



## Confidence in Canadian economy strongest in the Prairies: RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook Index

**TORONTO, July 2, 2010** — Across Canada, Prairie residents are most optimistic about the current state of the Canadian economy with 77 per cent rating it as good, down slightly from 80 per cent in March but well above the national average (67 per cent), according to the June *RBC Canadian Consumer Outlook*. Job anxiety remains among the lowest in the country at 16 per cent, up five points from March but below the national average (20 per cent).

Since March, Manitoba and Saskatchewan residents have seen improvements in: saving and investments (14 per cent, up 10 points); having more money left over after their bills are paid (17 per cent, up nine points); and reducing their debt (19 per cent, up seven points).

One-in-five Prairie residents (20 per cent) think that the amount of money they will have to pay their bills will increase (down eight points) and only 32 per cent think that the value of their investments or savings will increase (down eight points). Sixty-nine per cent are concerned about rising interest rates, slightly above the national average of 67 per cent.

“Thanks to an improving economy and the two lowest unemployment rates in Canada, Prairie residents have good reason to be upbeat and this optimism is carrying over to their personal financial situation,” said Rob Johnston, regional president, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Western Ontario, RBC. “However, rising interest rates and fluctuating markets affect all of us and working with an advisor can help ensure these variables have less of an impact on your financial situation.”

Looking ahead, 53 per cent of Prairie residents expect positive economic momentum to continue on a national level over the next year, compared to 55 per cent nationally and down significantly since March (71 per cent). Overall, the June *Manitoba and Saskatchewan Consumer Outlook Index* dropped six points to 94 from its inception in March.

Other regional highlights include:

- **Local Economy:** More Prairie residents (31 per cent) believe their local economy will improve in the next three months than did in March (26 per cent), which is higher than the national average of 26 per cent.
- **Personal Financial Situation (Overall):** Twenty per cent of Prairie residents say that their personal situation has improved in the last three months, an increase of six per cent from March and on par with the national average of 20 per cent. Twenty-eight per cent of Prairie residents also expect their personal situation to improve over the next three months, down six per cent since March and on par with the national average of 27 per cent.

“Saskatchewan’s economy is expected to grow by 3.8 per cent in 2010 and our forecast for Manitoba’s real GDP growth is 2.9 per cent in 2010.” said Paul Ferley, assistant chief economist.

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](http://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 3,229 Canadians (499 British Columbia, 450 Alberta, 453 Saskatchewan/Manitoba, 827 Ontario, 544 Quebec, 455 Atlantic Canada). 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. Data collection was June 1-8, 2010. 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  $\pm 1.7$  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:**

Suzanne Willers, RBC Corporate Communications, (416) 974-2727

Gillian McArdle, RBC Media Relations, (416) 974-5506