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Credit and Debit Cards to Capture \$108 Billion in Holiday Retail Sales CardWeb.com's CardTrak Projects \$17 Billion for Black Friday Weekend

FREDERICK, Md. - (BusinessWire) - Nov. 23, 2004 -- Between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, Americans will charge nearly \$108 billion in retail purchases on general-purpose credit/charge cards, signature debit cards, and store credit cards, about 6.2% more than 2003. According to CardWeb.com's® CardTrak® service, consumers will rack up \$2.6 million per minute on payment cards during the 29 shopping days. On average, households with at least one credit or debit card, will charge \$1,285 between the holidays. This does not include groceries, gasoline, restaurant, and travel expenses.

Consumers in California are expected to use credit and debit cards to charge \$15.4 billion in retail sales while New Yorkers will pull out plastic for \$9.0 billion. Floridians will charge \$7.8 billion, Texans \$6.1 billion, as consumers in Illinois say "charge it" to \$5.5 billion in retail sales.

The Black Friday weekend (Nov 26-28) should bring the most activity as retailers are expected to tally up retail sales of \$11.9 billion on VISA®, MasterCard®, American Express®, and Discover® credit cards, \$2.8 billion on VISA- and MasterCard-branded signature debit cards, and \$2.7 billion on store credit cards.

The busiest full week is expected to be December 13-19 when Americans should charge more than \$27 billion of retail sales on payment cards, or roughly one-fourth of the total sales anticipated during the holiday season.

Slightly more than 65% of all retail sales on cards will be on major credit cards while \$16 billion in retail sales will land on store credit cards, according to CardWeb.com's CardData® executive service.

Signature debit cards continue to capture more of holiday spending, nearly 20% of retail sales on cards this year. Overall purchase dollar volume on VISA and MasterCard signature debit cards is growing at an annual rate of 16%.

Gift cards are also emerging as a significant player in the payment card market with sales expected to top \$10 billion during the holiday season. Gift card sales currently average \$4.5 billion per month, according to CardData.

Holiday spending may add about \$6 billion to overall revolving credit in January. Last year Americans added \$5.4 billion to revolving credit in January and \$4.5 billion in January 2002. Approximately 60% of the \$86.4 billion expected to be charged to major credit cards and store credit cards during the holiday season will likely be paid-off in full, and without interest charges, during the January billing cycle. Therefore, about \$35 billion in retail charges on general-purpose credit cards and store credit cards may accrue some interest next year.

2004 Holiday Retail Sales on Payment Cards				
Shopping Period	CARD TYPE (\$ billions)			
	Credit	Debit	Store	Total
Nov 26-28:	\$11.9	\$2.8	\$2.7	\$17.4
Nov 29-Dec 5:	\$14.5	\$4.1	\$3.2	\$21.8

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Dec 6-12:	\$16.2	\$5.3	\$3.7	\$25.2
Dec 13-19:	\$17.3	\$6.0	\$3.9	\$27.2
Dec 20-24:	\$10.6	\$3.1	\$2.4	\$16.1
TOTAL:	\$70.5	\$21.3	\$15.9	\$107.7

Source: CardWeb.com's CardData

CardTrak® (www.cardtrak.com) is a monthly consumer service of CardWeb.com providing commentary and advice on current trends and the latest offers. CardTrak provides current pricing information on all types of general purpose credit cards including standard, gold, platinum, student, reward, secured/sub-prime, and business cards.

CardData® (www.carddata.com) is a database of comprehensive metrics on credit card and debit card portfolios and networks, providing near real-time financial surveillance. The CardData database reaches back 10 to 24 years for most statistics.

CardWeb.com, Inc.®, founded in 1986, provides competitive information to the payment card industry on a fee basis and free comparative information to consumers. The firm tracks credit cards, debit cards, prepaid cards, smart cards, ATMs, terminals, etc. The privately owned firm is based in Frederick, Maryland with satellite offices in London and Sydney. For more information, visit www.cardweb.com.

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