



## ALBERTANS SEEING SUNNY-SIDE UP FOR CANADIAN ECONOMY: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK INDEX

### Optimism about national economy highest in the country

**TORONTO, February 8, 2011** — Almost two-thirds (61 per cent) of Albertans feel Canada's economy is going to improve in 2011, the highest level of optimism across the country, according to the January 2011 RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index (RBC CCO). Alberta residents are also the most confident that their own financial situation will improve this year, registering a positive outlook of 48 per cent compared to the national average of 38 per cent.

Albertans' confidence in their finances may be reflected in their spending over the holidays. The RBC CCO survey found that almost one-third (31 per cent) of Albertans overspent their holiday season budgets, on average spending \$507 more than they intended to over the holidays, compared to the national average of \$429, and those who overspent are now looking for ways to pay their bills. Their top five post-holiday cutbacks include spending less on entertainment (51 per cent) and day-to-day living expenses (42 per cent), using credit cards and lines of credit less (30 per cent and 15 per cent respectively), as well as cutting back on smaller expenses such as lunches and coffee expenses (29 per cent).

"Budgeting to pay off holiday season expenses and to accommodate the various financial changes that each new year brings are good reasons to revisit your financial plan for 2011," said Bruce MacKenzie, regional president, Alberta and the Territories, RBC. "It's important to pay off your bills, but it's also a very good idea to set aside savings whenever possible. This is where a financial advisor can help you set up a budget and plan for your present and future needs."

Albertans' rosy outlook on the economy matches that of RBC Economics, which forecasts a very strong economic future for Alberta this year, anticipating that it will rank second only to Saskatchewan among the provinces in terms of growth in 2011.

"We're projecting that Alberta's growth will reach 4.3 per cent in 2011, the fastest growth this province has seen since 2006, as its all-important energy sector boosts a broader-based recovery," said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC.

Other provincial highlights from the January 2011 RBC CCO include:

- **Personal Financial Situation:** People in Atlantic Canada (44 per cent) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (40 per cent) are the most optimistic about the outlook for their personal financial situation; while people in Ontario (36 per cent) and Quebec (35 per cent) are the least optimistic.

- **Job Anxiety Outlook:** Job anxiety in Alberta has dropped from 31 per cent in January 2010 to 19 per cent in January 2011. Across the country, it is highest in Ontario (23 per cent) and lowest in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (15 per cent).
- **Spending Outlook on Major Purchases:** Over the next year, 21 per cent of Albertans plan to spend more on major purchases, one per cent above the national average. Atlantic Canadians are the most likely to increase their major purchase spending, while Quebecers are the least likely to do so (17 per cent).

#### **About RBC's financial advice and interactive tools**

RBC's [myFinance Tracker](#) is a new online financial management tool that offers all personal RBC online banking clients the ability, at no cost, to create a set budget and track their spending habits. In addition, whether Canadians want to get more from their everyday banking, protect what's important, save and invest, borrow with confidence or take care of their businesses, the RBC Advice Centre ([www.rbcadvicecentre.com](http://www.rbcadvicecentre.com)) can help answer their questions. Advice videos are updated regularly to reflect current trends and to answer the questions that are top of mind with Canadians. Interactive tools and calculators provide customized information covering many facets of personal finance. With the guidance of RBC advisors who are available to chat live, Canadians have access to free, no-obligation professional advice about RBC products and services and personalized one-on-one service.

#### **About the RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index**

The *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index*, benchmarked as of November 2009, is conducted online via Ipsos Reid's national I-Say Consumer Panel to 3,533 Canadians (503 British Columbia, 476 Alberta, 589 Saskatchewan/Manitoba, 721 Ontario, 678 Quebec, 566 Atlantic Canada). Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. Data collection was January 4 to 10, 2011. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100 per cent response rate would have an estimated margin of error of  $\pm 1.65$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled.

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