

Sep 5, 2006

## Monday Morning Outlook

Date/Time (CDT)	U.S. Economic Data	Consensus	First Trust	Actual	Previous
9-6 / 7:30 am	Q2 Non-Farm Productivity	1.6%	1.5%		1.1%
	Q2 Non-Farm Unit Labor Costs	3.8%	4.0%		4.2%
9:00 am	ISM Non-Manufacturing	55.1	55.0		54.8
9-7 / 7:30 am	Initial Unemployment Claims	315K	310K		316K

### Changing Times Are Challenging Times

It may sound trite, but technological change defines our world. And the changes are so rapid and dramatic that even the most astute observers cannot possibly grasp all the implications. Nonetheless, we see the benefits almost every day.

Last week, for example, we got a phone call from Russ Roberts, a professor at one of the best economic schools in the country, George Mason University. Russ is also the features editor at the Library of Economics and Liberty and he wanted us to know that he had just posted the first of a two part interview with Milton Friedman. In a great service to the world, Russ is interviewing leading economists and thinkers (many of them Nobel laureates) and making those taped interviews available at [www.econtalk.org](http://www.econtalk.org).

Because Russ is such a good economist, and these interviews are not constrained by the demands of television or print media, they are very valuable. They cover serious topics in depth and once again reveal the powerful nature of the Internet.

In the interview, Friedman said he was optimistic about the future, but he also fretted that the low inflation of the past 20 or 25 years could make people “bigger suckers.” He feared that without specific rules in place to restrain the central bank, the government would try to use inflation as a form of taxation. He said, “sooner or later, government’s are going to want to spend money without taxing it and the only way to do that is to print money—to create inflation.”

“When I see in the Federal Reserve reports that the inflation anticipation for 10, 20 years is on the order of 2 percent a year,” Friedman added, “I find it very hard to believe it. Sooner or later, the government’s going to get out of hand.”

These fears seem justified. The YOY change in the “core” PCE deflator has been at or above 2% for 28 consecutive months. In the past five years, the dollar has lost 56.7% of its value versus gold and 29.7% of its value versus the Euro. This is a clear sign that the Fed has printed too much money. Yet, concerns about inflation seem almost non-existent. Have we been lulled to sleep?

### Week of September 11, 2006

Date/Time (CDT)	U.S. Economic Data	Consensus	First Trust	Actual	Previous
9-14 / 7:30 am	Aug Import Prices	-0.2%	-1.0%		+0.9%
	Aug Export Prices	+0.3%	+0.2%		+0.4%
	Aug Retail Sales	+0.3%	0.0%		+1.4%
	Aug Retail Sales Ex Autos	+0.5%	+0.5%		1.0%
9-15 / 7:30 am	Aug CPI	+0.3%	+0.1%		+0.4%
	Aug “Core” CPI	+0.2%	+0.3%		+0.2%
8:15 am	Aug Industrial Production	+0.3%	+0.2%		+0.4%
	Aug Capacity Utilization	82.5%	82.5%		82.4%

**Brian S. Wesbury; Chief Economist**

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