Deck the malls



Shoppers look at flat-screen televisions on display at a Best Buy store in Brentwood, Tenn., on Nov. 25. MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Holiday spending back up, data show

By Anne D'Innocenzio
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Shoppers are again doing some holiday shopping after taking a break following their spree over the Thanksgiving weekend, according to data from research firm ShopperTrak.

ShopperTrak, based in Chicago, reported late Tuesday that sales for the week ended Saturday rose 10.6 percent from the previous week, though business fell 1.9 percent compared with the same week a year ago. Consumers spent a total of $14.76 billion Saturday and Sunday.

ShopperTrak recently reported that for the week ended Dec. 3, sales declined 22.5 percent from the week before, which included the day after Thanksgiving, known as Black Friday. That's expected to be the biggest day of the year.

"I think the consumer is a little bit immune to all the bad news, from the European crisis to the housing market," ShopperTrak founder Bill Martin said.

He noted that spending should accelerate in the final days of the season: Six of the top 10 shopping days of the holiday period are still to come, including Saturday, expected to be the biggest shopping day following Black Friday.

While the ShopperTrak figures exclude gas, food and autos, the numbers follow trends revealed in government data released Tuesday.

The Commerce Department reported that retail sales rose 0.2 percent in November. While that was down from October's gain, it signaled that retail spending is growing at a slow but steady pace. Consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of economic activity.