



## NEARLY NINE IN TEN ALBERTANS PLAN TO BUY GIFTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON: RBC

### Consumers in Alberta intend to increase spending on other holiday items

**TORONTO, November 15, 2012** — For the majority (87 per cent) of Albertans, celebrating the holidays includes giving [gifts](#) to others, up five per cent from last year, according to the latest RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook.

Albertans plan to [spend](#) an average of \$694 on gifts this year, a slight decrease from their 2011 spending intentions of \$703. However, they continue to boost their spending intentions on [other](#) holiday items (such as decorations, clothing, food and drink, travel and entertainment) to \$801 from \$736 last year and \$621 in 2010.

“The holiday season does not have to mean an expensive price tag; you can enjoy the festivities without taking on additional debt,” said Chris McEachern, financial planning role strategist, RBC Financial Planning. “Before you head out holiday shopping this year, figure out what you can afford, put a budget in place and keep on top of your purchases to ensure you stay on track.”

Half (51 per cent) of Albertans intend to use their savings to [finance](#) their holiday spending and a quarter (25 per cent) plan to use credit cards. Almost three-in-ten (27 per cent) say they have not thought about how they will pay for the holiday season.

RBC offers the following tips and secure payment options for holiday spending to help ensure that you stick to your holiday budget while enjoying the spirit of the season:

- **Take control by preparing a budget** – A budget will help you live within your means, during the holidays and throughout the rest of the year, and avoid unnecessary debt. A [Financial Planner](#) can help you put a plan with a budget in place or online budgeting and savings resources available on websites such as [www.rbc.com/savingsspot](http://www.rbc.com/savingsspot) can be of great assistance to help keep holiday spending plans under control. [myFinanceTracker](#) is another online customizable financial management tool that will help keep tabs on your monthly spending so you know exactly where your money is going and how to budget properly.
- **Use cash and credit wisely** – If you plan on using savings for your holiday costs, make your credit card work for you by using it for purchases and then immediately pay off the balance. Many rely on their credit cards for larger purchases but may not use it for everyday shopping instead of using cash. Holiday spending on groceries, gas, restaurants and clothing can add up quickly, but using your card can help you keep track of your expenses and also earn rewards more quickly while taking advantage of a temporary interest-free loan on purchases.

- **Shop online with confidence** – E-commerce sites are a great way to avoid crowds at the mall. Use the [RBC Virtual Visa Debit](#) for shopping online with funds coming directly from your bank account. This is a simple and secure way to make purchases that will be processed over Visa's network, providing the protection of Visa's multiple layers of security including: Visa's Zero Liability Policy, Verified by Visa, E-Promise, AVS (Address Verification Service) and CVV2 (the three-digit code).
- **Have someone that's "hard to buy for"?** – More secure than cash, [RBC Visa Gift Cards](#) can be used anywhere around the world where Visa cards are accepted, including online, giving friends and family more options than traditional store gift cards. RBC Visa Gift Cards are available at all RBC branches.
- **Get peace of mind with purchase protection and extended warranty** – Take advantage of these insurance features on gifts (e.g. electronics) that [RBC credit cards](#) offer. Need help finding the right card? Visit the [RBC Advice Centre](#).

#### **About RBC savings and other financial advice and interactive tools**

Canadians can access [RBC Financial Planning](#) and [www.rbc.com/savingsspot](http://www.rbc.com/savingsspot) for free planning, budgeting and savings advice and resources, or to find an [Investment and Retirement Planner](#) near you. In addition, all personal RBC [online banking clients can use myFinanceTracker](#), a no-cost interactive financial management tool, to create and track their budget, savings goals and 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 at [www.rbcadvicecentre.com](http://www.rbcadvicecentre.com).

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

The survey is conducted online via Ipsos Reid's national I-Say Consumer Panel to 3,375 Canadians (including 540 Albertans). 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 October 1 to 10, 2012. The precision of Ipsos Reid polls are calculated using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 1.9 percentage points of the entire Canadian population.

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