

CBS EVENING NEWS 1/25/2024

JAMES BROWN: Turning now to some positive economic news. The Commerce Department reports that the economy grew at a faster than expected pace of 3.3% in the fourth quarter. And while consumer confidence is rising across the board, some groups are feeling better than others. CBS's Nikki Battiste spoke to people across the country.

ADAM PIERCE: Personally, in my family, we are struggling.

WOMAN IN QUEENS, NY: I think that the economy is doing horrible.

WOMAN IN SUPERIOR, WI: I don't have retirement.

MAN #2 IN PORTLAND, OR: We're doing fine.

NIKKI BATTISTE: To hear people talk, it's a tale of two economies. While the U.S. economy ended 2023 with stronger than expected growth...

TREASURY SECRETARY JANET YELLEN: Instead of contracting, the economy has continued to grow.

BATTISTE: Some Americans across the country say they are not feeling the same boost to their bank accounts and many are still treading water.

PIERCE: Everything from, you know, the cost of groceries to getting around...

BATTISTE: More than 12 million Americans spent more than half their income on rent in 2022.

JANA STEWART: The percentage of my salary that goes into rent is about 60%.

BATTISTE: More people are turning to credit cards to pay their bills, carrying balances with rates at an all-time high. Some are using credit cards to pay for groceries.

MAN ON THE STREET: The prices of food the last few years is that they've been out of control.

UNNAMED ECONOMIST: They are looking at when I go to the grocery store, I'm paying 25% more than I did before the pandemic.

BATTISTE: 25% at the store adds up.

UNNAMED ECONOMIST: It adds up fast. And it's not just groceries, of course. It's the rent, it's auto insurance, and I think that's just inescapable.

BATTISTE: The good news is with unemployment dipping to 3.7%, jobs are readily available and wages are finally outpacing inflation.

UNNAMED ECONOMIST: People can feel a lot better in a few months, but we'll just have to wait and see.

BATTISTE: Some Americans might also see good news in their 401(k)s and retirement accounts, helped by a strong stock market. The economy is expected to be a key issue as voters head to the polls this election year. JB.

BROWN: Nikki Battiste. Thank you so much.