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BTS Data

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Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) Unchanged in December from November

The Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) was unchanged in December from its November level, after one 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 though the Freight TSI declined 4.1 percent during 2009 (Table 3) the index increased 2.9 percent over the last seven months of the year, beginning in June (Table 2). 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 December Freight TSI of 96.2 is a 2.9 percent increase from the recent low of 93.5 reached in May. In May, 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.

With the 4.1 percent decline in 2009 following an 8.7 percent decline in 2008, the Freight TSI has declined 12.4 percent in two years (Table 3).

The December Freight TSI of 96.2 is the lowest for December since December 1996 when it was 89.1. The 4.1 percent decline in the Freight TSI from December 2008 to December 2009 was the fourth largest annual decline in the 20 years for which the TSI is calculated. It was the third largest decline in the past decade, exceeded by declines in 2000 and 2008 (Table 4).

The freight index is also down 13.2 percent in the five years from December 2004. The index is down 8.4 percent in the 10 years from December 1999 (Table 5).

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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 January index is scheduled for March 10.

For a video explanation of the TSI, see [Overview of the Transportation Services Index](#). For a BTS 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 fell 0.5 percent in December from its November level (Table 6). The Passenger TSI December 2009 level of 108.2 was 2.3 percent below the December 2008 level, for the second consecutive December-to-December decrease, and marking the first consecutive annual decreases in the 20-year history of the TSI (Table 7). Despite recent declines, the index is up 1.5 percent in five years and 13.7 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 fell 0.1 percent in December from its November level (Table 8). The combined TSI December 2009 level of 98.8 was 3.7 percent lower than the December 2008 level, leaving the index at its lowest December level since 2001 and at the same level as December 2000 (Table 9). The combined index is down 9.8 percent in five years and down 2.9 percent in 10 years (Table 5).

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

4th Quarter Changes

The Freight TSI rose 0.5 percent in the fourth quarter, the second consecutive quarterly increase (Table 10) after five consecutive quarterly declines that started from the second quarter of 2008. The Passenger TSI fell 1.9 percent in the fourth quarter, falling after two consecutive quarterly increases (Table 11). The combined TSI fell 0.1 percent in the fourth quarter, declining after one quarterly increase (Table 12).

More on TSI

Note: TSI numbers for August (Freight, Passenger and Combined) were revised because of revisions in the output data of the component transportation services. The August Freight TSI is 96.5, revised from the 96.2 reported in last month's release. The August Passenger TSI is 110.6, revised from 111.2. The August Combined TSI is 99.6, revised from 99.5. The TSI for September, October, November and December 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 June 2009

Percent Change by Month

(Seasonally Adjusted, Monthly Average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight		Passenger		Combined	
	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change
June	94.1	0.6	109.3	0.5	97.4	0.6
July	95.8	1.9	110.6	1.3	99.1	1.7
August ^R	96.5	0.7	110.6	0.0	99.6	0.5
September ^P	95.7	-0.9	110.3	-0.3	98.9	-0.7
October ^P	94.5	-1.2	110.3	-0.1	98.0	-0.9
November ^P	96.2	1.8	108.8	-1.4	99.0	1.0
December^P	96.2	0.0	108.2	-0.5	98.8	-0.1

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	-1.8
May	2.3	-0.4	0.0	-0.1
June	-0.8	-1.0	-0.8	0.6
July	-0.8	-0.3	0.8	1.9
August	-2.3	0.7	-2.2	(R) 0.7
September	2.5	-1.0	-1.6	(P) -0.9
October	-1.5	1.7	-0.6	(P) -1.2
November	-1.4	0.6	-2.2	(P) 1.8
December	1.3	-0.1	-2.8	(P) 0.0

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 December

Year	Freight	Passenger	Combined
2000	-6.8	6.0	-2.9
2001	-0.5	-9.6	-3.3
2002	7.3	7.4	7.3
2003	3.3	2.9	3.2
2004	2.6	5.9	3.5
2005	0.3	2.5	0.9
2006	-1.7	4.9	-0.1
2007	0.5	3.1	1.1
2008	-8.7	-6.4	-8.1
2009^P	-4.1	-2.3	-3.7

