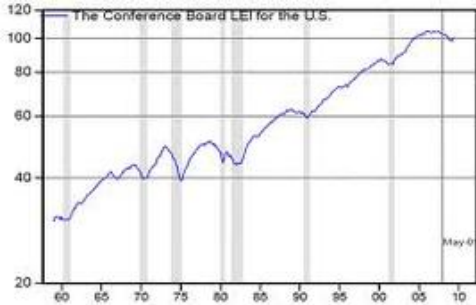




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**(Regional)-Midwest Economic Index Again Rises Slightly**



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/02/2013 09:23 AM

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - A monthly economic index for nine Midwest and Plains states rose again last month but still suggests an economic slump will continue over the next three to six months.

The Mid-America Business Conditions index hit 49.5 in December, up from November's 48.0 and October's 46.5.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey, and he says he's expecting only small regional increases in the job market.

The survey of business leaders and supply managers uses a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth while a score below 50 suggests decline for that factor.

The survey covers Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Oklahoma.