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Black Friday Frenzy

By Rachael Morrow

Shoppers began lining up hours before dawn Friday morning. And those long lines outside translated into long lines inside and led some consumers to develop a shopping strategy.

"I'm holding a place for my wife. She's out picking up a few things that are on our list and hopefully she'll get back and we'll get through the registers," shopper Glen Button explained. "After we saw the length of the lines, we thought, 'This is probably a good plan to follow.'"

At 5:30 a.m. Friday the Manager at Kohl's estimated there were nearly 4,000 shoppers in his store. And numbers like that are good news for retailers, who pull in 20 percent to 50 percent of their annual sales during the holiday season. They need a strong showing on Black Friday and in the run up to Christmas to help them rebound from an economy in a deepening recession.

"I think the big issue out there is what decisions will individual consumers make? It's almost like the election, you know, every individual choice people make is going to determine what happens with our economy this time," said Tasha Wallis, of the Vt. Retail Association.

And this year consumers are expected to make a budget and check it twice, with nearly 40 percent of people saying sales will be the biggest deciding factor in where they shop this year.

"When people don't feel as wealthy-- even if they are taking home the same size paycheck-- if they don't they don't feel as wealthy, it has an effect on their spending attitude," economist Jeff Carr said.

"We always wait until (Black Friday) to do our shopping. We go through the sales flyers, buy the stuff that's on sale and hopefully stay under budget," shopper Eliza Peters said.

"We just come out to see all the people and see if we can get any good deals," shopper Holly Glasser said.

And since banks have also made it harder to get credit the National Retail Federation says 60 percent of shoppers will stick to smaller items this year, like clothing, books and DVDs-- showing that consumers plan to be money savvy through Christmas.

Experts predict that many families have put off buying necessities so they can give them as gifts during the holidays. For example, some kids could be seeing winter clothes under the Christmas tree, instead of electronics.

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