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BTS Data

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Freight Index Rose 0.7 Percent in August from July

The Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) rose 0.7 percent in August from its July level, the second consecutive monthly increase, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) reported today (Table 1).

BTS, a part of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration, reported that the Freight TSI has now gone four consecutive months without a decline after dropping in 9 of the previous 12 months (Table 2). This is the first four month period without a decline in the index since 2002. For additional historical data, go to <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>

The Freight TSI measures the month-to-month changes in freight shipments in ton-miles, which are then combined into one index. The index measures the output of the for-hire freight transportation industry and consists of data from for-hire trucking, rail, inland waterways, pipelines and air freight.

The August Freight TSI of 96.2 is a 2.7 percent increase from the recent low of 93.6 reached in April. In April, the index was at its lowest level since June 1997. The Freight TSI is down 14.8 percent from its historic peak of 112.9 reached in May 2006.

The 4.2 percent decline in the first eight months of 2009 was the largest in the last decade, exceeding the 4.0 percent decline for the first eight months of 2000 (Table 3).

The August Freight TSI of 96.2 is the lowest for August since August 1997 when it was 94.4. The 10.9 percent decline in the Freight TSI from August 2008 to August 2009 was the largest August-to-August decline in the 20 years for which the TSI is calculated (Table 4).

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The freight index is also down 12.2 percent in the five years from August 2004. The index is down 6.5 percent in the 10 years from August 1999 (Table 5). All the five-year and 10-year declines took place consecutively in the past several months.

The TSI is a seasonally adjusted index that measures changes from the monthly average of the base year of 2000. It includes historic data from 1990 to the present. Release of the September index is scheduled for Nov. 12.

BTS has issued a report explaining the TSI. *Transportation Services Index and the Economy* is available for download in the [BTS bookstore](#).

Transportation Services Index for Passengers

The TSI for passengers rose 0.8 percent in August from its July level (Table 6). The Passenger TSI August 2009 level of 111.2 was 4.2 percent below the August 2008 level, the second largest August -to- August decrease in the last decade, exceeded only by the 7.6 percent decrease in 2002 to which the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack contributed (Table 7). Despite recent declines, the index is up 6.0 percent in five years and 16.2 percent in 10 years (Table 5).

The passenger TSI measures the month-to-month changes in travel conducted in the for-hire passenger transportation sector. The seasonally adjusted index consists of data from air, local transit and intercity rail.

Combined Freight and Passenger Index

The combined freight and passenger TSI rose 0.7 percent in August from its July level (Table 8). The combined TSI August 2009 level of 99.5 was 9.3 percent lower than the August 2008 level, leaving the index at its lowest August level since 1998 (Table 9). The combined index is down 8.0 percent in five years and down 1.1 percent in 10 years (Table 5). All the five-year and 10-year declines took place consecutively in the past several months.

The combined TSI merges the freight and passenger indexes into a single index.

More on TSI

Note: TSI numbers for April (Freight, Passenger and Combined) were revised because of revisions in the output data of the component transportation services. The April Freight TSI is 93.6, revised from the 94.6 reported in last month's release. The April Passenger TSI is 110.0, revised from 110.3. The April Combined TSI is 97.2, revised from 98.1. The TSI for May, June, July and August are preliminary.

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TSI revision policy: TSI is updated monthly with the latest four months' index numbers considered preliminary. Each month BTS releases the latest preliminary TSI, and replaces the oldest preliminary TSI with a revised TSI. More information about the monthly revision policy, is available at <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>

More information about the comprehensive revision conducted with the July release is provided under 2009 Comprehensive Revision at <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>.

Table 1: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes since February 2009
Percent Change by Month
(Seasonally Adjusted, Monthly Average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight		Passenger		Combined	
	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change
February	98.9	1.0	109.5	-0.4	101.2	0.7
March	95.3	-3.6	108.6	-0.9	98.2	-2.9
April ^R	93.6	-1.8	110.0	1.4	97.2	-1.0
May ^P	94.0	0.5	109.4	-0.6	97.4	0.2
June ^P	94.0	0.0	109.1	-0.3	97.3	-0.1
July ^P	95.5	1.6	110.4	1.2	98.8	1.5
August^P	96.2	0.7	111.2	0.8	99.5	0.7

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 2: Freight Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2006-2009
Percent change from previous month

	2006 % Growth	2007 % Growth	2008 % Growth	2009 % Growth
January	0.3	-0.6	2.3	-2.5
February	-1.4	-0.3	-0.9	1.0
March	0.7	1.9	-1.4	-3.6
April	-0.4	-0.7	0.6	(R) -1.8
May	2.3	-0.4	0.0	(P) 0.5
June	-0.8	-1.0	-0.8	(P) 0.0
July	-0.8	-0.3	0.8	(P) 1.6
August	-2.3	0.7	-2.2	(P) 0.7
September	2.5	-1.0	-1.6	
October	-1.5	1.7	-0.6	
November	-1.4	0.6	-2.2	
December	1.3	-0.1	-2.8	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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Table 3: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes Year-to-Date Change, 2000-2009

Percent change from December of previous year
December to August

Year	Freight	Passenger	Combined
2000	-4.0	5.5	-1.1
2001	2.4	2.3	2.4
2002	5.3	4.5	5.1
2003	-1.1	-1.0	-1.1
2004	1.4	4.1	2.2
2005	0.8	2.0	1.1
2006	-2.5	0.5	-1.7
2007	-0.8	2.2	0.0
2008	-1.8	-1.9	-1.8
2009^P	-4.2	0.4	-3.0

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

Table 4: Freight Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year

Percent change in the August Freight TSI

(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	100.8	-2.0
2001	100.2	-0.6
2002	102.6	2.4
2003	103.4	0.8
2004	109.6	6.0
2005	111.8	2.0
2006	108.4	-3.0
2007	108.5	0.1
2008	107.9	-0.6
2009^P	96.2	-10.9

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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**Table 5: Transportation Services Indexes from Previous Years
Percent Change to 2009 (August to August)**

Since August . . .	Duration in years	Freight TSI Percent change to August 2009	Passenger TSI Percent change to August 2009	Combined TSI Percent change to August 2009
2008	1	-10.9	-4.2	-9.3
2007	2	-11.4	-5.1	-9.9
2006	3	-11.3	1.1	-8.4
2005	4	-14.0	2.2	-10.2
2004	5	-12.2	6.0	-8.0
2003	6	-7.0	14.7	-1.9
2002	7	-6.3	16.7	-0.9
2001	8	-4.1	7.8	-1.7
2000	9	-4.6	10.8	-1.2
1999	10	-6.5	16.2	-1.1

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Note: The percent changes to August 2009 are all preliminary.

**Table 6: Passenger Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2006-2009
Percent change from previous month**

	2006 % Growth	2007 % Growth	2008 % Growth	2009 % Growth
January	1.3	0.3	-0.2	-0.7
February	-0.1	-0.7	-1.0	-0.4
March	0.3	2.0	0.2	-0.9
April	0.5	-0.3	1.1	(R) 1.4
May	0.2	2.4	-0.5	(P) -0.6
June	-0.9	-2.1	-0.4	(P) -0.3
July	0.2	-0.3	-0.2	(P) 1.2
August	-0.9	1.0	-1.1	(P) 0.8
September	1.1	1.4	-0.6	
October	1.3	-0.8	-1.4	
November	0.9	-0.5	-1.8	
December	1.0	0.9	-0.9	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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**Table 7: Passenger Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year
Percent change in the August Passenger TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	Passenger TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	100.4	4.9
2001	103.2	2.8
2002	95.3	-7.6
2003	96.9	1.7
2004	104.9	8.2
2005	108.8	3.7
2006	110.0	1.1
2007	117.2	6.6
2008	116.1	-1.0
2009^P	111.2	-4.2

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 8: Combined Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2006-2009
Percent change from previous month**

	2006 % Growth	2007 % Growth	2008 % Growth	2009 % Growth
January	0.5	-0.4	1.7	-2.1
February	-1.0	-0.4	-0.9	0.7
March	0.6	1.9	-1.0	-2.9
April	-0.1	-0.6	0.7	(R) -1.0
May	1.7	0.3	-0.1	(P) 0.2
June	-0.8	-1.3	-0.7	(P) -0.1
July	-0.6	-0.3	0.6	(P) 1.5
August	-2.0	0.8	-2.0	(P) 0.7
September	2.2	-0.4	-1.3	
October	-0.8	1.1	-0.8	
November	-0.9	0.3	-2.1	
December	1.2	0.2	-2.4	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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**Table 9: Combined Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year
Percent change in the August Combined TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	100.7	0.1
2001	101.2	0.5
2002	100.4	-0.7
2003	101.4	1.0
2004	108.1	6.6
2005	110.8	2.5
2006	108.6	-2.0
2007	110.4	1.7
2008	109.6	-0.7
2009^P	99.5	-9.3

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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Brief Explanation of the TSI

The Transportation Services Index (TSI) is a measure of the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire transportation industries. The freight index measure changes in freight shipments while the passenger index measures changes in passenger travel.

The TSI tells us how the output of transportation services has increased or decreased from month to month. The index can be examined together with other economic indicators to produce a better understanding of the current and future course of the economy. The movement of the index over time can be compared with other economic measures to understand the relationship of changes in transportation output to changes in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The freight transportation index consists of:

For-hire trucking,

Railroad freight services (including rail based intermodal shipments such as containers on flat cars),

Inland waterways transportation,

Pipeline transportation (including principally petroleum and petroleum products and natural gas), and

Air freight.

The index does not include international or coastal waterborne movements, private trucking, courier services, or the US Postal Service.

The passenger transportation index consists of:

Local transit,

Intercity passenger rail, and

Passenger air transportation.

The index does not include intercity bus, sight seeing services, ferry services, taxi service, private automobile usage, or bicycling and other non-motorized transportation.

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