



RISING GAS AND FOOD PRICES HITTING QUEBEC POCKETBOOKS: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK INDEX

Debt management is top financial focus

TORONTO, April 12, 2011 — Quebec consumers are already feeling the impact of rising gas and food prices, with 48 per cent indicating these cost increases have had a significant impact on their budgets, according to the latest quarterly [RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index](#) (RBC CCO).

Despite these increasing costs, Quebecers are among the most optimistic in the country that their personal financial situation will improve this year, with 43 per cent expecting positive change, up eight points since January 2011. That same percentage (43 per cent) indicate that their top financial priority for this year is paying off debt as much as they can, with 32 per cent planning to spend less and 20 per cent intending to save or invest more.

“We are seeing a very positive approach to managing debt while also saving money for future needs,” said Patrice Sieber, vice-president and regional operating officer, Quebec Headquarters, RBC. “It’s that balance between expenditures and savings that we try to help our clients achieve, to ensure they are budgeting not only for today, but also for tomorrow.”

The RBC CCO found that Quebecers are expressing less optimism about the national economy, with only 37 per cent expecting improvements over 2011. A more positive projection has been made by [RBC Economics](#), which is forecasting the national GDP will grow by 3.2 per cent in 2011 and the Quebec economy will also experience growth, although at a slightly slower pace of 2.6 per cent.

“We believe that moderate growth in Quebec will be sustained by expanding industries that will outweigh those that are losing some ground,” explained Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC. “We forecast that this growth will be supported by improvement in the provincial job market, non-residential capital spending and demand for exports.”

The RBC CCO is Canada’s [most comprehensive consumer assessment](#) of the economy, personal financial situation and economic and purchasing expectations. [Other provincial highlights](#) from the March 2011 RBC CCO include:

- **Economic Outlook:** Quebecers are less optimistic about the Canadian economy, with only 37 per cent expecting to see improvements over 2011, compared to 42 per cent nationally. Atlantic Canadians (33 per cent) are the least optimistic about the national economy; Albertans (50 per cent) are the most optimistic.

- **Job anxiety:** Twenty-one per cent of Quebecers are concerned about job loss or layoffs impacting someone in their household, just slightly below the national average of 22 per cent. Residents in Ontario are expressing the highest job anxiety (28 per cent); people living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba have the lowest job anxiety (16 per cent).
- **Major purchases:** A majority (55 per cent) of Quebec consumers are delaying major purchases due to current economic conditions, matching the national average. Ontario consumers (60 per cent) lead the country in delaying major purchases, while consumers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (43 per cent) indicate they have delayed these purchases the least.

The national RBC CCO release, full set of regional releases and related comparative data charts can be accessed via www.rbc.com/newsroom/2011/0412-cdn-consumer.html.

About RBC's debt management and other financial advice and interactive tools

RBC's [myFinanceTracker](#), a new online financial management tool, offers all personal RBC [online banking](#) clients the ability, at no cost, to create a set budget and track their spending habits. Whether Canadians want to get more from their [day to day banking](#), protect what's important, save and invest, borrow with confidence or take care of their businesses, the [RBC Advice Centre](#) can help answer their questions (www.rbcadvicecentre.com). Interactive tools and calculators provide customized information covering many facets of personal finance. In addition, online advice videos are updated regularly to reflect current trends and to answer the questions that are top of mind with Canadians. 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 [banking](#) service.

About the RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index

The [RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index](#) (RBC CCO) is Canada's most comprehensive consumer assessment of the economy, personal financial situation and economic and purchasing expectations. Benchmarked as of November 2009, the RBC CCO is conducted online via [Ipsos Reid's](#) national I-Say Consumer Panel to 3,520 Canadians (534 British Columbia, 502 Alberta, 482 Saskatchewan/Manitoba, 901 Ontario, 582 Quebec, 519 Atlantic Canada). Weighting is 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 March 11 to 15, 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 ± 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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