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**Annual Statewide Poll of Holiday Spending Plans**

**Every Indicator Up; Holiday Spending Plans Increase in 2012**

***38% Say Retailers Should be Open on Thanksgiving; Nearly ¼ Plan Black Friday Shopping***  
**Volunteering, Belief in Santa Rise; 27% Worry about Putting on Pounds**

**Loudonville, NY** – More New Yorkers plan to increase their holiday spending, buy gifts for more people, and spend slightly more on those gifts compared to last year according to a new statewide survey of consumers released today by the Siena (College) Research Institute. Thirteen percent, almost doubling last year's 7 percent, intend to spend more on gifts this year. Fifteen percent, virtually unchanged from 14 percent last year are adding items for those on their shopping list but those cutting back decreased from 21 to 16 percent and 16 percent are spending more on those individuals on their list (up from 11 percent a year ago).

“By no means are New Yorkers planning a holiday spending frenzy, but every indicator is trending upwards,” according to Dr. Don Levy, SRI's Director. “The percentage of residents holding their holiday budget under \$600 has dropped from 61 to 57 percent and those planning to exceed \$1000 in shopping cheer increased from 26 to 29 percent. The economy continues to dampen some spirits but even that Bah Humbug has lessened.”

While a majority, 54 percent, think retailers should not be open to shoppers on Thanksgiving night, nearly four out of ten New Yorkers and 55 percent of those 18 to 34 think they should. The percentage of residents that say they normally shop on Black Friday has remained constant at 19 percent but this year nearly a quarter, 23 percent of all residents and almost a third of both young adults and those with children plan to shop on Friday.

Again this year, nearly 80 percent of New Yorkers will be making donations of money, food or gifts to charitable organizations that focus on the needy during the holiday season and 39 percent, up from 31 percent a year ago, plan to volunteer time this holiday season for organizations that help people during the holidays.

Thirty-seven percent of state residents, up from 30 percent a year ago, say they believe in Santa Claus. Belief in Santa is greatest among older New Yorkers and is stronger among women than it is among men.

Over a quarter of New Yorkers, 27 percent, think they will gain weight during the holiday season while two-thirds believe they will avoid putting on extra pounds.

“The economy continues to be a concern for many New Yorkers. Similar to last year, half of residents say that compared to the last holiday season their personal finances have remained about the same and again this year, only about a quarter feel as though things have gotten better. But as fewer allow the state of the economy to have a negative effect on their holiday spending plans and more add dollars to their budget, and names to their list, we can expect more gifts to be exchanged and more activity at the mall,” Levy notes.

Clothing is the top gift again this season with 73 percent of all New Yorkers and 86 percent of those with children at home planning to give clothing as a gift. Sixty-two percent are shopping for toys with about 70 percent of 18-49 year olds focused there. Twenty-six percent plan to give jewelry with 18-34 year olds leading at 35 percent. Televisions, computers, smartphones, tablets, mp3 players or e-readers, with about 10 percent shopping for each item, are on many New Yorkers’ shopping lists.

Seventy-five percent of all New Yorkers continue to say that they do put up a Christmas tree in their home for the holiday season. Greater percentages of Upstaters (84%) and Suburbanites (83%) than New York City residents (64%) set up a holiday tree. Of those that do have a Christmas tree in their home, a majority of 60 percent choose an artificial tree while 39 percent prefer a real tree.

“‘Merry Christmas’ continues to be the top holiday salutation of fifty-five percent of all New Yorkers and sixty-six percent of those that believe in Santa” according to Levy.

Sixty-five percent of New Yorkers (up from 59% a year ago) say they try to purchase most of their gifts from locally owned and operated businesses. Shopping online is unchanged this year with 56 percent (54% in 2010, 48% in 2009) surfing the internet for gifts, most notably among higher income consumers (81 up from 76%).

“Large majorities of New Yorkers say the holiday season is their favorite time of the year and a time to connect with family and friends, and to reflect on what is most important in life. Again this year, most wish the decorations and ads didn’t start so early and that the holidays weren’t so commercialized. But, across New York, after what for many feels like years of cutting back, a growing number are ready to cut loose.

