

- Unemployment rate inches up to 7.0% in March
- Value of building permits jumps 45.5% in February
- Government expenditure on cultural activities slightly lower in 2009/10

Labour Force Survey

- **The province's unemployment rate was 7.0% (seasonally adjusted) in March, up slightly from the previous month (6.9% in February).** The somewhat static jobless rate came about as marginal declines in employment (-0.1%, a loss of 1,700 jobs) paired up with an unchanged number of people either working or looking for work (-0.0%).

The number of jobs in the province's goods sector slumped (-0.8%), with the manufacturing (-3.0%) industry shedding a notable portion of its workforce. While agriculture (+1.3%) and construction (+1.2%) saw modest gains, the number of workers in forestry, fishing & mining (-1.7%) and utilities (-1.4%) fell.

The service sector showed a bit more promise in March, with employment expanding slightly (+0.1%). Six industries added to their workforce, with management & administration (+15.7%), accommodation & food services (+5.1%), public administration (+4.6%), and health care & social assistance (+2.6%) posting the largest increases. Conversely, notably fewer people were employed in trade (-5.3%) and educational services (-5.3%).

Employment was down in both the public (-0.5%) and private (-0.7%) sectors, but self-employment climbed significantly (+2.4%).

The number of full-time jobs slipped 0.5% from February, while part-time employment grew 1.4%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Among the province's regions, jobless rates ranged from 3.6% (3-month moving average, unadjusted) in Northeast to 11.8% in North**

Coast/Nechako. Compared to the previous month, the job market improved in North-east, Cariboo (7.5%), Vancouver Island/Coast (6.5%) and North Coast/Nechako, but rates in other regions were either stagnant or on the rise.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canada's unemployment rate inched down 0.2 percentage points to 7.2% (seasonally adjusted) in March, with an addition of 82,000 jobs.** Most of the gain in overall employment was among those aged 55 and over (+47,000) and youth aged 15 to 24 (+39,000), while those aged of 25 to 54 saw little change. Among the provinces, Manitoba (+1.0%), Quebec (+0.9%) and Ontario (+0.7%) posted the strongest job growth in March.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities soared (+45.5% seasonally adjusted) in February, a significant turnaround from January's pace (-10.4%).** Permits for residential projects climbed 11.6%, while permits for other types of buildings were even higher (+108.2%). Planned spending on industrial projects surged (+643.8%) and permits for institutional (+177.7%) buildings also grew. Conversely, permits for commercial projects continued to decline (-15.3%). The value of permits more than doubled in Kelowna (+142.4%) and jumped 70.8% in Victoria. Vancouver (+9.6%), where most of the province's building activity occurs, also saw permits rise, as did Abbotsford-Mission (+4.2%).

Did you know...

In 2009, British Columbia chickens produced 64.6 million dozens of eggs.

Source: BC Egg Marketing Board

The national picture was also promising, as permits increased by 7.5%, bolstered primarily by strength in BC, Alberta (+22.0%) and Quebec (+18.8%). However, the overall increase was significantly moderated by slowdowns in Ontario (-10.7%) and three other provinces.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **During the first two months of 2012, the value of building permits issued in the province's regions climbed 52.5% (unadjusted) above the level recorded in the same period last year.** Investment intentions were up in six regions, including Mainland/Southwest (+31.2%), where planned spending on industrial (+152.1%) and commercial (+95.3%) projects soared. Overall permits also increased in Vancouver Island/Coast (+2.8%) and Thompson/Okanagan (+7.6%), albeit not as significantly as other regions, such as Nechako (+39.6%) and Kootenay (+54.4%). Permits in North Coast (+6,164.0%) skyrocketed, fuelled by a surge in permits for industrial projects. Cariboo (-16.2%) and Northeast (-9.3%) were the only regions to see permits decline in February.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

