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## For Manchester Shops, a Good Season

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...The Vermont Retail Association has been trying to help small, locally owned stores in the state get their products available online, according to R. Tasha Wallis, the association's president. She said Thursday that although no official data was available, online shopping continues to increase at a significant pace.

Wallis said early national numbers from the National Retail Federation showed a 3.6 percent increase in retail activity from last year. She said local and state retail numbers would not be available for another month until sales tax figures come in by county.

She said Chittenden County saw a lot of retail activity this year with Canadians crossing the border to take advantage of the weak American dollar.

Wallis said that although Christmas has come and gone, she would expect retail traffic to stay high in the state as skiers spend time here.

"Right now, the holiday shopping season isn't really over," she said. "There definitely a lot of activity when people come up to ski. When people are on vacation one thing they do is shop, so with a strong ski season we should see that."

She said with this season's snowfall already, strong bookings near ski areas have been reported.

...Wallis recently reported 59,000 Vermonters work in retail, and Vermont stores produced approximately \$800 million in state tax revenue last year.