

Driving home for the holidays

Research shows one-third of Americans are cutting back on holiday travel but committed to get home for the holidays

Basking Ridge, NJ (December 7, 2009) -- A study released today by Lightspeed Research (www.lightspeedresearch.com), a leading online market research company, reveals that the majority of Americans will be getting into their cars and driving home to visit relatives for the holidays this year. 75% of them plan to drive more than 50 miles during the holidays this December.

Cars are by far the most popular mode of transportation amongst those surveyed: 95% plan to use their car to visit family in the same state while nearly seven in 10 (69%) are prepared to trek interstate. But concerns about the economic climate and rising prices are threatening the traditional holiday homecoming. Nearly a third of those surveyed (33%) have changed their December holiday plans because they are worried about their finances.

Those currently employed were more likely to change their plans suggesting that concerns over job security may be responsible for causing consumers to reconsider their holidays – 36% of those employed have changed their travel plans compared to 28% among those who aren't working. Over half, (59%) are cutting down on what they are spending on their trip while 38% are cutting their holiday shorter than originally planned. Almost half (45%) are making their dollar stretch further by staying with family and friends for the holidays.

Americans are prepared to make sacrifices for their traditional December holidays – nearly three quarters (71%) of those surveyed said that December holidays were “very important” and that they would be prepared to make savings in other areas in order to safeguard their holiday plans. Cutting down on meals topped the list of money saving activities (57%) followed by buying fewer clothes and shoes (47%). One compromise few consumers are prepared to make is giving up their gym membership – just 6% of those surveyed had made cost-savings in this area.

According to the research, older travelers are more likely to have made their holiday plans way back in October. 47% of those aged over 55 plan their Christmas holidays more than two months in advance. Younger travelers are more likely to take off at the last minute with 28% of those aged 18-34 planning their travel just one week in advance.

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Note to Editors

The survey was carried out October 21-28, 2009. There were 1500 respondents

About Lightspeed

Through proprietary global panels and research products and services, Lightspeed Research delivers valuable data to help businesses make informed decisions. From recruitment, to activity level, to ongoing profiling, Lightspeed Research's panels are actively managed to provide engaged survey respondents and support studies that range in scope and complexity across industry sectors. Deeply profiled specialty panels including automotive, B2B, beverage, family

and household, finance, health and wellness, media consumption, mobile phone, beauty and personal care, sports and hobbies, and travel and leisure, provide quick access to target audiences. As a quality leader, Lightspeed Research has implemented extensive measures to prevent fraudulent panel registrations and poor survey data.

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