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For Immediate Release:

Monday, December 4, 2017

Contact:

Dr. Don Levy: 518-783-2901, dlevy@siena.edu

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

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Annual Statewide Poll of Holiday Spending Plans

Majority Plan to Keep Holiday Budget Unchanged in 2017; 50% Will Stay Under \$500 on Gifts; A Quarter to Spend More than \$1000 *'Merry Christmas' Top Holiday Greeting; 33% Believe in Santa* **76% Will Donate to Help Needy; 36% Plan to Volunteer**

Loudonville, NY – Sixty-one percent of New Yorkers plan to spend about the same this year as last on holiday gifts while 28 percent plan to lessen their spending and 9 percent intend to spend more according to a new statewide survey of consumers released today by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI). Half of New Yorkers plan to hold their gift spending under \$500, while 26 percent have budgeted \$1000 or more, and just under a quarter intend to spend between \$500 and \$1000 this holiday season.

A small majority of state residents, 55 percent, most often say 'Merry Christmas' rather than 'Happy Holidays' (35 percent) during this time of the year. Thirty-three percent of New Yorkers say that they believe in Santa with St. Nicholas support highest among Catholics and Latinos. Over three-quarters will be making donations of money, food or gifts to charitable organizations that focus on the needy during the holiday season and 36 percent plan to volunteer for organizations that help people during the holidays.

“With a majority of New Yorkers saying that their finances are about the same as a year ago, it’s not surprising that most hope to keep holiday spending about the same. Still, with more than two-thirds at least somewhat excited about the holiday season, overall consumer sentiment up slightly from a year ago, and appreciably from 2014, spending may well exceed best-laid plans,” according to SCRI Director, Don Levy.

“By two-to-one New Yorkers say that, as much as they can, they will buy practical gifts more than splurging on special items. While we won’t be wrapping up coal, it is more likely we’ll see needs, rather than wants, under the tree,” Levy said. “Still, every indicator, especially among affluent New Yorkers, points to increased spending this holiday season.”

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Seventy percent of New Yorkers plan to conduct at least some of their shopping online this year. Nearly 20 percent of all state residents and a quarter of younger residents as well as 28 percent of those earning at least \$100,000 a year, will do at least 75 percent of their shopping online.

Seventy percent of all New Yorkers will put up a Christmas Tree for the holidays but of those, 58 percent plan to have an artificial rather than real tree. Upstaters are most likely to have a tree in their home and while a majority are more inclined to choose an artificial tree, 46 percent of Upstate Christmas trees will be real this year.

“A large majority of New Yorkers say that there is ‘No War on Christmas’. Still, a third of all state residents and just over half of Republicans do believe that Christmas is under assault,” Levy said. “But with well over half saying that ‘Merry Christmas’ is their favorite seasonal greeting, a solid third proudly saying that Santa is real and eighty-five percent planning to celebrate Christmas, the holiday will be warmly enjoyed across New York in 2017.”

Fifteen percent of all New Yorkers including 98 percent of Jews will celebrate Hanukkah and five percent of all New Yorkers including 22 percent of African-Americans will celebrate Kwanzaa. Only 3 percent plan to include a Festivus celebration in their holiday plans. Nearly all Catholics and Protestants plan to celebrate Christmas this year and they will be joined by a quarter of Jewish New Yorkers.

The SCRI survey of Holiday Spending Plans was conducted November 6-15, 2017 by random telephone calls to 804 New York adults via landline and cell phones. Respondent sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest male in the household. Sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline and cell phone telephone numbers (both from Survey Sampling International) from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data was statistically adjusted by age, race/ethnicity and gender to ensure representativeness. SCRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of ± 4.2 points including the design effects resulting from weighting. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901. For survey cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SCRI/research.



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Sienna College Holiday Poll Trends – December 2017

As the holiday season begins, would you say you are very excited, somewhat excited, not very excited or not at all excited about the upcoming holiday season?

DATE	VERY EXCITED	SOMEWHAT EXCITED	NOT VERY EXCITED	NOT AT ALL EXCITED	DON'T KNOW
2017	33	34	17	15	2
2016	26	36	19	18	2
2014	23	35	23	18	0
2013	28	44	14	13	1
2012	26	41	18	15	0
2011	22	45	20	12	1
2010	24	45	18	13	0
2009	22	42	19	17	0
2008	24	39	25	12	1

Compared to last year (past years), do you plan to spend more money on holiday gifts, less money or about the same?

DATE	MORE MONEY	LESS MONEY	ABOUT THE SAME	DON'T KNOW
2017	9	28	61	2
2016	9	31	57	2
2014	7	32	59	1
2013	10	29	57	4
2012	13	33	53	2
2011	7	34	55	3
2010	4	37	57	2
2009	4	48	45	3
2008	5	53	41	1
2007	8	35	54	2

What is the total amount of money you plan to spend on gifts this holiday season?

DATE	\$0- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$599	\$600- \$699	\$700- \$799	\$800- \$899	\$900- \$999	\$1000+
2017	29	12	9	13	3	3	2	2	26
2016	31	11	9	13	4	2	4	3	24
2014	31	11	11	11	5	4	2	3	23
2013	28	12	8	13	5	2	3	3	25
2012	23	10	10	14	4	3	3	3	29
2011	27	14	9	13	3	4	3	2	26
2010	26	13	14	11	4	2	4	3	23
2009	30	13	11	11	4	3	2	3	23
2008	28	11	10	13	4	4	3	3	23
2007	21	11	8	14	5	3	3	2	33

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What percentage of your holiday shopping is done online?

DATE	NONE	0-25%	25%-50%	50%-75%	75%-100%	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	28	18	17	16	19	2
2016	33	16	17	15	18	1
2014	34	16	19	17	13	1
2013	33	20	18	18	10	2
2012	43	21	16	12	7	1
2011	43	21	14	13	9	0
2010	45	29	16	7	2	1
2009	51	22	15	7	4	1
2008	51	28	12	5	2	1

Thinking about the gifts that you purchase for others during the holiday season, which of these two statements more closely matches your approach?

DATE	BUY PRACTICAL GIFTS	SPLURGE ON SPECIAL GIFTS	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	61	32	6
2016	62	31	7
2014	65	31	4

This year will you be making any donations of money, food or gifts to charitable organizations that focus on the needy during the holiday season?

DATE	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	76	22	2
2016	76	20	4
2014	75	23	3
2013	76	20	4
2012	77	19	4
2011	77	20	3
2010	77	19	4
2009	72	20	7
2008	77	21	1
2007	81	17	2

Do you plan to volunteer any of your time this holiday season for organizations that help people during the holidays?

DATE	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	36	62	3
2016	37	60	3
2014	36	62	2
2013	33	63	4
2012	39	58	4
2011	31	66	3
2010	33	63	4
2009	30	65	4
2008	37	62	1
2007	34	65	1

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Of the following, during this time of the year, which greeting is the one you yourself most often use, is it...

DATE	MERRY CHRISTMAS	HAPPY HOLIDAYS	SEASONS' GREETINGS	OTHER/DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
2017	55	35	5	5
2016	51	38	6	5
2014	51	38	6	5
2013	47	44	4	5
2012	55	38	5	2
2011	53	37	8	2
2010	53	38	5	3
2009	56	35	3	7

Do you put up a Christmas Tree in your home for the holiday season?

DATE	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	70	29	1
2016	72	28	1
2014	70	30	0
2013	73	27	0
2012	75	24	1
2011	75	25	0
2010	74	26	1

(If put up Christmas Tree) Do you have a real tree or an artificial tree in your home?

DATE	REAL TREE	ARTIFICIAL TREE	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	42	58	0
2016	38	61	1
2014	38	61	1
2013	42	57	1
2012	39	60	1
2011	40	59	1
2010	42	58	0

Would you say you believe in Santa Claus or not?

DATE	BELIEVE	DO NOT BELIEVE	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2017	33	66	1
2016	32	65	2
2014	30	68	1
2013	30	69	1
2012	37	62	1
2011	30	69	1
2010	30	69	1