

Media release:

INDEX REVEALS CONSUMER SPENDING OFF TO GOOD START IN DECEMBER

13 December 2011: Latest cash withdrawal statistics released by Spark ATM Systems, South Africa's premier independent ATM deployer, reveal that festive season spending is off to a good start in the first few days of December.

The Spark Cash Index (SCI)*, which measures the average value of withdrawals across more than 1,500 Spark ATMs throughout the country, reflected a 2.12% year-on-year increase for the period 1 - 11 December, increasing from R425 to R434.

As the Stats SA's Retail Trade Sales report only releases figures two months in arrears, the SCI provides invaluable real-time insight into retail trading and cash availability conditions in South Africa. Since its launch in September 2007, it has proven to be an accurate leading indicator of retail sales.

"The Christmas spending spike has yet to kick in but so far the increase in the value of cash in circulation for the first few days of December is positive and in line with the historic trend for this time of the year. Next week's trading will be interesting as the first major Christmas shopping weekend is looming this weekend," says Marc Sternberg, MD of Spark ATM Systems.

It is likely that the highest withdrawal value of R447, recorded during December 2010, will be beaten this December, says Sternberg.

**About the Spark Cash Index (SCI): The amount of cash withdrawn at ATMs is a real-time indicator of cash availability and consumer spending in the economy. From Spark ATM Systems' records the company has noticed that over time the average amount of cash withdrawn at its network of ATMs corresponds with general economic conditions in South Africa. The Index also points to consumer trends such as the variations in cash withdrawn based on prevailing economic conditions, particularly variations in the prime interest rate and seasonal peaks and dips.*

The value for the SCI is obtained using the following formula: Cash dispensed for the month divided by the number of cash withdrawals for the month across a selection of Spark ATM's network of ATMs. The sample size is very large, and covers both urban and rural areas across all nine provinces of South Africa, therefore representing a very good cross section of South African consumers. The data presented is raw data and has not been adjusted for seasonality or for the effects of inflation.

About Spark ATM Systems:

Spark ATM Systems is South Africa's premier independent ATM deployer importing, installing and maintaining world-leading Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in the South African convenience ATM market including retail, hospitality, leisure and rural locations. Established in 2005, Spark ATM Systems has a national footprint with sales and technical capabilities across the country, ensuring cash is readily available anytime, anywhere. Visit www.sparkatm.co.za for more information.

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