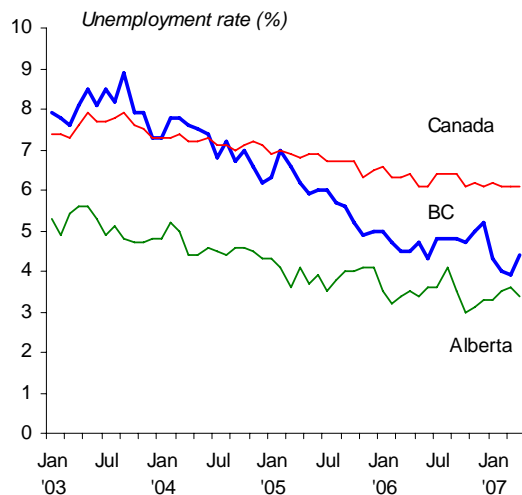


## Labour Force Statistics ♦ April 2007

### HIGHLIGHTS

All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

#### Unemployment rate rises to 4.4% in April



British Columbia's unemployment rate increased half a percentage point to 4.4% in April as employment in the province shrank (-0.7%) for the first time since November. As was the case last fall, the job losses were concentrated in the service sector (-1.1%).

Many service industries shed workers, with the biggest declines seen in education (-2.6%), finance, insurance & real estate (-2.7%), health care (-2.8%) and accommodation & food services (-3.5%). Together, these industries employ about a third of the province's workers. Transportation & warehousing (-0.9%) and wholesale & retail trade (-1.0%) also cut back on the size of their workforce.

In the goods sector, employment was up 0.5% as construction (+1.6%), utilities (+6.1%) and forestry, fishing & mining (+8.6%) were all hiring workers. However, manufacturing employed 1.6% fewer people than in March.

Despite the recent uptick, the unemployment rate remains near an historic low and labour market conditions continue to be robust, with the economy at or near full-employment.

#### Women, part-time and public sector workers less likely to be employed

Women (-1.4%) felt the effects of April's job losses more than men (-0.2%). Public sector employment was down 1.2%, reflecting the downsizing in education and health care last month. At the same time, private sector employment slipped 0.6%, and the ranks of the self-employed fell back 0.8%.

Not surprisingly, given that many of the job losses were in the service sector where part-time employment is more common, the number of part-time jobs in the province shrank 3.6%. Full-time employment was unchanged from March.

The unemployment rate for young workers (15 to 25) rose 0.3 percentage points, to 7.6%, half the increase seen in the more experienced workforce (aged 25 and over), where the jobless rate jumped from 3.2% to 3.8%.

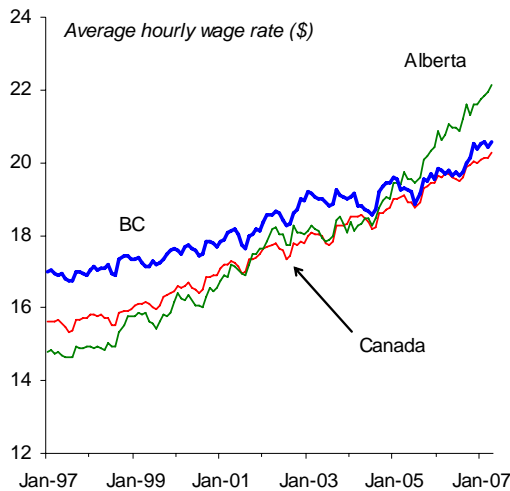
#### Average wages stable despite low jobless rate

The tight labour market conditions experienced in western Canada are beginning to affect prices, especially in Alberta, where higher wages have been exerting inflationary pressures on the economy. This has not yet begun to occur in BC, but may come into play if current labour market conditions persist.

Hourly wages in BC remain above the Canadian average, but the gap has been shrinking during the last decade. In contrast, wages in Alberta have climbed significantly in the last four years

and workers in that province typically earn \$1.88 per hour more than the Canadian average. BC workers earn just \$0.30 an hour more (\$20.56 per hour) than the Canadian average. In the goods sector, workers in BC receive virtually the same hourly wage (\$21.54) as other Canadians, but service sector workers (\$20.30) are better compensated than their counterparts in the rest of Canada.

**Wages in BC have not increased as much as in the rest of Canada**



**Regional unemployment rates still relatively low**

Among the regions, unemployment rates ranged from 3.7% (3-month moving average, unadjusted) in Northeast<sup>1</sup> to 8.6% in North

<sup>1</sup> BC Stats estimate using data supplied by Statistics Canada

Coast/Nechako. Kootenay (5.7%), where the rate was nearly three percentage points lower, had the second-highest unemployment rate in the province. Mainland/Southwest's jobless rate was just 3.8%. Cariboo and North Coast/Nechako continued to lose workers, as employment and the labour force declined in tandem. Job growth slowed to +0.4% in Vancouver Island/Coast, but Mainland/Southwest, together with most other regions of the province, saw the unemployment rate improve as labour force growth fell short of the increase in the number of jobs.

Kelowna's unemployment rate dropped to 3.0%, and Vernon<sup>1</sup> recorded a rate of 3.2%. Vancouver Island/Coast's relatively high jobless rate (5.3%) was largely due to labour market conditions outside the Capital region. Victoria's unemployment rate was 3.1%, but residents of Nanaimo (7.7%) were much more likely to be looking for work. Similarly, Prince George, the largest city in Cariboo, had a much lower incidence of unemployment (4.1%) than was the case in the region as a whole (5.2%).

**The Nation**

Nationally, both employment and the size of the labour force were unchanged, and the Canadian jobless rate remained at 6.1%. In recent months, unemployment rates have been improving in most parts of the country, and the April results marked only the second time since 1976 that Newfoundland has been the only province with a double-digit jobless rate (the only other time this occurred was in May 2006).

Selected Statistics	Apr-07	Mar-07	Apr-06
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	4.4	3.9	4.5
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.1	6.1	6.4
BC Employment ('000)	2,249	2,265	2,191
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	66.2	66.4	65.6
April % change in employment relative to:	-	-0.7	2.6
April % change in labour force relative to:	-	-0.1	2.6