

## *TIPS FOR SAVING \$\$ DURING THE HOLIDAYS!...*

*Now that the pumpkins have been set aside for another year, it is time to turn our thoughts to tinsel and “Jingle Bells”. With that comes the temptation to overspend and miss out on the joy that the holidays bring. Many plans need to be made – don’t forget to plan your spending and saving carefully so that the after-holiday bills don’t steal your joy. We are pleased to offer a few tips to help keep your “White Christmas” in the black.*

- \* Take note of how many pay periods there will be between now and Christmas, and figure out how much will have to be saved during that period of time. Determine how much of your income you can put toward your holiday spending.
- \* Start early to get items on sale and to spread your spending out over the year.
- \* Make a list of who you want to buy for, and then cross off as many names as possible. Send cards or small items when you can.
- \* Set an overall limit on holiday spending, taking into account shopping, parties, travel, charitable donations, office get-togethers and the other incidentals that seem to crop up at this time of year. Stick to your budget!
- \* Make a list of ideas and set a budget for each person so you don’t end up spending your whole day browsing or making impulse purchases.
- \* Cross items and people off your list as you shop so you don’t buy for anyone twice.
- \* Plan to give gifts of your time to people who can use it (ie. free babysitting, car washes, offer to paint a room, cook dinner, etc.).
- \* Return to an “old-fashioned” Christmas: Use your skills and make hand-made gifts for as many people as possible.
- \* Ask the store clerks whether a sale will be starting soon before you make a purchase.
- \* Watch the flyers for sales and take advantage of the tax-free incentives that merchants and shopping malls offer.
- \* Get together with friends and family to give group gifts, or draw names instead of gifting to everyone.
- \* Give a donation to a charity or sponsor a child in the name of several people.
- \* Challenge your spouse to keep to a smaller budget and see who can be the most creative! (*example*: try to spend no more than \$50, but each must purchase at least 3 items).
- \* Save money on gift wrapping by using items around your house (ie. comic pages, brown butcher paper, re-used gift bags, baby blankets), or shop at “dollar” stores.
- \* Take advantage of levees, free holiday breakfasts, etc. to help your celebrations.
- \* Plan for next year by contributing monthly to a savings account or Canada Savings Bonds.
- \* Quit shopping when you’ve bought the last gift on your list.
- \* Make the holidays about the giving and not about the gift.
- \* *Search the internet for more great ideas. Use keywords such as, “gifts from your kitchen”, “cheap Christmas”, etc.*

*For more information on budgeting, visit our website at [www.mydebtsolution.net](http://www.mydebtsolution.net)*