“And already planning ahead, nearly four in ten residents plan to make a New Year’s resolution. While many vow to be a better person, quit smoking, make more money or get more organized, topping the list is losing weight or getting in healthier shape.” Levy said.

**The SRI survey of Holiday Spending Plans was conducted November 12-15, 18, 2012 by random telephone calls to 727 New York adults via landline and cell phones. Data was statistically adjusted by age, and gender to ensure representativeness. SRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of  $\pm$  3.6 points. The Siena College Research Institute, under the direction of Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in New York State. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at [www.siena.edu/sri/resesearch](http://www.siena.edu/sri/resesearch)**



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**Siena College Holiday Poll Trends – November 2012**

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 |
|------|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 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 |
|------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| 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          |

Are you buying gifts for more, fewer or the same number of individuals as last year?

| DATE | MORE | FEWER | SAME | DON'T KNOW |
|------|------|-------|------|------------|
| 2012 | 15   | 16    | 67   | 2          |
| 2011 | 14   | 21    | 61   | 3          |
| 2010 | 10   | 20    | 67   | 3          |
| 2009 | 8    | 25    | 64   | 3          |
| 2008 | 10   | 29    | 60   | 1          |
| 2007 | 12   | 20    | 67   | 1          |

Per individual on your list, are you spending more money, less money or about the same as last year?

| DATE | MORE MONEY | LESS MONEY | ABOUT THE SAME | DON'T KNOW |
|------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| 2012 | 16         | 25         | 56             | 3          |
| 2011 | 11         | 29         | 56             | 3          |
| 2010 | 8          | 32         | 56             | 4          |
| 2009 | 8          | 34         | 55             | 4          |
| 2008 | 7          | 42         | 48             | 3          |
| 2007 | 12         | 24         | 60             | 3          |

Compared to last holiday season, would you say that you are better off, worse off or about the same regarding your personal finances?

| DATE | BETTER OFF | WORSE OFF | ABOUT THE SAME | DON'T KNOW |
|------|------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| 2012 | 23         | 26        | 50             | 0          |
| 2011 | 23         | 30        | 47             | 0          |
| 2010 | 17         | 26        | 56             | 0          |
| 2009 | 13         | 40        | 46             | 1          |
| 2008 | 14         | 45        | 40             | 1          |
| 2007 | 21         | 28        | 50             | 2          |

# Siena College Holiday Poll Trends – November 2012

Page 2

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

| DATE | \$0-<br>\$299 | \$300-<br>\$399 | \$400-<br>\$499 | \$500-<br>\$599 | \$600-<br>\$699 | \$700-<br>\$799 | \$800-<br>\$899 | \$900-<br>\$999 | \$1000+ |
|------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| 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      |

What percentage of your holiday shopping is done online?

| DATE | NONE | 0-25% | 25%-50% | 50%-75% | 75%-100% | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED |
|------|------|-------|---------|---------|----------|--------------------|
| 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                  |

As you plan your holiday spending, do you intend to pay for all your gifts and other spending in cash or as soon as the bill arrives, or do you plan to pay off your holiday spending over a period of time that could extend well into (the next year)?

| DATE | PAY NOW | PAY LATER | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED |
|------|---------|-----------|--------------------|
| 2012 | 84      | 12        | 5                  |
| 2011 | 83      | 12        | 4                  |

Do you plan to purchase a gift for yourself this holiday season?

| DATE | YES | NO | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED |
|------|-----|----|--------------------|
| 2012 | 28  | 69 | 3                  |
| 2011 | 31  | 67 | 2                  |

Do you believe the current state of the economy will have a negative effect on your holiday spending plans, a positive effect or no effect at all?

| DATE | POSITIVE | NEGATIVE | NO EFFECT | DON'T KNOW |
|------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 2012 | 10       | 32       | 57        | 1          |
| 2011 | 6        | 39       | 53        | 1          |
| 2010 | 5        | 41       | 53        | 2          |
| 2009 | 4        | 45       | 49        | 2          |
| 2008 | 9        | 56       | 35        | 1          |
| 2007 | 6        | 39       | 52        | 3          |

