

## Labour Force Statistics ♦ July 2007

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

### Jobless rate falls to 4.1% in July

British Columbia's unemployment rate fell to 4.1% in July. The improvement in the jobless rate occurred because the province's labour force shrank 0.4%, more than offsetting the effect of a slight drop (-0.1%) in the number of jobs. Employment growth in the province has stalled in the summer months, with the total number of people working inching down in both June and July.

### Employment slips as goods sector cuts back on jobs

The province's goods sector employed 2.4% fewer people in July. The manufacturing (-2.0%) and construction (-5.5%) industries both shed jobs. Employment in manufacturing has fallen in three of the last four months, while the decline in construction was the second in as many months. Employment edged down modestly (-0.2%) in forestry, fishing & mining, as a downturn in the resource industries continued.

The service sector, which employs eight out of ten workers, boosted employment by 0.5%. Retail & wholesale trade (+3.0%) continued to surge ahead, and there were more job opportunities in industries such as management & administration (+3.4%) and professional, scientific & technical services (+2.7%). Transportation & warehousing (+1.5%), public administration (+1.5%) and finance, insurance & real estate (+1.4%) also took on more workers.

Despite the slowdown in job growth, labour market conditions in the province remain robust. A 4.1% unemployment rate is very low by historical standards, and anecdotal evidence suggests that some employers in the province are finding it difficult to staff vacant positions.

### Despite slowdown in job growth, labour market conditions remain robust

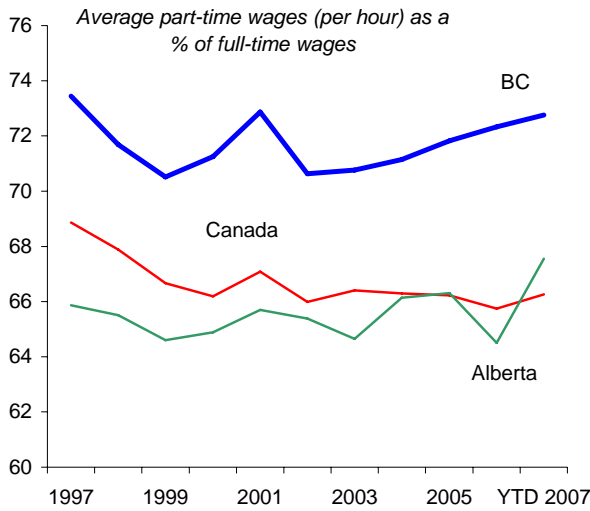


BC Stats

There were 0.4% fewer jobs in the public sector, as both the education (-6.8%) and health & social service (-1.2%) industries pared down their workforce. This may have contributed to a decline in the number of women (-0.3%) employed in July. Even though employment shrank in the male-dominated goods sector, the number of men with jobs edged up 0.1%. Self-employment continued to decline, falling 0.8%. The unemployment rate for young workers aged 15 to 24 dropped to 6.8%, while the rate for older workers (aged 25 or more) was 3.6%.

The number of full-time workers (+1.4%), both male and female, increased in July. However, part-time employment (-5.8%), especially for men (-10.0%) was down significantly.

**Part-time workers in BC fare better than those in other parts of the country**



BC Stats

In July, the average hourly wage (*unadjusted*) for British Columbians employed full-time was \$21.15, while part-time workers received \$15.99. However, the wage gap between part-time and full-time workers is much smaller in BC than in other regions of Canada. Part-time workers here earn nearly three-quarters as much as those employed full-time. Nationally, the ratio is closer to two-thirds.

In Alberta, part-time workers have been making gains as tight job-market conditions are driving wages up in that province. Average hourly wages in July were nearly two dollars higher (\$22.19) than in BC (\$20.24), where wages are very similar to the national average (\$20.20).

**Jobless rates low in most regions**

Jobless rates were low in most regions of the province. Northeast (2.1%<sup>1</sup>, 3-month moving average) and Vancouver Island/Coast (3.9%) continued to experience very low unemployment rates, but workers in most other parts of the province also had a relatively easy time finding work. Unemployment rates ranged from 4.2% in Mainland/Southwest to 4.8% in Cariboo, but the rate was considerably higher in North Coast/Nechako (7.7%). North Coast/Nechako, together with Cariboo, has seen jobless rates fall in recent months as the departure of workers from the labour force has outpaced a decline in the number of jobs available.

Victoria’s unemployment rate edged up to 3.4%, while the rate in Vancouver was 4.3%. Vancouver Island’s job market remains polarized, with residents of Victoria experiencing relatively little unemployment, while those living further north are not as fortunate. Nanaimo’s unemployment rate was 6.3% last month. In the rest of the province, rates were lowest in Chilliwack (3.1%), Vernon (3.6%) and Dawson Creek (4.1%), and higher in Kamloops (4.7%), Prince George (5.1%) and Kelowna (6.3%).

**The Nation**

Canada’s unemployment rate dropped to 6.0%, its lowest point since 1974. Nationally, the number of jobs inched up just 0.1%, while the labour force was unchanged from June. Alberta (3.3%), BC (4.1%) and Manitoba (4.2%) had the lowest rates, while Newfoundland (13.6%) and PEI (10.5%) continued to experience double-digit unemployment.

Selected Statistics	Jul-07	Jun-07	Jul-06
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	4.1	4.4	4.8
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.0	6.1	6.4
BC Employment ('000)	2,258	2,260	2,196
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.9	66.3	65.6
July % change in employment relative to:	-	-0.1	2.8
July % change in labour force relative to:	-	-0.4	2.2

<sup>1</sup> Rates for Northeast, as well as selected cities, are BC Stats estimates, calculated using data supplied by Statistics Canada