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

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

Percent change in the December Freight TSI

(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	97.9	-6.8
2001	97.4	-0.5
2002	104.6	7.3
2003	108.0	3.3
2004	110.9	2.6
2005	111.2	0.3
2006	109.3	-1.7
2007	109.8	0.5
2008	100.3	-8.7
2009^P	96.2	-4.1

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 (December to December)**

Since December . . .	Duration in years	Freight TSI Percent change to Dec 2009	Passenger TSI Percent change to Dec 2009	Combined TSI Percent change to Dec 2009
2008	1	-4.1	-2.3	-3.7
2007	2	-12.4	-8.5	-11.5
2006	3	-12.0	-5.7	-10.5
2005	4	-13.5	-1.0	-10.5
2004	5	-13.2	1.5	-9.8
2003	6	-10.9	7.4	-6.6
2002	7	-8.0	10.5	-3.6
2001	8	-1.3	18.7	3.5
2000	9	-1.7	7.3	0.0
1999	10	-8.4	13.7	-2.9

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Note: The percent changes to December 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	1.4
May	0.2	2.4	-0.5	-1.2
June	-0.9	-2.1	-0.4	0.5
July	0.2	-0.3	-0.2	1.3
August	-0.9	1.0	-1.1	(R) 0.0
September	1.1	1.4	-0.6	(P) -0.3
October	1.3	-0.8	-1.4	(P) -0.1
November	0.9	-0.5	-1.8	(P) -1.4
December	1.0	0.9	-0.9	(P) -0.5

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 December Passenger TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	Passenger TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	100.8	6.0
2001	91.2	-9.6
2002	97.9	7.4
2003	100.8	2.9
2004	106.7	5.9
2005	109.4	2.5
2006	114.7	4.9
2007	118.3	3.1
2008	110.8	-6.4
2009^P	108.2	-2.3

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	-1.0
May	1.7	0.3	-0.1	-0.4
June	-0.8	-1.3	-0.7	0.6
July	-0.6	-0.3	0.6	1.7
August	-2.0	0.8	-2.0	(R) 0.5
September	2.2	-0.4	-1.3	(P) -0.7
October	-0.8	1.1	-0.8	(P) -0.9
November	-0.9	0.3	-2.1	(P) 1.0
December	1.2	0.2	-2.4	(P) -0.1

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 December Combined TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	98.8	-2.9
2001	95.5	-3.3
2002	102.5	7.3
2003	105.8	3.2
2004	109.5	3.5
2005	110.5	0.9
2006	110.4	-0.1
2007	111.6	1.1
2008	102.6	-8.1
2009^P	98.8	-3.7

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 10: Freight Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2000-2009
Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter**

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2000	-5.1	0.5	-1.3	-1.0
2001	1.4	-0.5	-1.4	0.0
2002	1.3	2.8	1.1	1.9
2003	-1.4	0.0	1.3	3.3
2004	1.6	0.5	-0.3	0.8
2005	0.8	-0.7	-0.5	0.7
2006	-0.4	1.1	-0.7	-1.6
2007	0.9	-2.0	-0.6	2.2
2008	0.0	-0.3	-3.0	-5.5
2009	-5.0	-1.3	(P) 1.7	(P) 0.5

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

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Table 11: Passenger Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2000-2009
Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2000	4.1	1.0	2.6	-1.8
2001	-0.5	-0.1	-21.1	15.2
2002	2.3	1.1	-0.5	4.4
2003	-4.2	-0.1	4.9	2.6
2004	1.4	1.8	0.5	1.9
2005	2.0	0.2	1.5	-1.1
2006	1.5	-0.2	0.3	3.2
2007	1.5	-0.1	2.1	-0.4
2008	-1.0	0.3	-1.8	-4.0
2009	-2.0	0.6	(P) 1.0	(P) -1.9

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

Table 12: Combined Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2000-2009
Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2000	-2.3	0.7	-0.1	-1.3
2001	0.8	-0.3	-7.5	4.0
2002	1.6	2.3	0.6	2.6
2003	-2.2	0.0	2.3	3.1
2004	1.6	0.8	-0.1	1.1
2005	1.1	-0.5	0.0	0.2
2006	0.1	0.7	-0.5	-0.4
2007	1.0	-1.5	0.1	1.6
2008	-0.3	-0.1	-2.7	-5.2
2009	-4.3	-0.8	(P) 1.5	(P) -0.1

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

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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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