

Labour Force Statistics ♦ September 2005

HIGHLIGHTS

All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

Unemployment rate slips again, falling to 5.7% in September; job growth continues

British Columbia's unemployment rate fell for the second straight month in September, slipping 0.1 percentage points to 5.7%. A slight decline in the labour force (-0.1%) combined with a small increase in employment (+0.1%) was the reason for the improvement in the jobless rate.

A 0.4% increase in the size of the workforce in BC's service sector was the driving force behind the jump in overall employment to 2,146,800. Significant increases in employment in retail and wholesale trade (+2.5%) and information, culture & recreation (+11.7%) and a rebound in tourism-related industries such as accommodation & food services (+1.1%) and transportation & warehousing (+3.7%) helped offset large declines in finance, insurance & real estate & leasing (-6.1%) and professional, scientific & technical services (-4.1%).

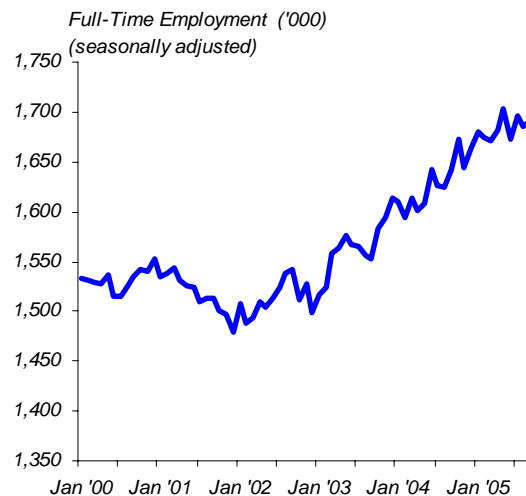
Employment in the goods sector fell in September with 1.2% fewer jobs being recorded in goods-producing industries. This is despite the fact that manufacturing, the largest employer among the goods industries, increased its workforce 1.5%. Significant drops in employment in construction (-1.2%), primary industries such as forestry, fishing & mining (-5.3%) and agriculture (-9.5%) countered the gains in manufacturing.

After experiencing three months of falling employment, the number of men at work in BC increased 0.8% in September. However, there

were 7,500 fewer women with jobs in the province (-0.7%) compared to August.

The overall employment increase was a result of a 0.2% jump in full-time employment (+4,100 jobs), which more than offset a 0.5% drop in part-time jobs (-2,400). The rise in full-time employment was the result of a 1.1% expansion in men working full-time, as fewer women had full-time jobs in September (-0.9%). Both men (-1.2%) and women (-0.3%) shared in the responsibility for the drop in part-time jobs.

Full-time employment in BC has been trending up for almost four years



The number of self-employed slipped 0.5% in September, wiping out most of the growth experienced from July to August. Among employees, job gains were concentrated in the private sector (+0.8%). Public sector employment slumped 1.7%, as industries dominated

by public sector workers, such as public administration (-2.1%) and educational services, (-0.3%), shed employees.

The unemployment rate among young adults (aged 15 to 24) fell significantly in September, dropping to 8.7% from 10.2% in August.

Some regions fare better than others

For the fifth consecutive month, all regions of the province saw single-digit unemployment rates. The jobless rates ranged from a low of 4.4% (*3-month-moving average, unadjusted*) in the Northeast to 6.4% in Kootenay and Vancouver Island/Coast. The Cariboo region has experienced considerable improvement in the rate of unemployment over the last several months, dropping from a peak of 10.4% in April, to 5.4% in September, a phenomenal five percentage point decline. Mainland/Southwest and Thompson-Okanagan also saw improvement with each recording a decline of 0.3 points; however, all other regions of the province experienced rising unemployment including a one percentage point jump in Kootenay and a 0.7 point increase in Vancouver Island/Coast.

With the exception of Thompson-Okanagan (+1.8%), all other regions of the province saw employment fall in September. The Northeast (-3.5%) experienced the most significant drop in jobs, followed by North Coast and Nechako (-2.3%).

In Vancouver, the unemployment rate was 6.1%. Victoria's jobless rate was just 4.6%.

The national scene

Canada's unemployment rate improved to 6.7% in September, remaining a full percentage point higher than BC's rate. Nationally, both the size of the labour force and the number of jobs remained virtually unchanged. The four western provinces had the lowest unemployment rates in the country, ranging from 4.1% in Alberta to 6.0% in Saskatchewan.

Employment growth decelerates in 3rd quarter

The number of jobs in the province edged up only 0.3% in the third quarter, following robust growth of 0.7% and 1.3% in the first and second quarters respectively. The province's unemployment rate remained virtually unchanged in the third quarter, compared to a 0.8 percentage point drop between the first and second quarters. Women (+0.7% rise in employment) fared better than men (-0.1%) in the third quarter. Part-time jobs (+0.5%) grew slightly faster than full-time jobs (+0.3%), but 71% of the increase in employment between the second and third quarters was comprised of full-time positions.

Selected Statistics	Sep 05	Aug 05	Sep 04
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	5.7	5.8	6.7
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.7	6.8	7
BC Employment ('000)	2,135	2,133	2,070
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.3	65.5	65.2
September % change in employment relative	-	0.1	3.1
September % change in labour force relative	-	-0.1	2.0