Do you normally shop on Black Friday, that is, the Friday after Thanksgiving?

| DATE | YES | NO | SOMETIMES | DON'T KNOW |
|------|-----|----|-----------|------------|
| 2012 | 19  | 76 | 4         | 0          |
| 2011 | 19  | 78 | 4         | 0          |
| 2010 | 22  | 74 | 3         | 0          |
| 2009 | 19  | 76 | 5         | 0          |

Will you be shopping on the Friday after Thanksgiving this year?

| DATE | YES | NO | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|------|-----|----|-------|------------|
| 2012 | 23  | 69 | 7     | 1          |
| 2011 | 19  | 74 | 7     | 1          |
| 2010 | 22  | 68 | 9     | 1          |
| 2009 | 20  | 69 | 9     | 2          |

# Siena College Holiday Poll Trends – November 2012

Page 3

(If definitely or possibly shopping on Black Friday this year) About what percentage of your holiday shopping do you expect to complete on that day?

| DATE | LESS THAN 25% | 25%-50% | 50%-75% | MORE THAN 75% | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED |
|------|---------------|---------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 2012 | 34            | 31      | 21      | 10            | 3                  |
| 2011 | 29            | 20      | 29      | 18            | 3                  |
| 2010 | 25            | 30      | 27      | 15            | 3                  |
| 2009 | 28            | 39      | 24      | 6             | 3                  |

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 |
|------|-----|----|--------------------|
| 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 |
|------|-----|----|--------------------|
| 2012 | 39  | 58 | 4                  |
| 2011 | 31  | 66 | 3                  |
| 2010 | 33  | 63 | 4                  |
| 2009 | 30  | 65 | 4                  |
| 2008 | 37  | 62 | 1                  |
| 2007 | 34  | 65 | 1                  |

For each of the following types of gifts, please tell me whether you are planning on buying that type of gift, not planning on buying it or not sure if you are buying that type of gift this holiday season.

## Clothing

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 73             | 18                   | 8        | 0       |
| 2011 | 73             | 18                   | 8        | 1       |

## Toys

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 62             | 33                   | 5        | 0       |
| 2011 | 57             | 37                   | 5        | 1       |

## Jewelry

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 26             | 57                   | 17       | 0       |
| 2011 | 29             | 57                   | 14       | 1       |

## Television

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 10             | 82                   | 7        | 0       |
| 2011 | 9              | 84                   | 6        | 1       |

# Siena College Holiday Poll Trends – November 2012

Page 4

## Desktop Computer

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 3              | 92                   | 5        | 0       |
| 2011 | 5              | 91                   | 3        | 1       |

## Laptop Computer

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 10             | 85                   | 5        | 0       |
| 2011 | 10             | 83                   | 6        | 1       |

## Smartphone

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 11             | 84                   | 5        | 0       |
| 2011 | 10             | 84                   | 5        | 1       |

## Tablet

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 14             | 75                   | 11       | 0       |
| 2011 | 11             | 78                   | 10       | 1       |

## E-Reader

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 8              | 82                   | 9        | 1       |
| 2011 | 10             | 79                   | 10       | 1       |

## MP3 Player

| DATE | PLAN ON BUYING | DON'T PLAN ON BUYING | NOT SURE | REFUSED |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------|---------|
| 2012 | 10             | 83                   | 7        | 0       |
| 2011 | 10             | 83                   | 6        | 1       |

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/<br>REFUSED |
|------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 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 |
|------|-----|----|--------------------|
| 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 |
|------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2012 | 39        | 60              | 1                  |
| 2011 | 40        | 59              | 1                  |
| 2010 | 42        | 58              | 0                  |

# Siena College Holiday Poll Trends – November 2012

Page 5

Would you say you believe in Santa Claus or not?

| <b>DATE</b> | <b>BELIEVE</b> | <b>DO NOT BELIEVE</b> | <b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b> |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 2012        | 37             | 62                    | 1                         |
| 2011        | 30             | 69                    | 1                         |
| 2010        | 30             | 69                    | 1                         |