



PRAIRIE RESIDENTS CONFIDENT ABOUT CANADIAN ECONOMY AND JOBS, YET LOSING SLEEP OVER FINANCES: RBC CANADIAN CONSUMER OUTLOOK INDEX

Two-in-three Prairie residents have financial concerns that keep them up at night

TORONTO, April 1, 2010 —The March *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook* report finds that 80 per cent of Manitoba and Saskatchewan residents say the current national economy is good, a rise of seven per cent over last month and well above the national average of 54 per cent. Prairie residents continue to have the lowest job anxiety in Canada at 11 per cent (down two percentage points from February), half that of the national average (22 per cent).

Despite this optimism, two-in-three Prairie residents (67 per cent) are losing sleep over financial concerns. Nearly one-in-three residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (32 per cent) are most likely to lose sleep worrying about paying off debt, followed by a lack of an emergency fund (18 per cent) and having enough money for retirement (17 per cent).

“While Prairie residents are optimistic, many have concerns about their own financial situation and this is where professional advice is invaluable,” said Rob Johnston, regional president, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Western Ontario, RBC. “At RBC, advice and planning is integral to the way we do business. Having a solid financial plan can help lessen the worry and enable you to focus on your financial priorities like paying down debt or saving for retirement.”

Not surprisingly, Prairie residents also have the most positive short and long-term outlook for the national economy, with 47 per cent expecting the economy to improve over the next three months (compared to 36 per cent nationally) and 71 per cent expecting improvement over the next year (compared to 57 per cent nationally).

Other regional highlights include:

- **Local Economy:** Fewer Prairie residents (26 per cent) believe that the local economy will improve (down from 40 per cent in February, a drop of 14 percentage points).

- **Personal Financial Situation (Overall):** Only 14 per cent of Prairie residents say that their personal situation has improved in the last three months, a decrease of eight percentage points from February and lower than the national average of 20 per cent. Still, one half (49 per cent) of Prairie residents believe their personal financial situation will improve in the next year and higher than the national average of 44 per cent.

“Economic growth is gaining momentum in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba,” said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC. “We expect Saskatchewan’s economy to grow by 3.6 per cent in 2010 and our forecast for Manitoba’s real GDP growth is 2.5 per cent in 2010.”

Whether Canadians want to borrow with confidence, get more from their everyday banking, protect what’s important, save and invest 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 based on the results of an online survey of 1,020 Canadians, ages 18 and over, conducted by Ipsos Reid between March 9 and 15, 2010. 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.

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Note to editors: The *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index* will be moving to a quarterly publication, with an enhanced sample size and regional indices. The next *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index* will be distributed in July.