



## ATLANTIC CANADIANS MOST LIKELY TO HIT THE STORES FOR HOLIDAY DEALS IN JANUARY, ACCORDING TO RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK

### Residents of Atlantic Canada least likely to pay for the holidays with money on hand, not debt

**TORONTO, January 4, 2010** — The December *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook* report finds that Atlantic Canadians are the most likely to shop for post-holiday deals in January, with 52 per cent planning to hit the stores, compared to 42 per cent nationally. As for financing their holiday shopping, residents of Atlantic Canada are least likely to pay for the holidays with money on hand (67 per cent compared to the national average of 75 per cent).

“Consumer spending in Atlantic Canada appears poised to pick up, although we encourage clients to be cautious about taking on debt unnecessarily,” said Greg Grice, regional president, Atlantic Provinces, RBC. “We at RBC continue to advise our clients that setting financial goals – like saving for a house or paying down debt — and then acting to achieve them is what’s important. There’s no such thing as a great holiday deal if it knocks your financial goals off course.”

The report also measures Canadians’ perception of current conditions compared to three months ago, as well as short term (three month) prospects for their personal finances, job anxiety and a number of other factors. Regional highlights include:

- **Job Anxiety**: Only one-in-ten Atlantic Canadians (10 per cent) are concerned about losing their job or being laid off, down significantly from 24 per cent in November, and well below the national average of 21 per cent. With the exception of British Columbia, where job anxiety is unchanged, job anxiety is down across the country.
- **Personal Financial Situation (Overall)**: Atlantic Canadians are among the most optimistic that their personal financial situation will improve in the next three months, with 37 per cent expecting improvement, compared to the national average of 30 per cent and second only to Alberta. In the longer term, Atlantic Canadians are also among the most likely to expect their personal economic situation to improve over the next year (45 per cent compared to 43 per cent nationally and second only to Alberta).

- **National Economy:** Respondents from Atlantic Canada are among the most likely to say that the current overall state of the Canadian economy is good (58 per cent, down slightly from 60 per cent in November), while 42 per cent describe it as bad. Nationally, Canadians are divided regarding the current overall state of the economy, which 51 per cent say is good and 49 per cent say is bad. When considering the condition of the Canadian economy in the next three months, Atlantic Canadians are the least optimistic in the country, with only 32 per cent expecting conditions to improve, down significantly from 45 per cent in November and well below the national average of 40 per cent. Only 16 per cent of Atlantic Canadians expect that conditions will worsen (compared to 20 per cent nationally). Over the next year, residents of Atlantic Canada are slightly less optimistic that the Canadian economy will improve (59 per cent, down from 63 per cent in November and versus 60 per cent nationally).

“While Atlantic Canada will continue to experience economic challenges, we expect positive economic performance in 2010,” said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC. “New Brunswick will likely lead the Atlantic provinces in growth in 2010 at 2.9 per cent, followed closely by Nova Scotia with growth of 2.8 per cent. We project real GDP growth of 2.4 per cent for Newfoundland and Labrador and 2.2 per cent growth in Prince Edward Island in 2010.”

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

The *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index*, benchmarked as of November 2009, is based on the results of an online survey of 1,018 Canadians, ages 18 and over, conducted by Ipsos Reid between December 8 and 11, 2009. This data represents the most timely and comprehensive snapshot of consumer attitudes regarding their finances and the economy in 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  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

Rina Cortese, RBC Corporate Communications, (416) 974-6970  
Gillian McArdle, RBC Media Relations, (647) 400-8464