

## Labour Force Statistics ♦ August 2005

### HIGHLIGHTS

*All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated*

#### **Unemployment rate falls back to 5.8% in August; job growth resumes**

British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped back to 5.8% in August, after a brief upturn (to 6.2%) in the previous month. The improvement in the jobless rate was the result of renewed job growth (+0.4%), combined with a stable labour force (unchanged at 2,265,000 in August).

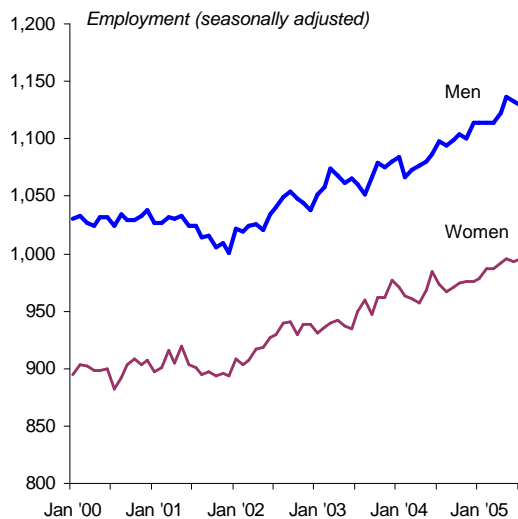
Employment rose to 2,133,000 in August after stalling in the previous month. In contrast to the situation in July, when many service sector employers pared down the size of their workforce, service sector employment increased (+0.6%) last month. Retail and wholesale trade (+3.8%), health care (+3.3%) and public administration (+3.1%) made particularly strong gains. The management & administration services industry also hired more workers (+3.0%). However, tourism-related industries such as accommodation & food services (-2.9%) and transportation & warehousing (-2.1%) cut back on their staff.

In the goods sector, there were 0.6% fewer jobs, as employment fell in most industries. Manufacturing, the biggest employer among the goods industries, reduced its workforce 2.2%, but this was partly mitigated by an increase in the number of construction workers (+2.9%). There were fewer jobs in agriculture (-9.5%) and utilities (-9.4%), but more workers in primary industries such as forestry, fishing and mining (+6.5%).

The number of women with jobs rose 1.1% in August, which was more than enough to ab-

sorb a 0.9% increase in the number of women available for work. However, the job market for men continued to tighten. Male employment slipped for the third straight month, falling 0.3% in August, and the labour force shrank (-0.9%) for the first time since March.

#### **There were fewer jobs for men, but more women were employed in August**



Self-employment played a big role in job growth last month, advancing 0.6%. Among employees, job gains were concentrated in the private sector (+0.6%). The number of public sector jobs fell 0.6%, largely because there were fewer people employed in educational services (-1.7%), an industry that is largely comprised of public sector workers.

Full-time employment fell 0.6%, with both men (-0.7%) and women (-0.5%) feeling the

pinch. Both sexes benefited from an increase in the number of part-time jobs available (+4.1%).

The unemployment rate among young adults (aged 15 to 24) dropped again in August, falling to 10.2%.

**Regional job market remains robust**

Job markets were generally upbeat in most regions of the province. Relative to August 2004, only Kootenay (-0.7%, *3-month-moving average, unadjusted*) and Cariboo (-0.9%) saw employment decline. For the fifth straight month, North Coast-Nechako posted a double-digit increase (+19.1%) in employment. Job growth was solid, but more restrained, in the rest of the province, ranging from +1.8% in Mainland/Southwest to +6.5% in Thompson-Okanagan.

Regional unemployment rates reflected the robust job growth. Unemployment rates in some of the regions had remained at double-digit levels during most of the period since the late 1990s. The situation has been improving, however, and since May, all regions of the province have recorded rates of less than ten percent. In August, jobless rates ranged from 4.2% in Northeast to 7.0% in Cariboo. Mainland/Southwest (6.3%) had the second-highest unemployment rate in the province.

In Vancouver, the unemployment rate was 6.4%. Victoria’s jobless rate was just 4.1%.

**The National Scene**

Canada’s unemployment rate was unchanged at 6.8% in August, a full percentage point higher than BC’s. Nationally, both the labour force and the number of jobs increased at the same rate (+0.2%). The four western provinces had the lowest unemployment rates in the country, ranging from 3.9% in Alberta to BC’s 5.8%.

<b>Selected Statistics</b>	<b>Aug-05</b>	<b>Jul-05</b>	<b>Aug-04</b>
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	5.8	6.2	7.4
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.8	6.8	7.1
BC Employment ('000)	2,133	2,125	2,062
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.5	65.7	65.6
August % change in employment relative to:	-	0.4	3.4
August % change in labour force relative to:	-	0.0	1.7