

Labour Force Statistics ♦ September 2006

HIGHLIGHTS

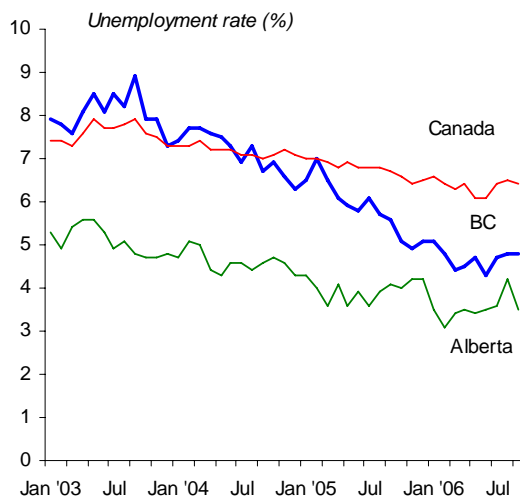
All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

Jobless rate remains steady in September

British Columbia's unemployment rate remained at 4.8% in September, unchanged from August as both the number of jobs and the number of people who were either working or looking for work edged up 0.3%.

BC's unemployment rate remained well below the national average of 6.4%, marginally higher than that of Manitoba (4.4%) and Saskatchewan (4.3%), but significantly above Alberta's 3.5% jobless rate. The low unemployment rates in the western provinces reflect the shortage of labour in Western Canada, particularly in Alberta.

Labour shortages in Western Canada are reflected in lower unemployment rates



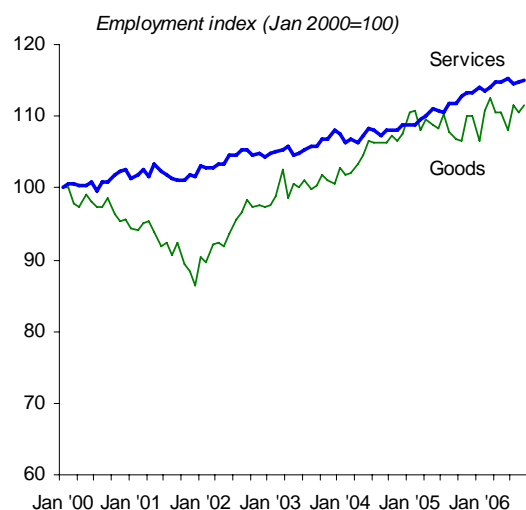
British Columbia's participation rate climbed slightly in September with 65.6% of the working age population (15 and older) in the labour force, an increase of 0.1 percentage points over August. However, despite the demand for la-

bour, British Columbia's participation rate remains significantly lower than the overall Canadian rate of 67.0%.

Jobs rebound in goods industries; service sector employment is fairly flat

Employment in the goods sector rebounded from a 1.0% drop in August with an equivalent rise in September. A 5.4% jump in employment in the resource sectors (forestry, fishing and mining) was responsible for much of the increase, along with a 1.3% rise in manufacturing jobs. The number of jobs in construction fell 0.4%, while employment in utilities dropped (-1.1%) for the second consecutive month.

Employment in goods industries has been much more volatile compared to services



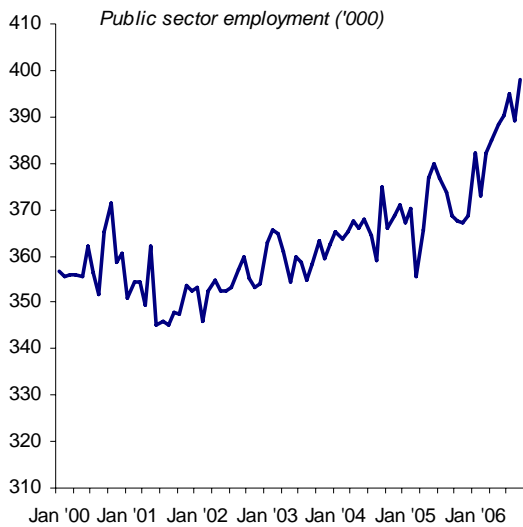
There was a marginal increase in employment (+0.2%) in the service sector, as strong job growth in some industries, such as public ad-

ministration (+4.2%) and management & administration (+6.0%), was mostly offset by declines in others, such as professional, scientific & technical services (-2.1%) and finance, insurance & real estate (-2.8%).

There were more jobs for both men (+0.1%) and women (+0.6%) in September and in both cases, the higher employment numbers were attributable to more full-time employment. Overall employment in full-time positions rose 0.6%, while the number of part-time jobs slipped 0.8%. The number of women in full-time jobs climbed 1.0%, while 0.3% more men worked full-time.

Employment in the public sector surged 2.3%, but there was a 0.2% decline in private sector jobs. Meanwhile, the number of self-employed in the province edged up 0.4%, the third straight monthly increase.

Public sector employment has been on the rise



Unemployment up in most regions

Among British Columbia's regions, jobless rates ranged from a low of 4.2% (3-month moving average, unadjusted) in Northeast to a high of 6.5% in North Coast/Nechako. While Kootenay shaved an entire percentage point off its unemployment rate, to 5.1%, most other regions saw unemployment rise. Thompson-Okanagan was the only other region where unemployment fell (to 5.7%). North Coast/Nechako experienced the largest jump in unemployment with the rate rising 0.9 points to 6.5%. Rates in Mainland/Southwest (4.7%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (4.9%) remained lower than most of the province, but were higher than they were in August.

The unemployment rate in Vancouver jumped to 4.5% (seasonally adjusted) from 3.8% in the previous month, while the Abbotsford metropolitan area saw its rate drop to 3.7% from 4.2% in August. Victoria's unemployment rate remained unchanged, at 3.9%.

The Nation

Canada's unemployment rate edged down to 6.4% in September as the number of jobs climbed slightly (+0.1%), while the size of the labour force remained virtually unchanged. Unemployment rates climbed slightly in Ontario and Quebec, but were down or flat in the rest of the country.

| Selected Statistics | Sep-06 | Aug-06 | Sep-05 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| BC Unemployment Rate (%) | 4.8 | 4.8 | 5.6 |
| Canadian Unemployment Rate (%) | 6.4 | 6.5 | 6.7 |
| BC Employment ('000) | 2,201 | 2,193 | 2,132 |
| BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%) | 65.6 | 65.5 | 65.3 |
| September % change in employment relative to: | - | 0.3 | 3.2 |
| September % change in labour force relative to: | - | 0.3 | 2.3 |