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ClearOne Advantage Recommends Budgeting, Financial Planning for Consumers in the New Year

Summary:

Encouraged by a surge in the Consumer Confidence Index, ClearOne Advantage executives are cautiously optimistic for an improved economy in 2012, and are recommending that consumers begin 2012 with a financial budget in order to spend wisely and avoid additional credit card debt in the New Year.

Baltimore, MD, December 30, 2011- Executives at ClearOne Advantage, a Maryland-based debt resolution company, encouraged by an increase in the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI), are urging consumers to start the New Year on the right financial foot.

“As we head into the New Year, we can already see some encouraging signs,” said ClearOne Advantage Chief Operating Officer John Wrinn referring to the CCI, which rose much more than expected in December. Wrinn and other ClearOne Advantage executives are encouraged by this news, as well as holiday retail reports that indicate better-than-expected sales.

The CCI is issued by The Conference Board, an independent economic research organization. Their monthly Consumer Confidence Survey is “a monthly report detailing consumer attitudes and buying intentions.” Simply put, the more confident consumers feel about the economy, the more likely they are to make purchases. According to an article by CNBC, “the surge builds on another big increase in November, when the index rose almost 15 points from the month before.”

This news comes in the wake of a holiday shopping season that surpassed expectation, according to the National Retail Federation, and—with returns and gift cards pulling consumers back into stores—is not yet over.

“While these positive indicators are certainly welcome news, consumers should be ready to spend money wisely in the New Year,” said Wrinn. To help their debt settlement clients and all consumers in the New Year, ClearOne Advantage is offering a few financial tips for starting 2012 off right:

- **Prioritize 2012 goals:** Instead of casually declaring New Year’s resolutions, write down one specific and realistic goal.
- **Plan now for next year:** With the holidays still fresh in mind, consumers should record all of their holiday spending, save receipts in a “Holidays 2011” envelope, and plan to set aside cash next year.

- Use gift cards before they expire: Consumer should avoid throwing gift cards in a drawer or waiting until stores begin imposing fees or reducing the value of the card. But once in the store, consumers should stick as close as possible to the gift card's value.
- Budget: Tracking expenses can reveal exactly where money goes each month, which can also help consumers find ways to save more money by cutting unnecessary spending. Consumers should learn a few options for creating a budget, choose the best method for their family, and stick to it year round.
- Commit to using coupons consistently: Shoppers can save \$5 to \$15 per grocery trip, and possibly more with the grocery store's loyalty savings card.
- Start filing taxes: Start collecting records now, find necessary forms on the [IRS website](#) and consider e-filing. When taxpayers e-file, they received their refunds faster (especially when using direct deposit) and confirmation that their forms were received. Plus taxpayers who find out they owe this year will have more time to plan for that payment.

“There are many ways that individuals can start the New Year with realistic financial goals,” said Wrinn. “At ClearOne Advantage, we aim to help individuals struggling with overwhelming debt get the help they deserve in 2012.”

Wrinn explained that while some economic indicators give people hope about the country’s economic improvements, many individuals will continue to feel financial pressure while unemployment rates remain high. Companies like ClearOne Advantage help consumers settle their unsecured debts, such as credit card debt and medical bills, at the time they need professional assistance.

To learn more visit ClearOneAdvantage.com.

ABOUT US:

ClearOne Advantage is a full-service debt settlement company providing settlements of credit cards and other unsecured debts. Our executive leadership team is comprised of financial industry professionals with expertise in many of the industries that provide consumer lending services, making ClearOne Advantage the obvious choice when looking to settle debt. To learn more about the products and services that make ClearOne Advantage an easy choice in debt settlement call 1-888-785-5376 or visit ClearOneAdvantage.com.

RESOURCES:

CNBC.com

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/45795931>

The Conference Board

<http://www.conference-board.org/data/consumerconfidence.cfm>

Consumer Reports Poll
ConsumerReports.org

National Retail Federation

http://www.nrf.com/modules.php?name=News&op=viewlive&sp_id=1278

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