



ALBERTANS RIDING HIGH ON STRONG ECONOMY: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK

Residents dealing with highest personal debt in country

TORONTO, July 20, 2011 — Albertans are faring better than most of the country when it comes to rising food and gas prices, with only 37 per cent saying these costs have had a significant effect on their budgets – compared to the national average of 45 per cent – according to the RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index ([RBC CCO](#)). In fact, over the next year, nearly half (47 per cent) of Albertans expect their personal financial situation to improve and plan to spend more on major purchases (29 per cent).

Still, Alberta residents say they are taking steps to cope with these price increases; they plan to comparison shop more often (55 per cent), follow a budget more closely (50 per cent) and use their vehicle less often (31 per cent).

“Albertans are enjoying the benefits of a strong provincial economy, but need to be mindful of other household budgetary pressures,” said Bruce MacKenzie, regional president, Alberta and the Territories, RBC. “A good financial plan can help Albertans build their savings and investments while they manage day-to-day expenses.”

At the same time, Albertans estimate they are carrying the highest level of personal debt in Canada with an average of \$19,282 (not including mortgages), well above the national average of \$13,058. Only 30 per cent of the province’s residents rank debt reduction as a financial priority, while more than half (51 per cent) say they could be doing a better job at managing their debt.

The latest [RBC Economic Outlook](#) indicates that Alberta’s real GDP is expected to grow 4.3 per cent, the strongest showing for the province since 2006.

“Alberta is set to become Canada’s fastest growing economy, spurred by growing activity in the province’s various oil sands projects,” noted Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC. “The strong demand for bitumen from these projects is acting as a catalyst for a number of other segments of the Alberta economy, including job gains and rising retail sales.”

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 July 2011 RBC CCO include:

- **Economic Outlook:** Alberta residents remain very optimistic about the Canadian economy, with 78 per cent rating the current economy as good, significantly higher than the national average of 66 per cent. That optimism doesn’t diminish in the long term, with six-in-ten (59 per cent) believing the economy will improve over the next year, also well above the national average of 42 per cent.

- **Job Anxiety:** Job anxiety rose in the province, with 20 per cent of Albertans reporting they are worried about someone in their household losing their job, up from 18 per cent in March, but still lower than the national average of 22 per cent.
- **Vacation:** Albertans and Quebecers are the least likely in Canada (26 per cent respectively) to be delaying their vacation plans due to changing economic factors; Ontarians (34 per cent) are most likely to delay these plans.

The national RBC CCO release, full set of regional releases and related comparative data charts can be accessed via www.rbc.com/newsroom/2011/0720-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). 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

Benchmarked as of November 2009, the RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index (RBC CCO) was conducted online via Ipsos Reid's national I-Say Consumer Panel. Data was collected between June 9 and 14, 2011 from 4,008 Canadians (671 British Columbia, 591 Alberta, 464 Saskatchewan/Manitoba, 1,099 Ontario, 564 Quebec, 619 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. 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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