

Based on the information from our surveys, Canadian shoppers cross the border an average of 11 times a year. Sixty percent of these shopping trips involve staying one or more nights. The average amount of money (in U.S. funds) spent per trip is \$332. Although a wide variety of goods are purchased, the most popular items include: clothing, food/groceries, shoes, houseware, hardware, gifts, sporting goods, electronics and auto supplies. Most of the purchases were made either using U.S. currency or credit cards. Currency exchange typically occurs either at a Canadian bank or at the point of sale. Many merchants provide the opportunity to pay for goods using Canadian funds so that currency exchange is not an issue; in fact, cash registers with two tills are a common bordertown trend. Exchanging currency at the stores is popular because of the convenience and because the stores often offer a better exchange rate than the banks.

Numerous factors influence Canadians to shop in the U.S. The most often mentioned reasons include: an opportunity to purchase something different from what they find at home, a larger variety of goods available in the U.S., already in the U.S. for recreation/tourism, higher prices in Canada and a means to avoid paying the GST. Several people mentioned that Spokane was the largest city near to them, and as a result, traveled there not only for shopping but for recreation, visiting friends, and various types of cultural and entertainment activities. Most Canadian shoppers in the greater Spokane-Coeur d'Alene region come from the following cities in British Columbia and Alberta: Trail, Calgary, Grand Forks, Nelson, Castlegar, Christina Lake, Kelowna, Cranbrook, Rossland, Vernon, Nakusp, Red Deer, Vancouver, Quesnel, Genelle and Kimberley.

While cross border shopping has had a tremendous impact on border communities in the Inland Northwest by reorienting the market in a