

# Labour Force Developments

May 5, 2006

April 2006

## April Highlights

Alberta's economy added 2,700 jobs in April, bringing total year-to-date job growth to 3.3 per cent. The unemployment rate in Alberta was at 3.5 per cent, the lowest among the provinces.

## Alberta

In the first four months of 2006, employment in Alberta increased by almost 58,000, or 3.3 per cent, the strongest growth since 1998. Also, over the same period, full-time employment grew by 65,400, while part-time employment fell by 5,400. It appears that part-time workers are being hired for full-time jobs. The largest gains were reported in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations.

Following a rise of 11,800 in March, Alberta's labour force increased further (5,100) in April. As a result, the unemployment rate rose to 3.5 per cent from 3.4 per cent in March. Despite the rise in the labour force, Alberta's labour market continues to be very tight, with unemployment rates of 2.6 per cent in Lethbridge, 2.9 per cent on Athabasca, and 3.0 per cent in Calgary.

These unemployment rates are causing upward pressure on wages, with the hourly wage rate rising by 6.8 per cent in April, more than double the national increase. Tight labour market conditions are still prominent in Alberta as shortages of workers continue to be reported across the province.

## Canada

The Canadian economy gained a solid 22,000 jobs in April, led by gains in Ontario.

### ALBERTA APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

<b>Employment</b>	
Monthly Net Jobs	+2,700
% Change	0.1%
<b>Unemployment Rate (April 2006)</b>	
Alberta	3.5%
Canada	6.4%

Employment in Ontario increased by almost 24,000, but fell by the same amount in Quebec. All the remaining provinces in Canada recorded gains in employment ranging from 5,000 in Saskatchewan to 2,000 in Prince Edward Island. Full-time employment in Canada also saw strong gains in April, with an increase of 26,400 positions.

The national unemployment rate edged up 0.1 percentage point to 6.4 per cent, but remained near the three-decade low as the labour force saw an increase of almost 25,000 during April.

Employment in the manufacturing sector rose by 24,500 from last month. Nonetheless, manufacturing jobs are still down more than 70,000 from a year ago, as the sector is experiencing fallout from a rising Canadian dollar.

## United States

The U.S. economy added a modest 138,000 jobs in April, but the unemployment rate (4.7 per cent) remained at a four-and-a-half year low. With the tight labour market conditions, wage growth increased 0.5 per cent from last month and 3.8 per cent on a year-over-year basis, the highest growth since June 2001.

**TABLE 1. ALBERTA REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

Regional Employment 3 Month Moving Avg.	Edmonton Region	Calgary Region	Wood Buffalo- Cold Lake	Athabasca- Grande Prairie	Red Deer	Camrose- Drumheller	Banff- Jasper- Rocky Mt. House	Lethbridge- Medicine Hat
<b>Mar. 2006-Apr. 2006</b>								
Change	1,100	8,000	0	200	1,800	2,200	100	300
Growth Rate	0.2%	1.2%	0.0%	0.2%	1.9%	2.2%	0.2%	0.2%
<b>Apr. 2005-Apr. 2006</b>								
Change	3,500	47,900	3,300	5,400	2,600	4,500	-1,300	900
Growth Rate	0.6%	7.5%	5.6%	4.4%	2.8%	4.6%	-2.6%	0.7%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	3.9%	3.0%	5.0%	2.9%	4.4%	3.1%	n/a	2.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey