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## Consumers still buying. Just not flowers.

By Dee DePass, September 28, 2011

Sick and tired of all the bad news, research firm Sageworks decided to do a little snooping and found some fun facts that you won't see in any of the economic reports due out this week.

The Consumer Confidence Report came out Tuesday with sad news that consumer shopping remained as weak as bland tea in September, even after falling to depression-era lows in August.

Undaunted, the folks at Sageworks decided to find out just where the money's going. Turns out consumers ARE shopping their little hearts out. Just not where you think. Flowers are out and cars are "in."

After studying the 10,200 financial statements from CPAs and bankers, Sageworks learned a little bit about the taste of their clients.

Automobile dealers reported that sales are up nicely at 14.8 percent, while flower sales at florists fell half a percentage point in the last 12 months.

Gas stations saw a 14.26 percent uptick in sales over the last 12 months after seeing a pathetic 17 percent drop in 2009. Nice recovery.

All other categories of merchandise except flowers rose in the single digits.

Auto parts, furniture and clothing stores produced decent 8.43 percent, 7 percent and 6.8 percent rises, respectively.

Rounding out the bottom of the list sat: depressed florists (-0.52 percent), lawn and garden centers (up 1.6 percent), Beer Wine and Liquor (up 3.93 percent) and Health and Personal Care Stores (up 4.01 percent).

Surprisingly jewelry sales rose 4.8 percent in the last 12 months.

Economists have noted that some luxury items such as jewelry do well during bad economic times. Maybe pearls and touch of gold can rescue the rest of us from financial doldrums.

For the full story featuring Sageworks' private industry data, please visit [Minneapolis Star Tribune – Consumers still buying. Just not flowers.](#)