

For Immediate Release

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**NEW AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP UPDATED CHRISTMAS SHOPPING
FORECAST REVEALS
FAR FEWER SHOPPERS LAST TWO WEEKENDS - BREAKING 10-YEAR RECORD
CHRISTMAS "HIBER-NATION" GAINING MOMENTUM
RECORD NUMBER - ONLY 17.1% - DONE, 12 MILLION FEWER THAN 2011
RECORD NUMBER STAY WITHIN BUDGET AT 75% - HIGHEST IN 11 YEARS
49.1% WAITING FOR 70% OFF
CASH STILL KING (ONLY 15.5% USE CREDIT CARDS)
SELF-GIFTING - BIG 2011 TREND - WAY DOWN
RECORD NUMBERS GOING TO FEWER STORES**

CHARLESTON, SC - According to the America's Research Group Updated Christmas Shopping Forecast based on research concluded Sunday, December 9, 2012, far fewer Americans shopped the last two weekends than at any time in the last ten years (42.6% this year with the previous low being 43.1% in 2002). Only 17.1% of Americans are done shopping (12 million more were finished this time last year) as "Christmas Hibernation" gains ground.

In addition: Of those who did shop this last weekend, a far greater number said they were seeing fewer discounts at 24.7%, the lowest since 2008, which was 27.5%); Self-Gifting, a major trend last season, is way down to its lowest since 2008 at 33.6%; fewer shoppers purchased any winter apparel for themselves at the lowest since 2008 (29.7% compared to 23% in 2008); more shoppers are waiting for 60% to 70% off at 49.1% this year compared to 38.4% last; and 52.4% are waiting for 50% to 60% off compared to 41.6% last year. More shoppers are going to fewer stores this year: those going to just 1-3 stores is at 27.5% this year versus 23% a year ago.

"The numbers shopping fewer stores represents a dramatic shift," said Britt Beemer, Chairman and CEO of America's Research Group, "and it is indicative of what is shaping up to be the most cautious season in a decade. A lot more people went to six to ten stores last year then are going this year at 28.8% now compared to 32.7% last year. It's simple - if you are saving money, you look at the ads and only shop the stores with the hottest deals.

"This research builds on last week's study showing that the number of Americans waiting to the last three days before Christmas to finish shopping was at a 25-year-high. This study shows only

19.5 million are done shopping compared to 31.4 million this time last year, almost 12 million fewer people. Far more shoppers also told us that they did not shop the last two weekends, which at 42.6% is the lowest in a decade.

"If retailers don't respond to Christmas Hibernation," said Beemer, "they will see soft shopping levels again this weekend and then will have to fight it out on the final weekend before Christmas, which will be a life and death retail struggle."

Christmas retail sales should rise 1.8% to 2.8% this year.

Media on deadline, please call Britt Beemer *directly* at 843-345-0939

The ARG research consisted of 1000 telephone interviewed December 8-9, 2012 at ARG headquarters in Charleston, SC. The error factor is plus or minus 3.8%. The next ARG shopping survey will be conducted December 15-16, 2012. 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 30th anniversary in 2009. 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 2012 American Business Award for Executive of the Year - Business Services and Company of the Year - Business Services.