

## Economic Outlook Briefing Points

- Conference Board: **Leading Economic Index** at .1% percent, **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** down to .6% (versus 2.2% 2007 average) and CEO Confidence Measure the lowest since 2000, with only one in four businesses planning to increase employment.
- **Debt-addicted culture:** \$9.4 trillion public debt owed by the United States Government--requiring \$4,300 yearly from every taxpayer to pay just the interest; \$700 billion trade deficit in 2007; \$950 billion credit card debt; and \$1.6 trillion auto loans and non-revolving debt.
- In the past year, **unleaded gasoline has increased 20%**, jet aviation fuel by 172%, and new housing starts nationwide declined 11.9% in March, double what the U.S. Commerce Department anticipated. The Dow Jones declined 12% between October 15 and April 16.
- Aside from the housing sub-prime crisis and credit tightening, **worldwide oil production**, consumption and prices could have a tremendous bearing on the economy. According to Jubak's Journal, oil could increase from the present \$117 a barrel to \$180--\$3.80 a gallon gasoline to \$5.50—because of world demand and declining production due to cash shortages in Russia, Nigeria, and Mexico.
- In Wyoming, **per capita income** increased 6.3% last year and inflation was 6.1%. Yet to be released 2007 finals could peg the income increase in the 4%-5% range—less than the rate of inflation.
- **State Spending** has increased 166% in the past ten years—four times the rate of inflation. The increase of \$5 billion is not sustainable without minerals. Assume on the low side a \$1 billion reduction scenario in minerals income 15 years from today and a state population of 525,000: \$7,619 in more taxes for a family of four to off-set the \$1 billion.