

For Immediate Release

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**NEW AMERICA'S RESEARCH GROUP UPDATED CHRISTMAS SHOPPING
FORECAST REVEALS
NUMBER OF SHOPPERS DONE SHOPPING AT 11-YEAR LOW
RECORD CROWDS EXPECTED FRIDAY/SATURDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS
MORE ONLINE SHOPPERS REPORT SPENDING MORE
(VS. SHOPPERS OVERALL) AT 24.5%
RECORD NUMBERS STAYING HOME THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AT 71.5%
1 IN 12 SPENDING LESS DUE TO CONCERNS ABOUT FISCAL CLIFF**

CHARLESTON, SC - According to the America's Research Group Updated Christmas Shopping Forecast based on research concluded Sunday, December 16, 2012, the number of shoppers 100% done shopping is at an 11-year low at 32.4% (the previous low was 33.6% in 2006). In 2007, when there was still one weekend of shopping left, 60.4% were 90% or more done while this year only 45.2% are done. This represents a difference of 23 million Americans.

The Holiday Shopping Forecast also shows: Record crowds are expected on Friday and Saturday, December 22 and 23 when 24.7% will finish their Christmas shopping. More parents are waiting for the last weekend before Christmas to finish shopping for their children – only 52.6% are finished this year while the previous low was 56.1% back in 2006. For those spending less, job concerns as the reason is its highest since 2008 at 18.3%; and 1 in 12 or 8.4% report spending less due to concerns about the fiscal cliff. 2012 will see record numbers of Americans staying home this Christmas season at 71.5%.

The Survey includes online news: Online shopping has been fairly steady over the last five years with 2012 at 41.9%. Amazon was the king of Christmas Shopping online with 27.7% of market share. 9.5% of Americans shopped online for the first time; and more online shoppers reported spending more at 24.5% (versus 19.7% spending less).

"The numbers of shoppers holding out until the weekend before Christmas – and who held off shopping since Black Friday – continues to represent a dramatic shift," said Britt Beemer, Chairman and CEO of America's Research Group. "It is indicative of what is shaping up to be the most nail-biting season in a decade. This coming weekend retailers have a lot at stake because the entire Christmas Season is going to rest with retailers having the right promotions and getting those 25% of consumers in the front door to spend money."

This Survey builds on holiday shopping forecasts over the last three weeks, which showed that the number of Americans waiting until the last three days before Christmas to finish shopping was at a 25-year-high; and, as of last week, only 17.1% were done shopping. This week that number has risen to 32.4% – still an 11-year low.

“Those retailers who are aggressive and discount heavily,” said Beemer, “will see a huge weekend while those who decide to not be as promotional will be experiencing Christmas hibernation through the weekend. The one bright spot is online shopping, where those who are shopping report spending more this season.”

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 15-16, 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 22-23, 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.