Northwest Consumers Spend More Freely on Groceries

PHUONG LE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Consumers in Washington and Oregon have been spending more freely since the Great Recession ended in 2009, shelling out more for consumer goods in each of the past four years, according to new data released Thursday by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

In 2012, per-person spending in both Northwest states eclipsed what they spent in 2007, when the nation's economy was just starting to slump.

The new government report provides a state-by-state breakdown of spending from 1997 through 2012 for the first time, offering a glimpse into how and where households put their money.

Washingtonians spent more overall than many of their counterparts in the nation in 2012, the latest year for which figures are available. The Evergreen State ranked among the top 10 states for total personal expenditures.

In 2012, total consumer spending grew by 4.7 percent in Washington, which has seen steady gains in consumer activity since 2009. That year was the only time in the 15-year period when total consumer spending in the state dropped compared with the previous year.

In Oregon, overall consumer spending in 2012 lagged slightly behind the national average, ranking it 19th among states. Oregon saw a 3.9 percent increase in total personal spending, compared with 4.1 percent nationwide.

Before the Great Recession set in, Oregonians spent $34,076 per person on consumer goods in 2007. That figure dipped in 2008 and 2009 but steadily increased over the next three years. In 2012, consumers in the state spent an average of $35,762, which is more than the national average and ranked 24th among states.

Washingtonians spent $36,006 per person annually on consumer goods in 2007. By 2012, they spent $39,110 per person, a 3.6 percent increase from the year before and an 8.6 percent jump over five years.

People in Northwest also spent more per person on housing and utilities, as well as groceries, than the nation as a whole. They also spent less on gasoline and other energy goods than the national average.

In each state, consumers spent 20 percent of their money on housing and utilities, and 16 percent for health care. Washingtonians shelled out $7,677 per person on

housing and utilities, with Oregon not far behind at $7,188 per person.

The proportion of what Oregonians spend on food costs, about 9.5 percent, ranked it third in the nation, behind Hawaii and Nevada.

Source URL (retrieved on *04/02/2015 - 3:38am*):
http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/08/northwest-consumers-spend-more-freely-groceries