

Consumer Price Index ♦ March 2003

Highlights

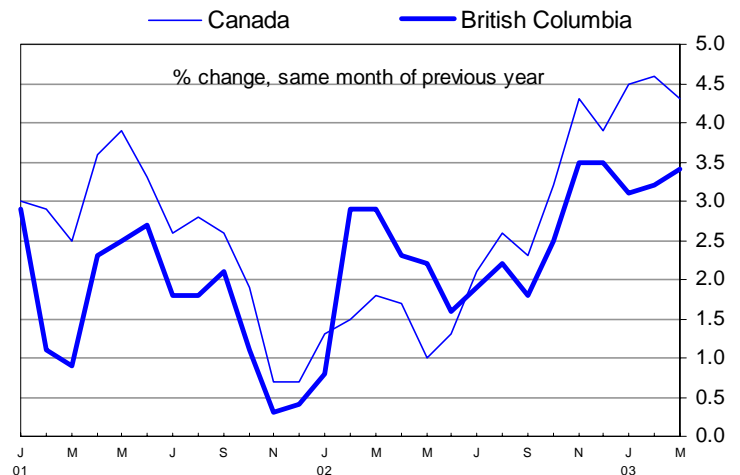
- Compared to March 2002, BC consumers paid 3.4% more for the basket of goods included in the CPI. Ontario posted the lowest increase at 3.3%, while Alberta recorded the highest rise at 7.6%. Nationally, the CPI rose 4.3%.
- Of the metropolitan areas, Edmonton continues to record the highest inflation, 9.1% from March 2002 to March 2003. Vancouver residents still enjoyed the lowest inflation at 3.2%, while prices in Victoria rose 3.4% during the same period.
- Contributing to BC's inflation were higher prices for fuel oil (+46.9%), gasoline (+32.4%), cigarettes (+19.1%), education (+14.9%), and inter-city transportation (+10.1%). Offsetting these increases were lower prices for fresh vegetables (-13.8%), coffee and tea (-5.6%), and clothing (-4.5%).
- BC's CPI, excluding food and energy, rose 2.4% from last March. The comparable figure for Canada was 3.6%.
- Costs for internet access services were slightly lower (-0.2% for Canada and -0.4% for BC) in March than in February. There was no change for financial services.

Notes

- The basket of goods and services used to calculate the CPI has been updated. Starting January 2003 expenditure patterns for 2001 replaced those for 1996. The time base remains at 1992=100.

1992=100	Index	% Change From	
	March 2003	February 2003	March 2002
Canada	122.8	0.4	4.3
BC	120.6	0.8	3.4
Vancouver	121.2	0.7	3.2
Victoria	120.1	0.8	3.4

Inflation Gap Narrowing?



1992=100	Latest 12-Month Average Index (ending in March)	Latest 12-Month Average % Change
Canada	120.3	3.0
BC	118.8	2.6
Vancouver	119.5	2.6
Victoria	118.4	2.9

Note:
Statistics Canada will release the April Consumer Price Index on May 22, 2003.