

“Houston, all systems go!”

Do you remember when America was on the way to the moon? Or perhaps you were too young to have seen some of the Apollo missions/rockets (years 1961 - 1975). Back then, we only had three channels on the television and the whole nation watched the countdown to the major rocket launches (i.e. Apollo Missions). Luckily for me, I grew up in Ormond Beach and did a lot of fishing around there. I saw most of the Apollo moon missions from a fairly close area (within 5 - 6 miles) and it's true, that the ground would actually shake during take off! And if it was a night time launch, the whole sky would be lit up as well. It really was an incredible sight to see the Saturn rocket take off!

Some interesting facts about the rocket:

Let me tell you a little about the Saturn V rocket. The rocket stood 363 feet (111 m) tall, and it was 33 feet (10 m) in diameter. It was taller than the Statue of Liberty from the ground to the torch. Fully fueled, the Saturn V weighed 6.5 million pounds (2,950 metric tons).^[1]

As they were getting ready to light up the rocket, they would always radio back to Houston and say, “Houston, all systems go!” Obviously, the conditions had to be perfect for a successful launch; no winds, no lightening, and all systems had to be functioning correctly.

Is our economy ready to lift off? Let's go ahead and check the status on our economic conditions:

- **Job Numbers:** The job numbers came out in February and it is a great job number report! But most importantly, these are great high-paying quality jobs. Some examples are: construction, mining, and manufacturing. Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 235,000 in February. Job gains occurred in construction, private educational services, manufacturing, health care, and mining.^[2]
- **Home Sales in January 2017:** Home sales and home values are up to all-time values. “Existing-home sales stepped out to a fast start in 2017, surpassing a recent cyclical high and increasing in January to the fastest pace in almost a decade, according to the National Association of Realtors®. All major regions except for the Midwest saw sales gains last month.^[3]
- **Consumer Spending:** Consumer spending increased 2.5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 to \$12.98 trillion. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reports consumer spending at an annualized rate. That's so it can compare it to economic output, measured by Gross Domestic Product.^[4]
- **Stock Market:** The stock market is hitting all-time highs. It creates a wealth effect which people feel the wealthier they get, the more money they can spend on consumer goods.
- **Small businesses optimism:** U.S. small-business owners are the most optimistic they have been since July 2007, according to the latest Wells Fargo/Gallup Small Business Index. The overall index is now at 100, up 20 points since November and up 33 points from one year ago. This represents the largest quarterly increase in three years.^[5]
- **Demographics:** 70% of the American economy is consumers spending their money. And here comes the Millennials! They are the largest group to move through the American Economy since the baby boomers.
- **Infrastructure and Tax Cuts:** Still pendingI don't know about you, but I think most people are really looking forward to keeping more of what they make!

We may not be there yet, but we may be closer and closer to saying “Houston, all systems go!”

Sincerely,
John Romano, CFP®

References:

- [1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturn_V
- [2] <http://goldrushcam.com/sierrasuntimes/index.php/news/local-news/9211-united-states-payroll-employment-rises-by-235-000-in-february-2017-unemployment-rate-changes-little-at-4-7-labor-force-participation-rate-at-63-0-percent>
- [3] <https://www.nar.realtor/news-releases/2017/02/existing-home-sales-jump-in-january>
- [4] <https://www.thebalance.com/consumer-spending-trends-and-current-statistics-3305916>
- [5] <http://www.gallup.com/poll/205898/optimism-among-small-business-owners-soars.aspx>

John Romano, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™, has over 30 years experience in the financial field. John is a Registered Representative with Securities America, Inc. (member of the FINRA and SIPC), and an Investment Advisor Representative with Securities America Advisors. He has prepared hundreds of reports for retirees to assist in their retirement income planning needs. He is dedicated to providing portfolio analysis, dividend and income information, and investment management services to retirees (and those preparing to retire) in The Villages, Florida and surrounding areas. He is a member in good standing of the Financial Planning Association (FPA).

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