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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Cash withdrawals on the rise

2010/02/15

**South Africa has seen an increase in cash demand during January compared to previous years, according to figures released recently. The Spark Cash Index, which tracks and provides real time consumer data, shows that average ATM cash withdrawals for the January 2010 period increased by 7.4% year on year.**

The amount of cash withdrawn at ATMs is a real-time indicator of cash availability and spend in the economy. The data released by the Spark Cash Index shows that consumer spending may be increasing. Marc Sternberg, MD of Spark ATM Systems comments that this clearly shows an increased appetite for spending as recessionary pressures subside and consumer confidence returns.

Adds Sternberg: "South African consumers are following the international demand for safe and convenient access to cash, with retailers rolling out independent ATMs countrywide. This new trend has been encouraged by the massive influx of 2010 World Cup supporters who will be used to having safe and convenient access to cash. Not only do these ATMs benefit consumers and retailers but also offer valuable real time consumer data which is presented on the Spark Cash Index.

What is further evident from the data is that consumers respond quickly to changing economic conditions, particularly variations in the prime interest rate. The Index has shown that transaction data closely mirrors interest rate fluctuations in an inverse relationship. According to Sternberg, when the interest rate has decreased, average cash withdrawals have increased, and vice versa.

The Spark Cash Index is a valuable and reliable indicator of consumer trends, as the Spark ATMs are installed in key retail positions and respond fastest to consumer patterns and appetites.

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