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Black Friday brings crowds

*By Greg Duggan
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...Tasha Wallis, executive director of the Vermont Retail Association, said, "Because of uncertainty around the economy," a lot of attention was focused on the retail sales of Black Friday and the entire weekend.

Though Wallis said national sales figures for the weekend jumped 8 per cent over last year – she said retailers expected a 4 percent increase – she did not have specific figures for Williston or even Vermont.

"Anecdotally, I can tell you it was busy in the county," Wallis said, adding that electronics made up a large portion of sales in Williston.

A dollar that has fallen in value may have actually benefited Vermont retailers.

"Chittenden County saw a bump in Canadian shoppers. I think that's a real opportunity for Vermont merchants throughout the holiday seasons," Wallis said. "It's because the Canadian dollar is so strong. The purchasing power is so much stronger down here."

...For all the hype around Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year has yet to come – Wallis said that distinction belongs to the Saturday before Christmas.

"I think there were so many promotions on Black Friday and around the (Thanksgiving) holiday, it really got people out. It's early to tell how the whole season is going to be," Wallis said. "People may have come out early because they want to stretch their holiday dollar. We're hoping they came out early as a sign of a good holiday season."