

For Immediate Release

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**HOLIDAY FORECAST #1 FROM AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP REVEALS
CONSUMERS FINDING A WAY TO SURVIVE IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES
55% SAY THEY ARE NOT SPENDING LESS; 45% SAY THEY HAVE BEEN
SPENDING LESS ALL YEAR LONG AND ARE CONTINUING NOW
SAVINGS/RETIREMENT BIGGEST HURDLE
BLACK FRIDAY WEEKEND CROWDS EXPECTED AT ALL TIME HIGH
VAST MAJORITY SAY IF SHOP WILL DEPEND ON SALES
NUMBER OF AMERICANS EXPECTING BIGGER DEALS WAY UP
OF THOSE SHOPPING BLACK FRIDAY 77.8% WILL BUY
EARLY-BIRD SPECIALS – ALL TIME HIGH**

CHARLESTON, SC - According to America's Research Group's first Holiday Forecast of the season, American consumers are finding a way to spend less by reducing the number of stores they shop; by not using credit cards; and by opting to give highly affordable gift cards as their primary gift choice. Yet Black Friday weekend will be the biggest in history as long as retailers provide unprecedented deals.

Moreover, when asked the question, "Since Donald Trump was elected president will you spend more or less", 13.2% said they would spend more versus 8% when Obama was elected and 4% right after Clinton's election. Of that 13.2%, all are in the \$75,000 and up income bracket so that while the season could be lackluster if retailers don't offer extraordinary deals, the number of high-end shoppers spending more due to the election could take a potentially lackluster season to one where sales are up 3% to 3 ½%.

The shopping season will depend more than ever on what retailers choose to do. If they offer unprecedented deals on early bird specials, Americans will shop; if not, they will stay home. Deal fever is at an all-time high with 77.8% of Americans telling us they will buy the early bird specials, an all-time high. The number expecting bigger deals is up, at 33.9%; and more are influenced by store advertising at an unusually high 45.3%.

The greatest percentage ever will opt for gift cards, at a very high 62.7% but in the affordable \$21-\$25 range.

Additional survey results include: 30.3% say they are spending less this season because there is nothing to buy/nothing new/nothing they must have; those shopping for more people, at 31.3%, is the highest in nine years; Americans are still worried about credit card debt with 24.8% saying they are using a credit card, significantly below that in the last five years..

Amazon is the season's winner with 25.2% saying they will shop there more; and only 14.8% saying they will do so less often. Of those buying online, e-tailers are at an all-time high at 46.5%. Meanwhile, those saying they will shop at Walmart less often is also at an all-time high at 20.6%.

Black Friday is a winner crowd-wise – as long as retailers provide unprecedented early bird specials. With more than three quarters of Americans depending on them, it could be the biggest Black Friday in history. Video games are the season's alternative to toys at 60.6%, an all-time high. At 24.6%, another all-time high, toys are low on parents' lists this year because they say there is nothing new.

Parents who tell us their children feel the financial pressure is way up at 21.5%; and parents who say they are drastically cutting back is also up, at 34.9%.

“It all depends on the retailers,” says Britt Beemer, Chairman of America's Research Group.

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For media on deadline, please call Britt Beemer directly at 843-345-0939

The ARG research consisted of 1000 telephone interviews November 10-14, 2016 with adults at ARG headquarters in Charleston, SC. The error factor is plus or minus 3.8%. The next ARG shopping survey will be conducted November 16-21, 2016. The surveys will continue every week through the shopping season.

America's Research Group, one of the nation's foremost consumer research and strategic marketing firms, marked its 36th anniversary in 2015 and its 25th of doing these Christmas Surveys. CEO Britt Beemer is a key resource and advisor to leading brands and top retailers. He is author of *The Customer Rules*, published by McGraw-Hill. Britt Beemer is a winner of the American Business Award for Executive of the Year - Business Services and Company of the Year - Business Services.