

## Labour Force Statistics ♦ October 2005

### HIGHLIGHTS

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

#### ***Unemployment rate falls to at least a 30-year low; job growth continues***

British Columbia's unemployment rate fell 0.6 percentage points to 5.1% in October, its lowest level in at least 30 years. A significant jump in employment (+0.7%) pushed the unemployment rate down despite a slight boost in the labour force (+0.1%).

The service sector continues to drive the expansion in jobs. While the goods sector experienced a 0.4% drop in employment between September and October, service jobs climbed 1.0%. Strong growth in the workforce of wholesale & retail trade (+5.9%) and information, culture & recreation (+3.3%) industries helped offset significant declines in employment in educational services (-7.2%) and public administration (-4.3%).

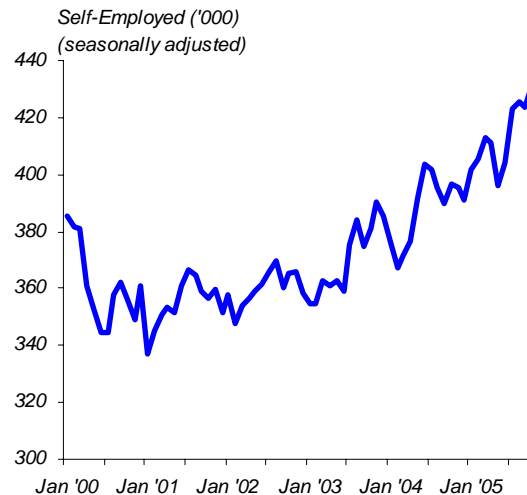
BC's manufacturing sector shed about 3,200 jobs in October, a drop of 1.6%. A slump in construction employment (-1.2%) also contributed to the decline in jobs in the goods sector. Strong employment growth in the primary industries such as forestry, fishing & mining (+5.9%) and agriculture (+2.8%) were not enough to offset the losses in manufacturing and construction.

Women benefited the most from the increase in employment as the female work-force in BC expanded 1.1% in October, more than recovering from a 0.7% drop a month earlier. The unemployment rate for women in BC dropped to 4.6%, the lowest rate in at least three decades and a full percentage point lower than a month earlier. The number of men employed in BC

also climbed, edging up 0.3%, with male unemployment in the province dropping to 5.6%.

The overall employment increase was a combination of a 0.5% rise in full-time employment (+8,900 jobs) and a 1.2% increase in part-time jobs (+5,400).

#### ***The number of self-employed in BC hit an all-time high in October***



The number of self-employed in the province grew to an all-time high in October, rising 1.9% to 431,500. Among employees, job gains were concentrated in the private sector (+0.6%) as public sector employment continued to slump (-0.6%) due to losses in industries dominated by public sector workers, such as public administration and educational services.

#### ***Some regions fare better than others***

Unemployment rates dropped in most regions of the province, with the exception of North

Coast/Nechako, where the jobless rate climbed to 6.0% (*3-month-moving average, unadjusted*) and Northeast, where it was unchanged. The 4.4% rate recorded in Northeast was the lowest in the province, while North/Coast Nechako's 6.0% was the highest. October was the sixth consecutive month where all regions of the province had single-digit unemployment rates. In Vancouver, the unemployment rate was 5.4%, while Victoria's jobless rate was just 4.7%.

Employment fell marginally in Mainland/Southwest in October (-0.1%) and North Coast/Nechako (-3.2%) and Northeast (-1.5%) also experienced declines in employment, but all other regions of the province saw an increase in jobs. Kootenay had the strongest job growth (+1.4%), followed by Cariboo (+1.1%). Thompson-Okanagan (+0.9%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (+0.4%) also showed improvement.

### ***The national scene***

Canada's unemployment rate improved to 6.6% (seasonally adjusted) in October, but was still a full one-and-a-half percentage points higher than BC's rate. A 0.4% increase in employment outpaced 0.3% growth in the labour force to drive down the unemployment rate. The four western provinces had the lowest unemployment rates in the country, ranging from 4.0% in Alberta to 5.2% in Saskatchewan, while Newfoundland and Labrador's 15.2% was the highest rate of joblessness in Canada.

<b>Selected Statistics</b>	<b>Oct 05</b>	<b>Sep-05</b>	<b>Oct-04</b>
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	5.1	5.7	6.8
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.6	6.7	7.1
BC Employment ('000)	2,149	2,135	2,079
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.3	65.3	65.5
October % change in employment relative to:	-	0.7	3.3
October % change in labour force relative to:	-	0.1	1.5