BUSINESS

Poll: Weak growth through 2011

Cutbacks in spending slowing down economic recovery

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WASHINGTON — Top forecasters say the economy will grow this year and next at a slower pace than previously thought, weakened by governments and consumers spending less so they can pay down debt.

That's the findings of a new survey released Monday by the National Association of Business Economics.

The 46 economists polled tempered their expectations after seeing weak economic data in recent months. The panel reduced its forecast for annual economic growth to 2.6 percent in 2010 and 2011. That's down from its forecast of 3.2 percent in May.

The economists expect the economy will add jobs through the end of 2011, but not enough to bring down the unemployment rate below 9.2 percent. They don't see home prices rising much or the nation's soaring deficit falling much.

The mainly downbeat report comes as persistently high unemployment, weak consumer spending and stagnant wages drag on the U.S. economy.

"This summer's slowdown has exposed the economy's sensitivity to wealth losses, the unwinding of debt, and the reductions in economic stimulus," NABE President-elect Richard Wobbekind said in a statement.

The NABE's Outlook survey is conducted four times per year.