

Labour Force Statistics ♦ May 2004

HIGHLIGHTS

All labour force statistics in this Highlights article are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

- **B.C. employment in May rose by 15,200 from April, following a decrease of 3,200 between March and April.** Full-time employment rose by 3,900 and part-time employment rose by 11,200 in May.
- **The services sector in May accounted for most of the overall B.C. employment gain, led by gains in retail and wholesale trade, education and other services.** Goods sector employment was little changed in May.
- **Employment for Canada overall in May rose by 56,100, following a gain of 50,000 in April.** Employment growth in May was strongest in Newfoundland (up 1.5 per cent), Prince Edward Island (up 1.5 per cent), and British Columbia (up 0.7 per cent). The national unemployment rate fell to 7.2 per cent in May, its lowest level since July 2001.
- **The labour force participation rate rose to 65.3 per cent in May, and with the labour force growing faster than employment, the B.C. unemployment rate edged up to 7.8 per cent.** The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 rose to 15.8 per cent in May, up from 14.9 per cent in April. Strong growth in youth labour force participation masked the substantial net gain of 8,000 jobs by youth in May.

Selected Statistics	May 2004	Apr. 2004	May 2003
B.C. Unemployment Rate	7.8%	7.7%	8.6%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.2%	7.3%	7.9%
B.C. Employment - Change from prev. mo.	0.7%	-0.2%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Change from prev. mo.	0.8%	-0.3%	-
B.C. Labour Force Participation Rate	65.3%	64.9%	65.3%

Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Management Services and the Planning and Data Management Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, reflecting the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or the Planning and Data Management Branch (250) 952-6111.

Construction Employment in B.C.

Figure 1 shows monthly employment levels in construction for B.C. from January 1995 to May 2004. Construction employment levels this year are averaging over 140,000 for the first five months of 2004, adding to gains seen last year, and well up from levels seen in the late-1990's and the years 2000 and 2001. Employment growth in construction in B.C. relates to strength in building permits and housing starts.

Strong actual employment growth from May 2003 to May 2004 is seen not only in construction (up 19%), but also in related sectors like real estate services (up 18%). Construction employment in Canada has generally also grown, expanding by 6% from a year ago. However, B.C. has accounted for fully 40% of Canada's net employment gains in construction between May 2003 and May 2004.

