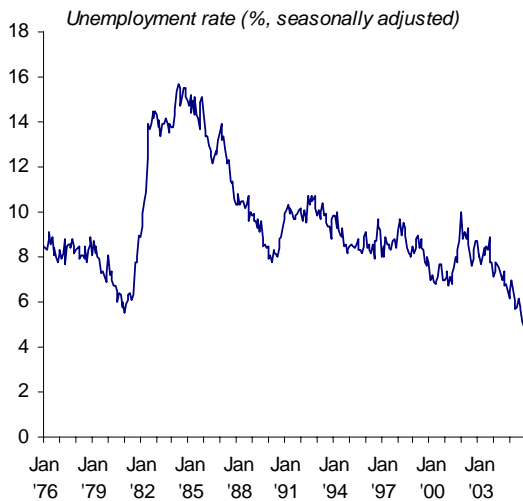


Labour Force Statistics ♦ November 2005

HIGHLIGHTS

All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

Jobless rate at lowest level in at least 30 years



British Columbia's unemployment rate continued to tumble in November, dropping to 4.9%, the lowest level since 1976 (the first year for which labour force estimates are available). The continued improvement in the province's job market occurred despite a significant increase (+0.6%) in the size of the labour force, as employment growth (+0.8%) was more than strong enough to absorb the net addition of 14,300 people who were either working or looking for work.

Except for a brief period during the early 1990s, BC has had the highest unemployment rate in western Canada for most of the last thirty years, but the recent improvement has brought the province in line with the rest of the west. Although it is still higher than in both Alberta (4.1%) and Manitoba (4.2%), BC's unemployment rate has fallen below Saskatchewan's (5.2%) and is significantly lower than the national average of 6.4%.

More full-time jobs

Full-time employment increased 1.5% in November, but there were fewer people with part-time (-1.7%) jobs. Self-employment, a strong source of job growth in October, fell back 2.1% in November. There were 2.0% more private sector jobs, but employment in the public sector was down for the sixth month in a row.

The unemployment rate for those aged 25 and over edged up to 4.6%, but young people (aged 15-24) were less likely to be unemployed. The jobless rate in this age group dropped 1.6 percentage points, to 6.9%.

Goods sector drives job growth

Last month, the job gains in BC were concentrated in the goods sector, which took on 12,400 (+2.8%) more workers. Manufacturing (+6.7%) and construction (+4.1%), the biggest employers in the sector, accounted for most of the job growth in the goods industries. The electric power and gas utilities (-17.9%), forestry, fishing & mining (-7.1%) and agriculture (-7.1%) industries all cut back on the size of their workforce.

In the service sector, employment advanced just 0.3%, as many service industries kept the lid on job growth. The exceptions were information, culture & recreation (+6.5%), professional, scientific & technical (+4.6%), finance, insurance & real estate (+1.8%) and education (+1.3%) services. There were fewer jobs in retail & wholesale trade (-2.1%), management & administration (-1.6%), public

administration (-1.5%), and most other service industries.

The number of men (+0.9%) and women (+0.7%) with jobs increased, but the sexes did not fare equally well in terms of unemployment rates. Among men, the jobless rate fell 0.9 percentage points, to 4.7%. For women, however, job growth was not strong enough to absorb the increase in the size of the labour force, and the jobless rate climbed from 4.6% to 5.2%. This disparity likely reflects the nature of goods and service sector employment. Most of the net job growth in November was in goods industries such as manufacturing and construction, which tend to have a higher percentage of male employees, while the service sector, which shed jobs in November, is more likely to employ women.

Vancouver benefits most from job growth

In Vancouver, the unemployment rate inched up (to 4.7%), while Victoria's jobless rate edged down (to 4.3%). Abbotsford's unemployment rate was 5.6

Despite the increase in Vancouver's unemployment rate, the largest city in the province

saw the strongest employment growth (+2.4%, or 27,900 net new jobs). However, the labour force expanded even more (by 29,400 people) in November. In Victoria, the number of people with jobs fell 2.7% in November.

Unemployment rates lowest in Thompson-Okanagan and Mainland/Southwest

Among the regions, jobless rates were lowest in Thompson-Okanagan (4.3%, 3-month-moving average) and Mainland/Southwest (4.4%) and highest in North Coast/Nechako (6.8%). Kootenay (-2.8%) and Northeast (-4.8%) were the only regions to see a net decline in employment, relative to the same period of 2004.

The National Scene

Canada's unemployment rate dropped to 6.4% in November, partly because there were more jobs (+0.2%) but also because the labour force shrank (-0.1%). Eight of the provinces saw unemployment rates decline. Despite the improvement, jobless rates remained well into the double-digits in Newfoundland (15.6%).

Selected Statistics	Nov-05	Oct-05	Nov-04
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	4.9	5.1	6.5
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.4	6.6	7.2
BC Employment ('000)	2,167	2,149	2,077
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.6	65.3	65.1
November % change in employment relative to:	-	0.8	4.3
November % change in labour force relative to:	-	0.6	2.6