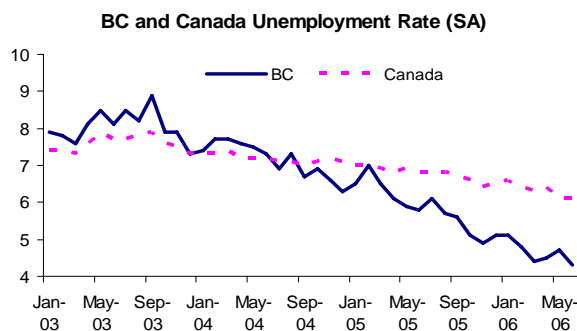


Current Statistics ♦ July 2006

- **British Columbia's population climbed 0.30% from the fourth quarter of 2005 to the first quarter of 2006, reaching 4,292,166 on April 1st.** Net international migration was the largest source of new residents, with 10,199 more people entering the province from other countries than there were people emigrating to other international destinations. There was also a net inflow of people from other provinces, reversing the situation in the fourth quarter when there was a net interprovincial outflow. The gain from other provinces was modest (+654) as net inflows from most provinces were largely offset by a net outflow of 2,362 people to Alberta. There were also marginal net outflows to Nova Scotia (-5) and Nunavut (-2), but BC gained population from every other province and territory. The largest gains were from Ontario (+1,403) and Manitoba (+671).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped 0.4 percentage points to a new record low of 4.3% (seasonally adjusted) in June.** The improvement in the jobless rate came as the labour force shrank (-0.6%) between May and June and the number of jobs remained relatively unchanged (-0.1%, or a net loss of 1,800 jobs).



Alberta (3.5%) and Manitoba (3.6%) continued to be the only provinces with a lower incidence of unemployment than BC.

Jobless rates in the rest of the country ranged from 4.9% in Saskatchewan to 14.8% in Newfoundland. The Canadian unemployment rate held steady at 6.1%, as the number of jobs was virtually unchanged and the number of people either employed or looking for work shrank by a mere 0.1%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities rose 16.1% (seasonally adjusted) in May, following a 27.8% downturn in April.** The increase was due to planned activity in the non-residential sector (+61.7%), while residential permits were down (-1.8%) slightly. Permits for institutional & government buildings more than tripled (+216.8%), with less substantial increases in the value of permits issued for commercial (+20.9%) and industrial buildings (+20.5%) projects.

Although permits were up in May, the increase was localized in the Vancouver area, where building intentions jumped 25.2%. Both Victoria (-9.6%) and Abbotsford (-31.2%) posted significant declines, while Vancouver accounted for more than fifty percent of the total value of building permits issued in May.

Canadian permits were up 6.9%, as increased activity in the more populous provinces, such as Ontario (+5.4%), Quebec (+3.8%), Alberta (+3.3%) and BC offset slowdowns in other parts of the country. The value of permits issued in Canada's non-residential sector jumped 18.1% in May while permits for residential projects inched up (+0.7%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Compared to the same period last year, the value of building permits issued by BC municipalities was up 11.9% during the first five months of 2006, with increased activity in every region except Nechako (-3.7%).** In the

rest of the province, increases in the value of permits ranged from 3.2% in Thompson/Okanagan to 93.9% in North Coast, where residential, industrial and commercial building permits were up significantly from last year.

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **The value of BC origin exports slipped 3.0% in May (seasonally adjusted) due primarily to declines in shipments of energy products (-13.4%).** Exports of machinery, equipment and automobiles (-7.2%) were also down, while forestry products remained relatively flat (+0.2%). Agriculture and fish (+4.3%) and industrial & consumer (+3.7%) products were the only major commodity groups to show notable increases in export value.

Exports to the United States dropped 4.3% as shipments of every major commodity except machinery, equipment and automobiles (+1.3%) fell. Energy shipments south of the border showed continued volatility, dropping 18.0% following a 16.7% increase in April. Agriculture & fish products (-0.4%), forestry products (-1.1%) and industrial and consumer goods (-1.4%) were all lower in May. International exports to countries other than the US were also down (-0.6%), reflecting significant declines in shipments of machinery, equipment and automobiles (-31.3%) and energy (-6.6%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

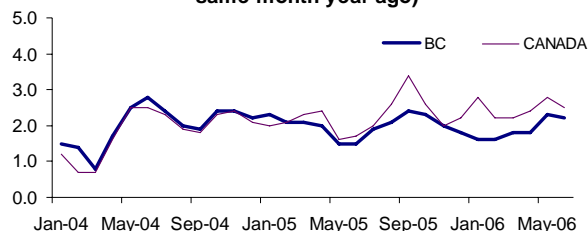
- **Shipments of goods produced by British Columbia manufacturers bounced back 0.9% (seasonally adjusted) in May after slumping 2.3% a month earlier.** A 4.0% rise in shipments of non-durable goods spurred the increase as manufacturers of durable goods saw a 1.1% drop in shipments. Paper manufacturers were the main contributors to the growth in non-durables with a 14.8% jump in shipments, recovering from an identical 14.8% drop a month earlier. There were some bright spots in durables as well, such as computer and electronic (+9.1%) product industries, but wood product manufacturers, the largest

durable goods manufacturing industry in the province, offset growth elsewhere with a 4.5% slump.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rose 2.2% in June, on the heels of a similar increase in May (+2.3%).** The increasingly higher cost of energy (+10.8%) sustained its effect on the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI). Excluding energy, prices for most goods and services rose at a relatively moderate 1.3%. The continued rise in energy and gasoline (+18.0%) prices helped drive transportation costs up 6.5%. The cost of food (+1.0%) was moderately higher in June as consumers paid more to eat at restaurants (+2.0%) and for food purchased from stores (+0.6%). The increased cost of shelter (+2.2%) had consumers digging deeper into their wallets as property taxes (+6.3%), home owners' insurance premiums (+4.7%), water (+9.1%) and fuel oil (+14.9%) were all more costly than in the same month last year. However, consumers did pay less for household furnishings (-2.2%) and equipment (-2.6%).

BC and Canada Inflation Trend (% change, same month year ago)



- **Wholesale sales in the province continued to see-saw in May, rising 2.5% (seasonally adjusted), following a downturn (-2.0%) in the previous month.** Total Canadian sales rebounded (+0.9%) from the weaker April levels, with over half of the increase attributable to sales in the automotive sector. Although sales were down in Quebec (-0.3%), they rose in most other provinces, led by PEI (+9.3%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (+4.1%)—the only provinces where wholesale sales grew faster than in BC.

Data Source: Statistics Canada