



OVER HALF OF ONTARIANS HIT BY RISING PRICES FOR GAS, FOOD: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK INDEX

TORONTO, April 12, 2011 — Rising food and gas prices have packed a wallop for Ontario consumers, with 51 per cent saying the new expenses have had a significant impact on their budget – the highest impact in Canada – according to the March 2011 [RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index](#) (RBC CCO). Job anxiety has also risen in the province, with 28 per cent reporting worries about themselves or someone in their household losing their job or being laid off, up five per cent since last quarter and well above the national average of 22 per cent.

While there are immediate concerns, Ontarians are still optimistic when looking to the future, with 44 per cent expecting the Canadian economy to improve over the next year, slightly higher than national expectations (42 per cent). The province's overall outlook index also rose this quarter by six points to 85 points.

"Unexpected costs can arise at any time, which makes it a good idea to visit a financial planner whenever conditions change," said Jeff Boyd, regional president, Ontario North and East, RBC. "In this way, you can get a better idea of how to adjust your budget so that you can manage debt and day-to-day costs, while still being able to put money aside for future needs."

Meanwhile, the Ontario economy is expected to see its best performance since 2002, with real GDP forecast to grow by 3.1 per cent, according to the latest [Economic Outlook](#) from RBC Economics. "Conditions in Ontario are expected to continue to improve this year, allowing the province to complete its recovery and move into an expansion cycle," said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC.

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:

- **Debt Management:** Thirty four per cent of Ontarians feel confident in their debt management skills, compared to the national average of 38 per cent. Nearly one-in-four Ontarians (37 per cent) think they are doing an "okay" job managing their debt, but know they could be doing better.
- **Personal Financial Situation Outlook:** Nearly four-in-ten of Ontario residents (39 per cent) expect their personal finances to improve over the next year, up three per cent since last quarter and on par with the national average.

- **Spending Outlook on Major Purchases:** Six-in-ten Ontarians (60 per cent) have delayed making a major purchase due to the current economy, a rise of three per cent since January – the highest such ranking in the country and five percentage points above the national average (55 per cent). Only one-in-four (24 per cent) plan to increase spending over the next year.

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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