Culture

- **Federal and provincial spending on cultural activities in BC totalled \$474 million during the 2009/2010 fiscal year, a 4.4% drop from the previous year.** Much of the decrease was the result of a significant decline in federal (-32.4%) and provincial (-24.4%) expenditures on film & video. However, this was somewhat mitigated by an increase in federal spending on the province's nature & provincial parks (+13.1%) and the performing arts (+13.1%) as well as a rise in provincial expenditures on university and college libraries (+13.3%). Nationally, federal (+3.9%) expenditures on cultural activities increased in 2009/10, while provincial/territorial (-0.6%) spending inched down.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Environment

- **In the past decade, Canadian households have become increasingly more likely to be engaged in activities that could be considered "environmentally friendly".** Households with better ecological behaviour (measured through numerous indicators, such as recycling practices, water conservation practices, organic food purchasing, and mode of transportation) are likely to be more educated and wealthier. Most of them own their home and live in a single house with a larger-than-average heated area. Interestingly, households reporting a higher level of environmentally friendly activities tend to consume more energy. In fact, 'green' households consume 15% more energy for their dwellings than other households. This could be at least partly attributable to the fact that the most conscientious households are often those with above-average income and hence a higher level of energy consumption owing to their lifestyle.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Between 1972 and 2010, the average annual area covered by snow in Canada declined by 5.1%.** Over this period, 1998 was the year with the lowest mean snow cover, followed closely by 2010. The month of June has seen the largest decline in average snow coverage, decreasing by 34%, followed by May (-13%) and April (-7%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada



Have a Happy Easter!

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also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca or choose [RSS](#)

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/2012	% change on one year ago
BC	4,597.9	1.0
Canada	34,670.4	1.1
GDP and INCOME (Released Nov 8)	2010	% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>		
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	203,147	5.9
GDP (\$ 2002 millions)	167,140	3.0
GDP (\$ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)	36,899	1.4
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 2002 per Capita)	26,166	2.2
TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jan 2012	3,161	2.0
Merchandise Exports - Jan 2012	2,641	-4.8
Retail Sales - Jan 2012	5,047	0.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
<i>(all items - Feb 2012)</i>		
BC	1.7	2.3
Vancouver	2.1	2.2
Victoria	1.6	2.1
Canada	2.6	3.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)	Mar 2012	% change on prev. month
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>		
Jobs Created (-Lost) - BC	-1.7	
Labour Force - BC	2,471.8	0.0
Employed - BC	2,299.1	-0.1
Unemployed - BC	172.7	0.7
		Feb 2012
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	7.0	6.9
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.2	7.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Apr 4/2012	Apr 6/2011
Prime Business Rate	3.00	3.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	3.20	3.70
- 5 year	5.44	5.69
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Apr 4/2012	Apr 6/2011
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$ per US \$	0.9962	0.9588
<i>(closing rate)</i> US \$ per Cdn \$	1.0036	1.0412
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE	Mar 2012	% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>		
BC	858.29	3.7
Canada	859.73	2.7
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate	} Statistics Canada	
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca		

New RSS Feeds From BC Stats

BC Stats has published several new RSS feeds, including: Aboriginal Peoples, Business and Industry, Census, Economic Statistics, Education, Environment, Geography and Mapping, Income, Pensions, Spending and Wealth, International and Interprovincial Trade, Labour, Population, Demography and Immigration, and more.

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Help/RSSFeeds.aspx>

The 2011 National Household Survey

Release dates have been set as:

May 8, 2013

- Immigration; Citizenship; Place of birth; Language; Ethnic origin; Visible minorities; Religion; Aboriginal Peoples

June 26, 2013

- Labour; Education; Place of work; Commuting to work; Mobility and migration; Language of work

August 14, 2013

- Income; Earnings; Housing; Shelter costs

<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/index-eng.cfm>

Census 2011 Fast Facts

According to the 2011 census, compared to other provinces, BC's population growth was second only to Alberta over the 2006 to 2011 period. In May of 2011, the census counted 4,400,057 persons in BC, up 286,570 (+7.0%) from the 2006 count. Read more on the 2011 Census page:

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/2011Census.aspx>

Released this week by BC Stats

- Labour Force Statistics, March 2012
- Earnings & Employment Trends, March 2012
- Economic Statistics Report, April 2012

Next week

- Exports, February 2012
- Business Indicators, March 2012