



NEARLY EIGHT-IN-TEN QUEBECERS REJECT DEBT AS A MEANS TO FINANCE HOLIDAY PURCHASES, ACCORDING TO RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK

Four-in-ten Quebecers plan to shop for January post-holiday deals

TORONTO, January 5, 2010 — The December *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook* report finds that Quebecers are among the most likely to pay for the holidays with money on hand (79 per cent, tied with Alberta for second to the Prairies at 81 per cent and compared to the national average of 75 per cent). As for shopping for post-holiday deals in January, 41 per cent of Quebec residents are planning to hit the stores, similar to the 42 per cent level nationally.

“Quebecers are feeling very positive about the Canadian economy, and more optimistic about their personal finances, which should bode well for consumer confidence in 2010,” said Micheline Martin, regional president, Quebec, RBC. “We at RBC continue to advise our clients to build a solid financial plan that will help them achieve important goals like reducing debt, purchasing a home or saving for their kids’ university tuition.”

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. Provincial highlights include:

- **Job Anxiety:** Job anxiety in Quebec has fallen to 21 per cent (the national average), down four points from 25 per cent in November. With the exception of British Columbia, where job anxiety is unchanged, job anxiety is down across the country.
- **Personal Financial Situation (Overall):** Quebecers’ outlook for their personal financial situation over the next three months was significantly more optimistic in December, with 32 per cent expecting their personal financial situation to improve over the next three months, compared to 23 per cent in November. They are also more optimistic about their personal financial prospects over the next year, with 43 per cent expecting improvement in December, compared to 36 per cent in November.

- **National Economy:** Respondents from Quebec are among the most likely to say that the current overall state of the Canadian economy is good (56 per cent), while 44 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, Quebecers are showing increased optimism, with 39 per cent expecting conditions to improve compared to 34 per cent in November. Only 15 per cent of Quebec residents expect that conditions will worsen (compared to 20 per cent nationally). Quebecers are also more optimistic that the Canadian economy will improve in 2010 (56 per cent versus 52 per cent in November).

“As Quebec’s economy gathers strength in the coming year, we expect real GDP growth in the province to be 2.2 per cent in 2010 and then a much faster growth rate of 3.7 per cent in 2011,” said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC.

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 ± 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