



PRAIRIES CONFIDENT ABOUT JOBS, NATIONAL ECONOMY: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK INDEX

TORONTO, February 8, 2011 — Prairie residents are the most positive in Canada about their employment outlook and among the most optimistic about the Canadian economy, according to the January 2011 RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index (RBC CCO).

Job anxiety in Saskatchewan and Manitoba remains the lowest in the country, sitting at 15 per cent, down four percentage points from last January. In addition, 49 per cent of Prairie respondents are optimistic about the outlook for Canada's economy in 2011, second only to Alberta.

People on the Prairies are, however, less optimistic when it comes to their own financial situation, with just four-in-ten (40 per cent) expecting improvement over the next year, down from 48 per cent a year ago.

"People here are feeling good about the economy and employment, but they are still cautious when it comes to their own finances," said Rob Johnston, regional president, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Western Ontario, RBC. "Concern over the financial changes that each new year brings is a good reason to revisit your plan for 2011 and build confidence in how you can go about reaching your financial goals."

Prairie residents' economic confidence is mirrored in RBC Economics' is projection that Saskatchewan will lead the country in growth at a rate of 5.3 per cent in 2011, with support coming from a solid recovery in the agriculture and mining sectors.

"Manitoba is also poised to out-pace the Canadian average, though at a more moderate 3.5 per cent pace, with gains coming from a recovering manufacturing sector and hopes of a return to more normal growing conditions in the agriculture sector," said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC.

Other provincial highlights from the January 2011 RBC CCO include:

- **Personal Financial Situation Outlook:** Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents' positive outlook for their personal financial situation (40 per cent) ranks third highest in the country, following the positive outlooks of Albertans (48 per cent) and Atlantic Canadians (44 per cent). People in Ontario (36 per cent) and Quebec (35 per cent) are the least confident they will see improvements in their financial situation over the next year.

- **Job Anxiety Outlook:** The national job anxiety outlook sits at 20 per cent, and concerns about job losses or layoffs are highest in Ontario (23 per cent).
- **Spending Outlook on Major Purchases:** Over the next year, 23 per cent of Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents plan to spend more on major purchases, three per cent higher than the national average. Atlantic Canadians are the most likely to increase their major purchase spending (24 per cent), 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) 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 ± 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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