



## ATLANTIC CANADA DRILLS DOWN ON DEBT: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK

### East coast job concerns stabilize

**TORONTO, October 26, 2011** — While optimism has dropped in Atlantic Canada about the outlook for personal finances and the Canadian economy on the whole, the majority (57 per cent) of residents on the east coast are not setting any money aside for [rainy days](#), according to the October RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index ([RBC CCO](#)).

Atlantic Canadians are the most focused in the country, however, on reducing their debt over the next 12 months (37 per cent compared to 33 per cent nationally). Over one-quarter (29 per cent) of east coast consumers plan to spend less, 16 per cent want to save or invest more and 19 per cent will take all of these [actions](#).

“Atlantic Canadians tend to look for very practical ways to balance money coming in with money going out,” said Kim Mason, regional president, Atlantic Provinces, RBC. “The advice that our financial planners provide helps their clients find that balance, so that they can set aside some savings and also pay monthly bills.”

The RBC CCO found that 31 per cent of people in Atlantic Canada expect to see improvements in the [outlook](#) for their personal financial situation over the upcoming year, down from 37 per cent last quarter. East coast residents also are much less confident than last quarter that the national economy will improve (25 per cent compared to 41 per cent last quarter).

Concerns about job losses and layoffs remain stable in Atlantic Canada at 18 per cent, the second lowest job anxiety level in the country. Meanwhile, the latest [RBC Economic Outlook](#) forecasts that softening employment and lackluster U.S. demand will slow economic growth in most of the region in 2011, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador.

“We expect to see the highest economic growth in the region in Newfoundland and Labrador this year, due to a booming minerals sector and high levels of non-residential investment,” explained Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC. “Weak U.S. demand is having a dampening effect on economic growth in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, while a strong domestic sector should bolster Prince Edward Island’s economy.”

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 October RBC CCO include:

- **Major Purchases:** Half (50 per cent) of Atlantic Canadians have delayed making major purchases (such as vehicles, household appliances or spending on vacations) due to current economic conditions. Forty-four per cent plan on spending less on such purchases over the next 12 months.
- **Savings:** Over one-quarter (28 per cent) of east coast residents have had to dip into their savings to help pay every day expenses or for an emergency in the past three months, slightly less than the national average of 30 per cent.

The national RBC CCO release, full set of regional releases and related comparative data charts can be accessed via [www.rbc.com/newsroom/2011/1026-cdn-consumer.html](http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/2011/1026-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. 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 service. Further information is available at [www.rbcadvicecentre.com](http://www.rbcadvicecentre.com).

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

Benchmarked as of November 2009, the RBC CCO is conducted online via Ipsos Reid's national I-Say Consumer Panel. Data was collected between September 26 to October 3, 2011, via 3,054 Canadians (453 British Columbia, 454 Alberta, 458 Saskatchewan/Manitoba, 705 Ontario, 516 Quebec, 467 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  $\pm 1.65$  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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