

High average ATM withdrawal value reflects rise in spending

LATEST cash withdrawal statistics released by Spark ATM Systems, South Africa's premier independent ATM deployer, revealed the highest ever December average ATM withdrawal values recorded across the country, indicating strong consumer spending and trading conditions for retailers and other businesses during the festive season.

The Spark Cash Index (SCI), which measures the average value of cash withdrawals across more than 1 500 Spark ATMs throughout the country, reflected a 2,45% year-on-year increase in December 2011, beating the previous highest value of R447 recorded in December 2010 with a value of R458.

Month-on-month cash withdrawal values also revealed a significant increase of 8,75% from November to December 2011.

As the Statistics SA's Retail Trade Sales (RTS) report only releases figures two months in arrears, the SCI provides invaluable real-time insight into retail trading and consumer spending power in SA, said Marc

Sternberg, MD of Spark ATM Systems.

"Since its launch in September 2007, it has proven to be an accurate leading indicator of retail sales.

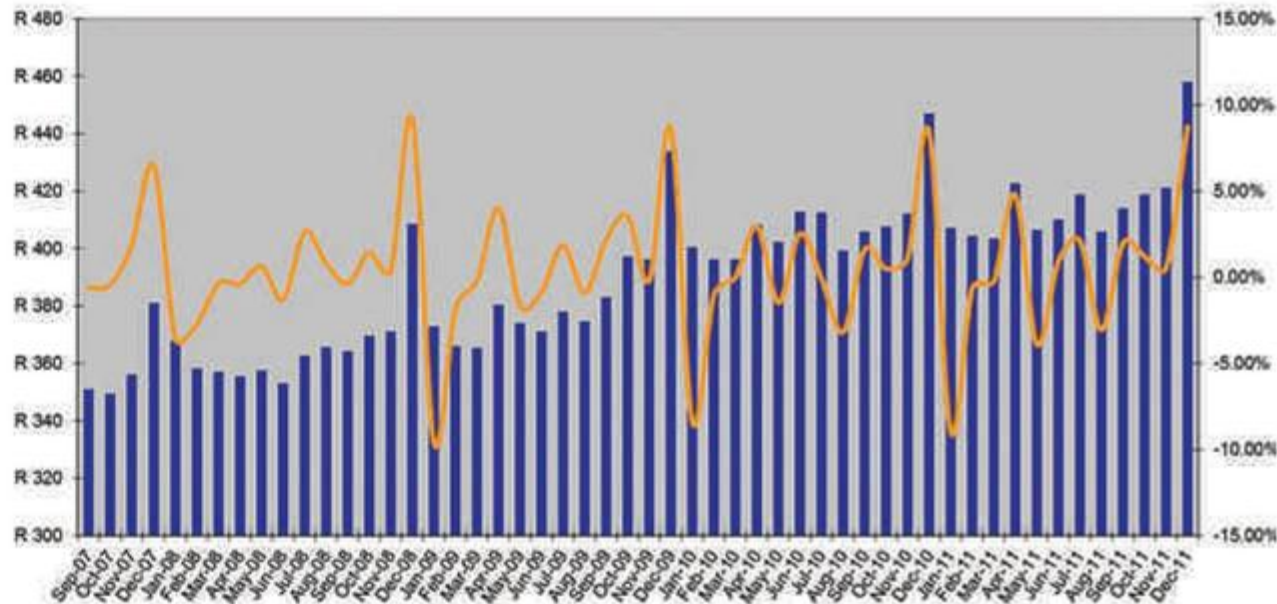
"The December 2011 results of the SCI indicate that we can expect the RTS results for December 2011 also to reflect a positive increase over the same period in 2010," said Sternberg.

Other countries have also reported an uptick in consumer spending in December.

A survey of 56 economists by Bloomberg News this week revealed sales at U.S. retailers were projected to rise by 0,3% in December, while British Retail Consortium reported a 4,1% rise in sales in December 2011 versus the same month in 2010.

The amount of cash withdrawn at ATMs is a real-time indicator of cash availability and consumer spending in the economy. From Spark ATM Systems' records, the company has noticed that over time the average amount of cash withdrawn at its network of ATMs corresponds with general economic conditions in South Africa. — Witness Reporter.

Graph A
Average cash withdrawal value



The 2011 cash withdrawal statistics reveal an upward trend.

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