I am compelled to open with a look at 2 major indicators of economic health: the Consumer Confidence Index and the U.S. Inflation Rate. With the major stock market indices recording new record highs over the last several trading weeks, it is reasonable to ask "Can this trend continue?" Many investors monitor key metrics such as the Consumer Confidence Index, inflation numbers, interest rate outlook, and unemployment data to help inform their investing decisions.

However, we are coming off of a period in history unlike any we've seen in the past 100 years. Can the data be interpreted the same as in the past, or does the era of COVID-19 warrant modifications and adjustments to get a more accurate picture? We have heard from the Federal Reserve in recent days that their interest rate policy will remain intact near term, despite the rise in inflation numbers. We have heard from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that unemployment numbers have been moderating and that record numbers of new jobs have been created over the last several weeks. Also, the consumer confidence level has increased dramatically even in the face of inflation numbers and increasing concerns for a new COVID 19 spike. Remember where we are in the combined cycle of COVID 19 impact and leading economic indicators: we are at a crossroads which we have never witnessed before and that warrants ongoing scrutiny.

At the very least, these circumstances require close monitoring as we approach year end and consider modifications to our investment approach or portfolio content. For example, recently there has been much published about supply chain disruptions causing shortages of goods, leading to increased prices for the goods that are available. Economics 101, supply and demand dictate price level. So, it is not unusual to see these disruptions cause spot shortages and therefore price increases. What is important is to monitor this situation to discern whether, as the supply chain disruptions are addressed, prices will return to reasonable levels.

What is the best course of action in times like these? Engage with your financial advisor, review your personal financial plan, and ensure your investments remain appropriate for your risk tolerance and investment objectives. While no investment strategy can guarantee against losses in unpredictable times such as these, your advisor can help you craft a long-term perspective and consistent plan to increase your odds of long term success in your journey towards financial freedom.