

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Migration

- **During the second quarter of 1997, BC gained 12,968 people as a result of net migration from all sources.** This was 23% less than in the second quarter of 1996. Net international migration remained strong, at 11,277, or 0.8% more than in the same quarter of 1996. While interprovincial migration was down sharply (-70%), the province continued to gain population from the rest of Canada. In the second quarter, interprovincial migration resulted in an inflow of 1,691 people to British Columbia from the rest of Canada. *Source: BC STATS*
- **British Columbia's population increased 2.0% to 3,933,300 during the twelve-month period ending July 1.** The province continued to have the fastest-growing population in the country, with Alberta (1.9%) a close second. Growth rates in other regions ranged from 0.4% in PEI, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan to 1.3% in Ontario. New Brunswick's population was unchanged from July 1996, while Newfoundland (-1.4%) continued to lose people. Canada's population stood at 30,286,600 on July 1, which was 1.1% higher than a year earlier. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Tourism

- **Tourism room revenues in British Columbia decreased 2.4% (seasonally adjusted) between May and June.** Revenues at large hotels, which account for about a third of the total, were down 6.5%. Medium-sized hotels (-2.1%) also saw revenues drop but revenues increased for all other accommodation types, with the strongest gains occurring at vacation rentals (+6.0%) and fishing lodges (+5.3%). Motel reve-

nues were up marginally (+0.4%), as were revenues in smaller hotels. *Source: BC STATS*

- **Among the regions, growth in Vancouver Island/Coast (0.7%) and the interior (2.4% in Thompson-Okanagan, 3.7% in Kootenay and 6.3% in Cariboo) helped offset declines in the rest of the province.** The largest decreases were in Northeast (-11.9%) and Nechako (-9.2%). Revenues were down 4.6% in Mainland Southwest and decreased 1.6% in North Coast. *Source: BC STATS*

Employment Insurance

- **The number of British Columbians receiving regular employment insurance (EI) benefits increased 5.8% to 69,510 (seasonally adjusted) in July.** The number of EI recipients was up in all parts of the country except New Brunswick (-0.2%). Nationally, it increased 6.7% to 616,280. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Manufacturing Shipments

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia increased 1.2% (seasonally adjusted) between June and July.** The non-durables sector was largely responsible for the gain, with all industries except chemicals increasing their shipments. Paper shipments recovered from two months of declines to grow 2.3%. The durables sector did not fare as well. Shipments were down 0.2% overall, mainly due to a 3.8% decline in the wood industry. The fabricated metals (-2.6%) and furniture and fixtures (-11.5%) industries also recorded lower shipments in July.

Nationally, shipments were up 3.8% in July, led by 11.6% growth in Saskatchewan. Manitoba's manufacturing sector was also strong (+6.2%),

Did you know...?

***In 1979, there were 28 department store chains operating 703 stores in Canada.
By 1995, there were only 6 chains, operating 872 stores.***

and shipments from Ontario rose 5.6%—the strongest growth since last November. Shipments were down in Newfoundland (-9.8%), Alberta (-2.0%), PEI (-1.6%) and Nova Scotia (-0.5%).

Source: Statistics Canada

Housing

- **The number of home sales in British Columbia decreased 5.0% (seasonally adjusted) to 5,767 in August, reversing the growth that had occurred in the previous month.** MLS sales in the province have declined in four of the last six months. Nationally, home sales were also down, decreasing 4.0% to 26,645. The housing market was weak in most parts of the country with New Brunswick (+12.3%) and Alberta (+2.9%) being the only exceptions. Sales were down 8.7% in the Atlantic provinces, 5.7% in Ontario and 1.1% in Quebec. Alberta's growth offset declines in the other Prairie provinces, and total sales were up 0.3%.

The average price of homes sold in British Columbia was \$215,260 in August. This was 1.2% less than in the same month last year. Nationally, prices rose 2.1% to an average of \$153,677.

Source: Canadian Real Estate Association

Public Transit

- **The number of passengers using BC Transit was down 3.7% in August.** Eleven-and-a-half million people used the system in that month, compared to 12 million in August 1996. The main reason for the decline was a 6.0% decrease in usage of Vancouver's public transit system. This followed a 3.3% drop in July. August's figures were affected by a one-day wildcat strike in Vancouver. In addition, ridership was down from the summer of 1996, when lane closures on the Second Narrows Bridge boosted usage of the public transit system. Bus usage in the Victoria area rose only marginally (0.7%) in August. However, in smaller centres, transit usage was up sharply, increasing 19.3% in August and 9.4% during the first eight months of the year.

Source: BC Transit

Education

- **Student fees comprised about a quarter of Canadian university operating revenues in**

1995. This compares to about a sixth in both 1975 and 1985. The percentage of total costs borne by students has increased significantly during the last fifteen years. In 1980, universities received \$6.44 in government grants for each dollar collected in student fees. By 1995, this had fallen to \$2.97. However, government grants to universities are higher in Canada than in other countries. A 1993 survey conducted by the OECD found that Canada contributed 1.7% of its GDP to public expenditures on higher education. Finland (1.8%) was the only OECD country to allocate a larger share of its GDP toward higher education. The US figure was 1.2%, and the OECD average was 1.0%.

Source: SC, Catalogue 81-003-XPB

Movie Theatres and the Film Industry

- **Attendance at movie theatres in British Columbia continued to increase in 1995/96.** There were 14.5 million paid admissions to theatres (excluding drive-ins) in the province, an increase of 11.2% over the previous year. This compares to a 4.8% increase at the national level, where movie theatre attendance reached a 13-year high of 85.0 million. British Columbians were the most avid movie-goers in the country, averaging 3.8 visits per person, compared to 2.8 visits per capita for all of Canada. Newfoundland (1.5) had the lowest average attendance per capita.

Source: SC, Catalogue 87F0009XPE

- **BC's film industry produced 18 feature films, 16 TV series, 5 animation productions, and 41 movies-of-the-week, for a total of 80 productions, in the first 6 months of 1997.** This compares to 105 productions for all of 1996. Spending by the motion picture industry in BC has increased from about \$12 million a year in the late 1970s to \$537 million last year. Much of the growth has occurred during the last six years, with spending almost tripling during this period.

Source: BC Film Commission

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Infoline Report:

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Accommodation Categories

Originally published in Mar. '97 issue of *Tourism Room Revenue*, available by annual subscription for \$60 plus GST

The categories

The Tourism Room Revenue report contains data that detail the revenue earnings of five accommodation categories: fishing lodges, hotels (divided into four groups based on the number of rooms), motels, vacation rentals, and miscellaneous properties. Vacation rentals include cabins, resorts and lodges (notably wilderness lodges). The miscellaneous category is a catch-all that includes guest ranches, outdoor adventure (including guide outfitters), larger bed and breakfasts, and houseboats.

Hotels dominate ...

That hotels earn more revenue than the other accommodators does not come as much of a surprise. Although motels outnumber hotels three to two, the hotels contain twice as many rooms – 55% of the provincial total. In 1996, 75% of B.C.'s room revenue was earned by hotels: a quarter of the properties, with half the rooms, earned three quarters of the revenue.

Further compounding the dominance of hotels has been above-average revenue growth in every year since 1993. In 1996, hotel revenue was up 11.7%, compared to a provincial growth rate of 9.8%. This means that the share of the accommodation dollars spent in hotels has risen from 73% in 1992 to 75% in 1996.

... but small hotels are declining in number

In 1996, there were 370 small hotels (those with 75 or fewer rooms) operating in B.C., 53 fewer than in 1989. It is suspected that much of the decline is in the small "beverage hotels"¹ which have been affected by the proliferation of neighbourhood pubs. Revenue growth in the category averaged 6.3% annu-

¹ Hotels whose operations are centred around a beverage room or tavern.

ally² between 1989 and 1996, one percentage point below the provincial rate of 7.3%.

Motels in protracted slump

The importance of motels in the province's accommodation mix has been declining steadily since 1989 (the first year for which data is available). In that year motels earned 18% of the province's room revenue; by 1996, this share had fallen to 15%. Annual growth in motel revenue averaged 5.5%² between 1989 and 1996. 1996 was a particularly bleak year, with motel revenue falling 0.1% during a year when provincial revenue rose 9.8%.


More tellingly, the number of motel properties fell from 873 in 1989 to 825 in 1996, and while the total number of rooms in B.C. increased 7%, the number of motel rooms rose less than 1% over the same period.

Niche properties show dynamic growth in both revenue and number

At a time when traditional motel and small hotel properties are declining in number, other forms of traveller accommodation are appearing to fill niches in the market. Both vacation rentals and miscellaneous properties have shown substantial growth since 1989. Annual average revenue growth² has been well above the provincial rate; vacation rentals have grown at an average of 9.9% each year between 1989 and 1996, while miscellaneous property revenue averaged 18.3% growth.

The number of properties in these two categories has also jumped. There are now over 100 more vacation rentals than in 1989. The number of properties in the miscellaneous category has grown even more, with 141 more properties. This growth in vacation rentals and miscellaneous properties has added nearly 4,900 rooms to the provincial accommodation supply.

² Compound rate.

 fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

 also on the Internet at <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca>

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)			% change
		Jul 1/97	on year ago
BC		3,933.3	2.0
Canada		30,286.6	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT			% change
		1996	on year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices - \$ millions)</i>			
Current Dollars		103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars		74,001	1.0
TRADE (\$ millions)			
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jul		2,945	-0.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul		2,189	-10.4
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul		2,706	3.9
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX			% change
		Aug '97	on year ago
<i>(all items - 1986=100)</i>			
BC		139.9	1.1
Canada		138.2	1.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)			% change
		Aug '97	on year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>			
Labour Force - BC		2,029	2.1
Employed - BC		1,856	2.8
Unemployed - BC		172	-5.0
		Aug '96	
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)		8.5	9.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)		9.0	9.5
INTEREST RATES (percent)		Oct 1/97	Oct 2/96
Prime Business Rate		4.75	5.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year		5.65	5.95
- 5 year		6.85	7.90
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		Oct 1/97	Oct 2/96
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$		1.3788	1.3617
US \$ <i>(reciprocal of above rate)</i>		0.7253	0.7344
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS			% change
		Jul '97	on year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>			
BC		621.13	0.5
Canada		605.00	2.6
SOURCES:			
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS			
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada			
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics			

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Released this week by BC STATS

- Migration Highlights, Second Quarter, 1997
- Tourism Room Revenue, June 1997

Next week

- Major Projects Inventory, September 1997
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, Third Quarter 1997 (last published 4th Quarter 1996)