

## Current Statistics ♦ May 2003

- **The median income of families in BC was \$54,840 in 2000, a 2.3% drop (after adjusting for inflation) from 1990.** In the census metropolitan area of Vancouver the median income was \$57,926 in 2000, a 3.9% decline from 1990. The median income in Victoria jumped 4.9% to \$59,015, higher than Vancouver. When families in BC were ranked by income, the lowest decile (10%) had an average income of \$9,727 and the highest decile had an average income of \$176,762. After Toronto, Vancouver had the most unequally distributed income. The bottom 10% of families had an average income of \$8,723 and the top 10% had an average income of \$205,199. This means that for every dollar of income held by the bottom 10% of families, the top 10% had more than \$23. *Source: Census 2001*

Median Family Income			
Vancouver	\$	57,926	
BC	\$	54,840	
Canada	\$	55,016	
		Lowest 10%	Highest 10%
Vancouver	\$	8,700	\$ 205,200
BC	\$	9,727	\$ 176,762
Canada	\$	10,341	\$ 185,070
Income of families in the highest 10% for every dollar of income of lowest 10%			
Vancouver	\$	23.59	
BC	\$	18.17	
Canada	\$	17.90	

*Definition:* The median is the point at which half the incomes are higher, and half are lower.

- **The incidence of low-income in BC, using the new Market Basket Measure (MBM), was 20% in 2000—the highest rate in Canada after Newfoundland (23%).** The MBM is Human Resource Development Canada's newly developed measure of low income, based on income and living costs (a "market

basket" of typical household expenses). One of the key factors that raises BC's low-income rate relative to other regions is the high housing costs in the province.

*Source: Human Resources Development Canada*

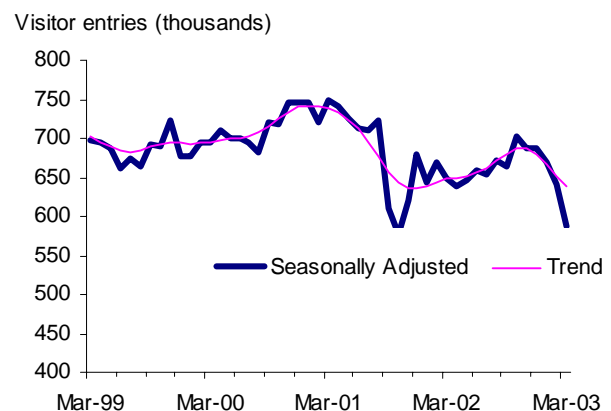
- **The New Housing Price Index for both Vancouver (+2.7%) and Victoria (+7.1%) rose in March, compared to the same month of 2002.** In Vancouver, land prices remained fairly flat (+0.1%) but housing prices were up 4.4%. In Victoria both land (+5.7%) and housing (+8.9%) prices climbed.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The number of visitors entering Canada via BC border crossings declined 8.2% in March (seasonally adjusted), the steepest fall seen since September 2001.** This was due to fewer travellers from both the US (-8.8%) and overseas (-5.2%). Australia and the South Pacific region showed the most notable decline in overseas visitors to BC (-16.8%), followed by Europe (-9.7%) and Asia (-3.4%). March was the third straight month of declining visitor entries.

*Source: BC Stats and Statistics Canada*

### The number of visitors entering BC dropped sharply in March



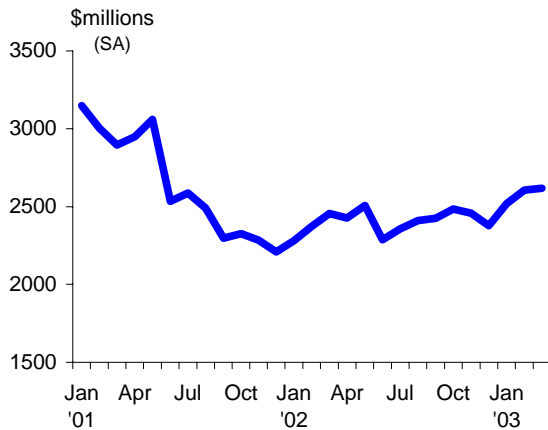
- **The value of exports of BC products increased 0.5% (seasonally adjusted) in March, the third consecutive month of**

**growth.** Climbing energy exports (+17.8%) outweighed declines in all other categories.

Exports to the United States were up 3.9%, mainly due to a jump in exports of energy (+19.0%). Forestry (+0.7%) and agriculture and fishing (+3.6%) products also made gains. Exports to countries other than the United States fell 6.6%. Exports of forestry (-3.3%) and agriculture and fishing (-37.3%) products dropped.

Source: BC Stats

Exports have been slowly recovering since the beginning of 2002



- **British Columbia's manufacturing shipments slipped 0.4% (seasonally adjusted) in March.** Growth in shipments of non-durables (+4.7%) was outweighed by declines in durables (-4.0%). Paper (+14.9%) was the main driving force for the increase in non-durables. On the durables side, wood shipments fell 5.5%.

- **BC's Consumer Price Index (CPI) was up 2.3% in April compared to the same month last year.** This is down from a 12-month increase of 3.4% posted in March. The decline in the inflation rate was primarily due to energy prices, which rose 8.3% after posting double-digit gains earlier in the year. Excluding the cost of energy, the overall price level was up 1.9%, compared to a 2.3% increase recorded in March. Year-over-year price increases for food (+1.0%), household operations (+0.2%), transportation (+4.2%) and health care (+0.5%) were all well below

March levels. Lower price increases for gasoline, bus and intercity transportation in April helped moderate the upward movement in the transportation components of the CPI.

Fuel oil prices showed the largest 12-month increase (+26.1%), followed by tuition fees (+21.1%) and cigarettes (+18.7%). Victoria (+2.4%) and Vancouver (+2.2%) had basically the same inflation rates as the province as a whole.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **In March, the number of British Columbians receiving regular employment insurance (EI) benefits grew 1.3% (seasonally adjusted) to 60,730.** The total value of benefits paid out rose 9.7%.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Restaurant, caterer and tavern receipts in the province fell (-2.1%, seasonally adjusted) for the second consecutive month in March.** Spending at both drinking places (-3.7%) and food service establishments (-2.0%) dropped.

Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **BC housing starts rose 17.1% in April (seasonally adjusted).** This is a significant improvement over March housing starts (-4.8%).

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Retail sales in BC were up 4% in the first quarter of 2003, compared to the same quarter of last year.** Quarterly sales growth was strongest in furniture (+11%) and clothing (+6%), and weakest in drug and patent medicine (+1%).

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Consumers in BC purchased over 72 million litres of alcoholic beverages in the first three months of 2003.** This represents a negligible (0.8%) increase over the same months of 2002. The total price for the first quarter beverages was \$492 million (or \$6.80 per litre). (Note that these figures include some amount of de-alcoholized products.)

Source: BC Liquor Distribution Branch data

- **Work absences in BC averaged 9.4 days per worker in 2002 (among full-time paid employees), slightly above the national average of 9.0 days per worker.** Absences were more frequent in Victoria (10.4 days per worker) than in Vancouver (8.2 days).

Source: SC, Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE