

## highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

### *The Economy*

- **Exports of BC products were up 13.6% in May, compared to the same month last year.** This marked the fourth time in the last five months that BC's exports have risen at double-digit rates, and continues an upturn that began last August. A 27.9% jump in exports to the US, BC's main trading partner, remained the primary reason for the strong growth. Canadian exports were up 6.6% in May, as BC (+13.6%), Atlantic Canada (+12.4%), and Ontario (+11.4%) all posted healthy gains. Alberta's exports rose (+5.1%) for the first time in nearly a year.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC's exports to the US have been expanding since last June.** Year-to-date, they were 23.9% higher than in the first five months of 1998. US-bound exports of most commodities have grown at double-digit rates ranging from 13.9% for metallic minerals to 52.9% for energy products. Exports of machinery and equipment increased 34.5%, as sales of motor vehicles and parts rose to almost double (+83.0%) the level in the first five months of 1998. Two hundred million of the \$393 million of autos and parts exported to the US were road tractors, with another \$20 million coming from sales of wheels. Exports of new and used passenger vehicles (excluding buses) grew to \$55 million, four times the level in the first five months of 1998. Passenger auto exports have been expanding steadily in recent months, suggesting that a cheap loonie may be encouraging a growing number of Americans to buy cars from BC. *Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS*
- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia rose 1.7% (seasonally adjusted) between April and May.** BC's three biggest manufacturing industries—wood (+2.4%), paper

(+1.1%) and food (+3.0%)—all posted gains following a relatively weak performance in April. Canadian shipments were up 1.0%, as most provinces rebounded from a downturn in April. PEI (-4.8%) and Nova Scotia (-0.1%), the only provinces to escape the slowdown in April, did not fare as well in May. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Retail sales in BC continued to see-saw, declining 1.0% (seasonally adjusted) in May after posting a 1.5% increase in the previous month.** The drop in sales was the second so far this year, sending mixed signals as to whether or not retailing in the province has started to rebound from a sluggish 1998. Canadian sales were 0.4% higher than in April. Ontario's 0.8% increase, and strong growth in Atlantic Canada only partly compensated for weakness in western Canada (where sales fell in three of the four provinces, and were flat in Saskatchewan) and in Quebec (0.0%). *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Sales by wholesalers rose 3.5% (seasonally adjusted) between April and May.** BC had the third-highest increase in the country, after Newfoundland (+7.1%) and New Brunswick (+4.6%). Canadian sales were up 1.8%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

### *Bankruptcies*

- **There were 91 business bankruptcies in the province in April, compared to 53 in the same month last year.** Nationally, the number of bankruptcies was down 9.1%, to 836. The 71.7% increase in BC reflects the fact that April 1998 figures were lower than usual as some businesses facing bankruptcy held off from filing until May, in anticipation of changes to the law which came into effect at the beginning of that month. However, it is unlikely that all of the in-

### ***Did you know...***

***The world's population passed the 6 billion mark this week. With our population at just over 4 million, that means that one in every 1,500 people alive today lives in British Columbia.***

crease in bankruptcies can be attributed to this factor. Business bankruptcies have been on the rise, increasing more than twenty percent in all but three of the last 12 months.

*Source: Industry Canada*

- **The number of consumer bankruptcies in the province rose 37.6%, to 710 in April, marking the second straight month in which they have been more than a third higher than a year earlier.** Consumer bankruptcy registrations at the beginning of last year were also affected by the change in the law governing bankruptcies. Canadian consumer bankruptcies were 7.7% lower than in April 1998.

*Source: Industry Canada*

### ***Homeowner Repairs and Renovations***

- **British Columbians dusted off their tools in 1997, as spending on home repairs and renovations increased for the first time since 1992.** The average homeowner spent \$1,863 to repair or renovate their dwelling in 1997, up from \$1,590 in the previous year. The national average, which also increased for the first time since 1992, was \$1,712. Two out of every three homeowners surveyed in 1997 said they had spent some money on repairs or renovations. Sixty-one percent of the expenditures in BC were for contract work, with the remaining 39 cents on every dollar going to the cost of materials. Total spending by all homeowners was \$1.8 billion in BC, and reached \$12.8 billion at the national level.

*Source: SC, Catalogue 62-201*

### ***Absence from Work***

- **In 1998, the average full-time employee in BC missed 8.7 days of work due to illness or for personal reasons (excluding absences for maternity leaves).** Illness or disability accounted for most (7.5 days) of the time lost. Women (10.5 days) were off the job an average of 3.1 days more than men (7.4). The main reason for the difference was that the average woman spent 2.7 more days at home due to illness or disability than her male counterpart (9.1 versus 6.4). In addition, women were slightly more likely than men (1.5 days, compared to 1.0) to stay home for family or personal reasons. Overall, Canadians lost an average of 7.8 days of work in 1998 due to illness or for personal reasons.

Newfoundlanders (9.6 days) lost the most time, while employees in PEI (6.5 days) and Alberta (6.9 days) were the least likely to book off work.

*Source: SC, Catalogue 71-535-MPB, no. 10*

### ***Radio Listening***

- **The average BC resident spent 18.6 hours a week listening to the radio last fall, almost two hours less than the Canadian average (20.4 hours).** Radio was most popular in PEI, Quebec, and Alberta, where people tuned in for an average of 21.3 hours a week. BC and New Brunswick (18.7 hours) were at the bottom of the scale.

Format preferences vary considerably among the provinces. In BC, the most popular radio format is gold/oldies/rock (16%), but it is followed closely by adult contemporary (15%), talk radio (15%) and the CBC (14%). Contemporary and country music stations each have 10% of the market. On the Prairies and in most of Atlantic Canada, country is king, accounting for anywhere from 23% of listening time in Manitoba to 50% in Newfoundland. Residents of Quebec (34%), Ontario (29%) and New Brunswick (27%) are most likely to tune in to adult contemporary stations.

*Source: SC, The Daily*

### ***Crime Rates***

- **British Columbia's crime rate fell to 12,141 per 100,000 population in 1998, a decrease of 4.8% from 1997.** There were 486,861 crimes reported to police in the province last year. A 7.6% drop in the property crime rate (to 7,178 per 100,000), and fall of 3.8% in the incidence of violent crimes (to 1,344 per 100,000) both contributed to the decline in the crime rate. Despite the decrease, BC's crime rate was the second-highest among the provinces, after Saskatchewan (12,403), and 50% above the national rate (8,102). Newfoundland (5,803) had the lowest crime rate in the country.

*Source: SC, Catalogue 85-002, Vol 19, No. 9*

**highlights**, Issue 99-29  
July 23, 1999

Methodology contact: Ruth McDougall / (250) 387-0337  
Population Statistics, BC STATS

Each year BC STATS projects the population of the province and its regions based on demographic and economic trends, modified to take into consideration possible future changes. This cycle, just published, is known as PEOPLE 24 and was completed in the summer of 1999.

Detailed projections, each 11 pages long, with a map, "Economic and Demographic Notes", 4 pages of population pyramids and charts, "Components of Change", "Special Age Groups", "5 Year Age Groups by Sex", are available for BC, the 8 development regions, the 28 regional districts, the 83 local health areas, 6 sub-Vancouver local health areas, and a number of "special areas" of local interest. Summaries appear free on our Internet site.

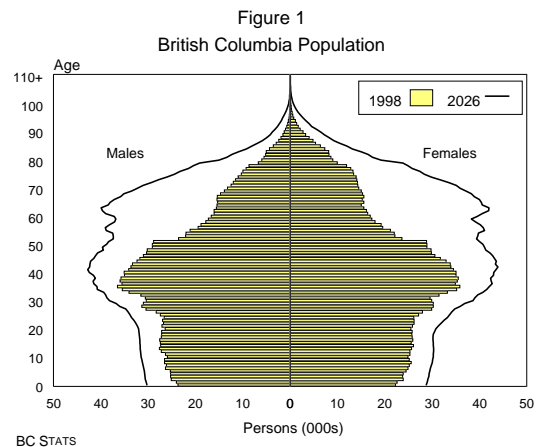
Ordering Information follows this report. BC STATS will service requests for individual areas at \$5 per area with a minimum charge of \$10 plus GST. VISA or Mastercard required on minimum orders.

The demands for public services, such as schools, hospitals and roads, are closely related to population size and characteristics. In addition, marketing strategies of businesses are greatly influenced by the size and structure of the population. As a result, reliable population projections are an essential tool for planners in both the private and public sectors.

As we head toward the next century, British Columbia faces unique challenges within Canada. Some of the major issues emerging in our province include how to deal with strong population growth that will put even greater pressure on our urban communities, our environment and government resources; a changing ethnic make-up of the population requiring a greater understanding of the values of cultural diversity; a health care system that must meet the needs of a growing and aging population; and growing economic and income disparities between our province's regions and people.

The following are some demographic highlights from PEOPLE Projection 24:

The British Columbia population is getting larger and aging. Between 1998 and 2026, the population will have increased by almost 48%. The median age of the population will have increased from 36.4 to 43.0 years.



Components of B.C. Population Change

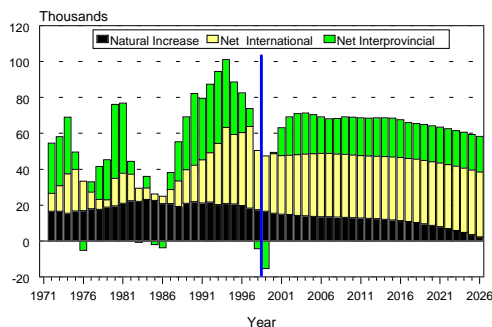


Figure 2

The major factor driving population growth will be migration to British Columbia. International migration will account for 57% of the population gain, followed by interprovincial migration at 27%, and natural increase (births minus deaths) at 16%.

Even though the number of births in British Columbia will continue to rise, the contribution of natural increase to the overall population growth will decrease.

Figure 3  
British Columbia Births and Deaths

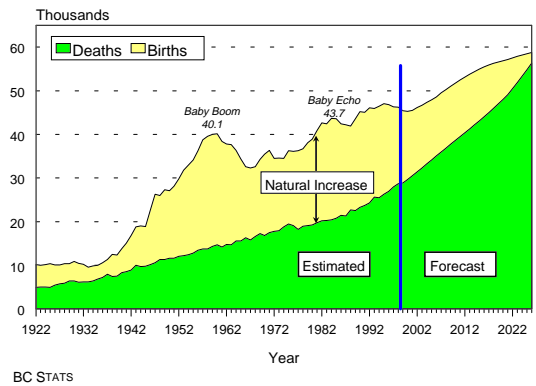
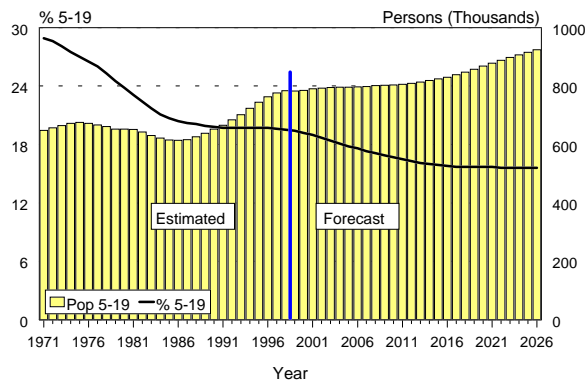
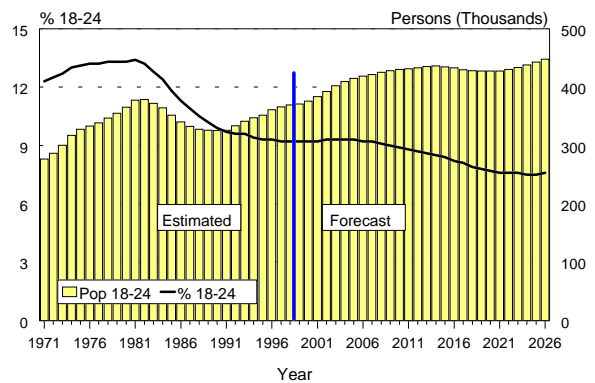


Figure 4  
B.C. Population 5-19



BC STATS

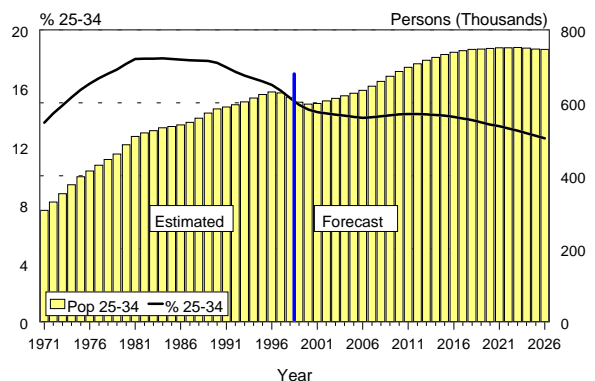
Figure 5  
B.C. Population 18-24



BC STATS

The population of school age (5-19 years) will continue to grow, although its share of total provincial population will decline. The same will be true for the population of post-secondary school age (18-24 years).

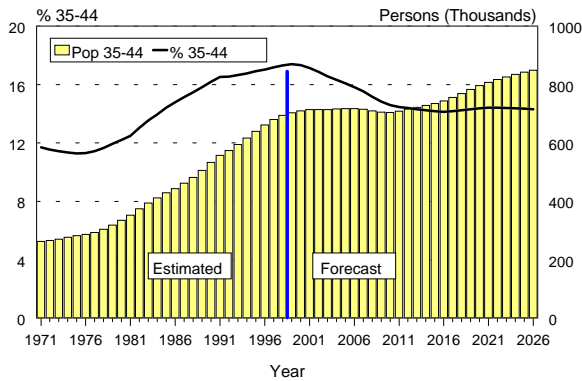
Figure 6  
B.C. Population 25-34



BC STATS

The population aged 25-34, which is generally associated with first time household formation, is expected to dip due to net out-migration in the short-term, but will rise once again as migrants return to the province.

Figure 7  
B.C. Population 35-44



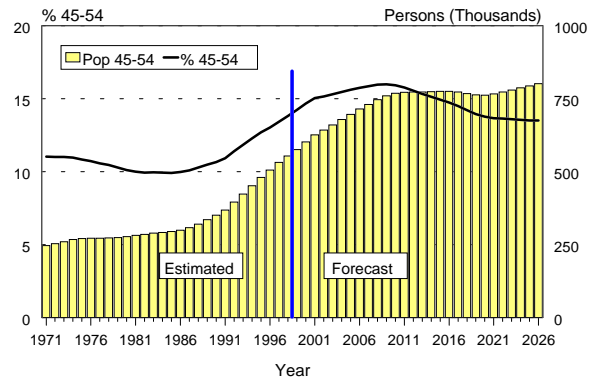
BC STATS

The population of mature labour force age (45-54 years) went through a period of slow growth for a couple of decades, but in the last several years this trend has started to change. Baby-boomers are beginning to enter this age group, and as a result, the population will increase significantly. This will have repercussions on the labour force, especially in terms of career goals and whether or not they can be met with so many people competing for a limited number of higher level jobs.

Both the share and overall population of retirement age (65+) will continue to increase significantly from 12.7 per cent in 1998 to 20.2 per cent in 2026. The same will be true for the very senior population (80+), which will grow from 3.0 per cent of the population to 4.6 per cent. This increase will have a serious effect on health care expenditures given the high per capita health costs associated with seniors.

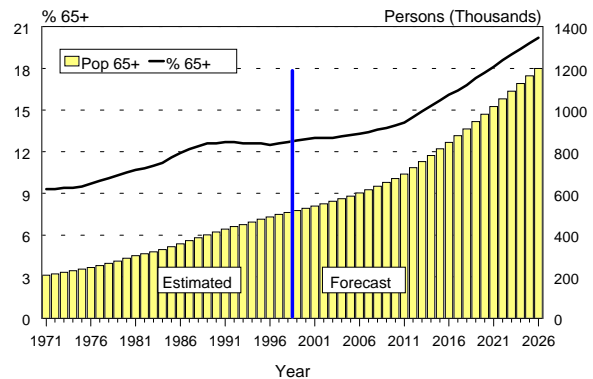
The population currently aged 35-44 represents the bulk of the baby-boom cohort. The population in this age group is expected to level off for several years, then show strong growth once again.

Figure 8  
B.C. Population 45-54



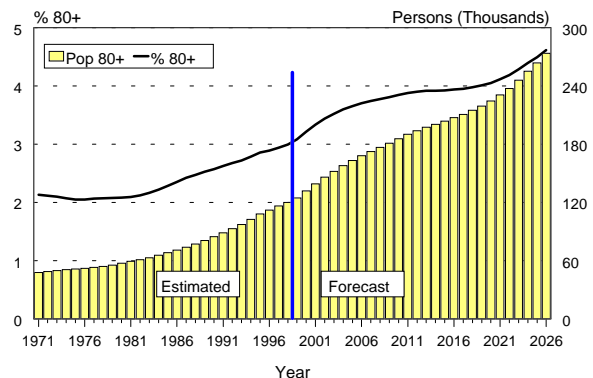
BC STATS

Figure 9  
B.C. Population 65+



BC STATS

Figure 10  
B.C. Population 80+

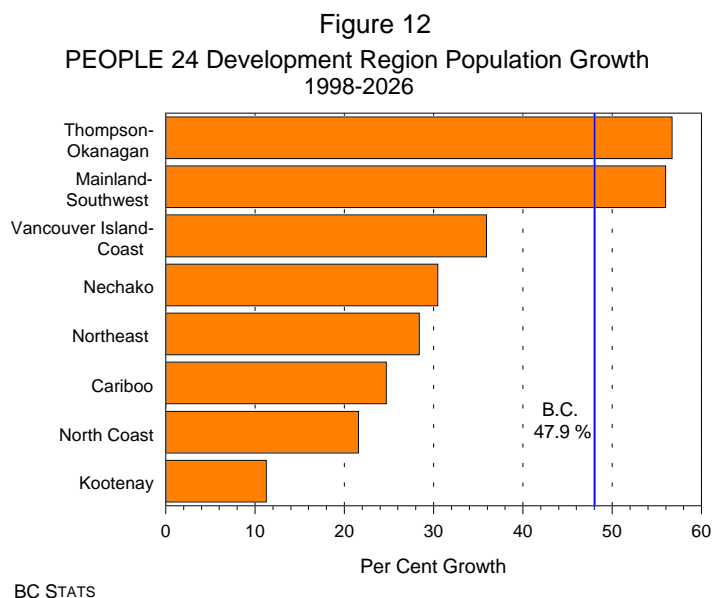
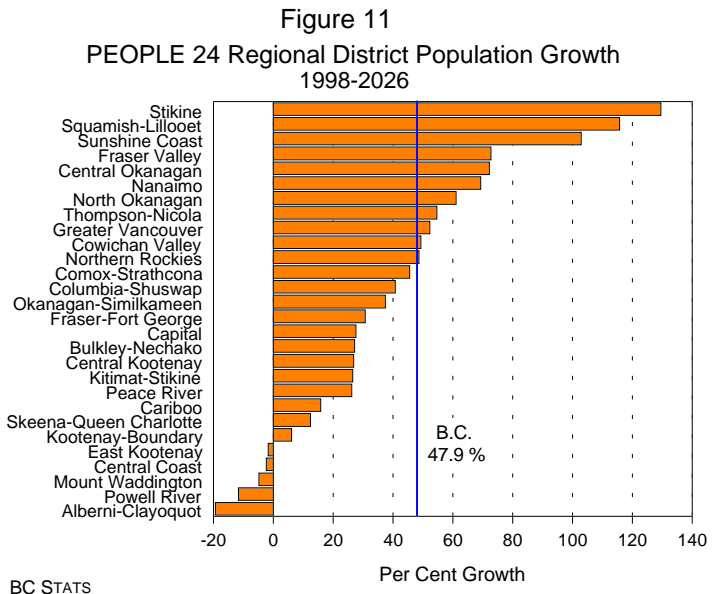


BC STATS

## Regional Population Projections

There are substantial disparities with respect to projected growth among the 28 British Columbia Regional Districts. Areas in the southern portions of the province will likely see much higher growth rates than regions in the north. One of the reasons for this is that the economic base in the northern regions is far more resource dependent than the Lower Mainland, the lower portion of Vancouver Island, and the Okanagan. The regions that are expected to experience a decline tend to be those that are heavily dependent on resource extraction industries. The Stikine Region is a notable exception to the rule. The reason for the projected growth is the expectation of increased activity in the forest sector.

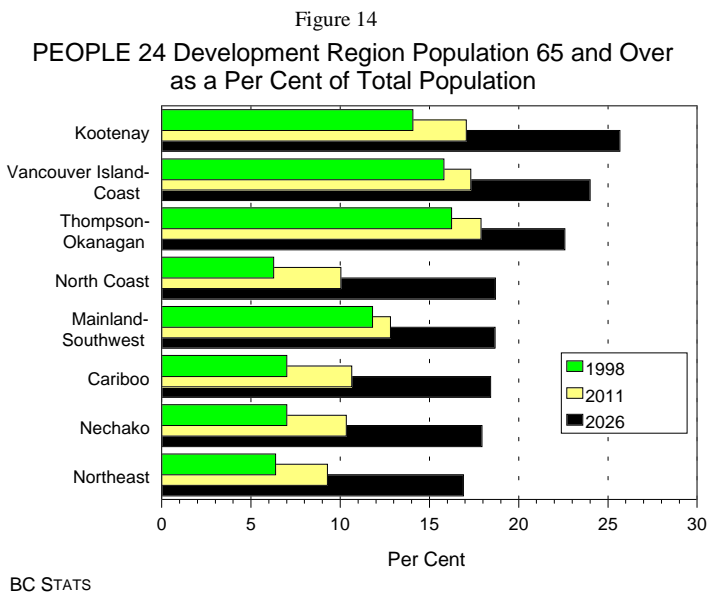
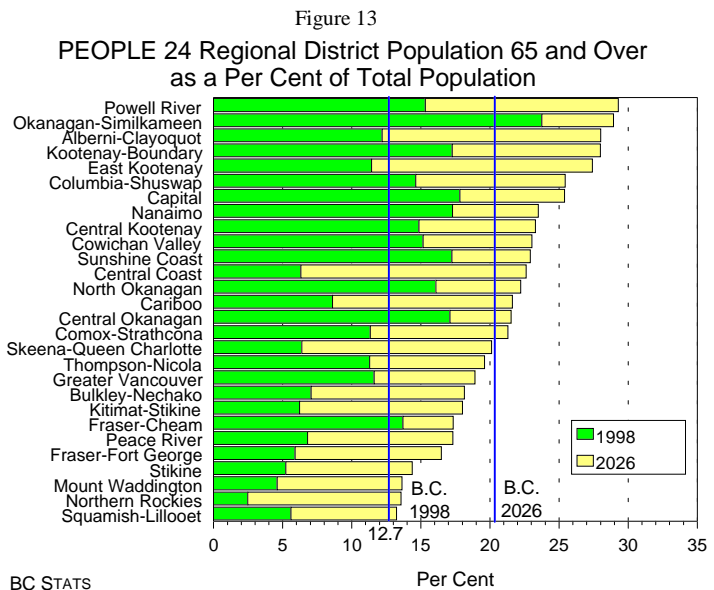
Figure 12, depicting growth by Development Region, shows more clearly the inclination toward the southern regions when it comes to growth. Both the Thompson-Okanagan and Mainland-Southwest regions are expected to experience over 55 per cent growth over the 1998 to 2026 period. The slower growth in the Kootenay region is largely due to the depletion of coal reserves and the anticipated shutdown of various mines in the East Kootenay area as we enter the next century.



There are regional differences with respect to age as well. Currently, the population 65 and over as a per cent of total population is much smaller in most of the remote areas, and greater in the more populous regions in the southern portion of the province. This is largely a combination of the greater access to services (particularly those related to health care) in the larger centres, and the more pleasant climate of the southern regions, which attracts the elderly looking for a place to retire.

The Regional District chart in Figure 13 indicates that some regions will experience proportionately larger increases in the per cent of population over 65. In many of these cases, this is the result of differential rates of migration to or from an area. Migrants tend to be younger than the population at large. Hence, in regions of high net inflows of population the aging process is slowed. Alternatively, where there is a net outflow, population aging accelerates.

On a larger scale, the Development Regions show a similar pattern of a more aged population in the south; however, the regions to the north will see proportionately larger increases in the proportion of the population over 65, particularly in the first 15 years of the projection.



# Regional Population Projections

## Where will the people be in the year 2026?

The demands for public services, such as schools, hospitals and roads, are closely related to population size and characteristics. Marketing strategies of businesses are greatly influenced by the size and structure of the population. A reliable population projection can be an essential tool for planners in both the private and public sectors.

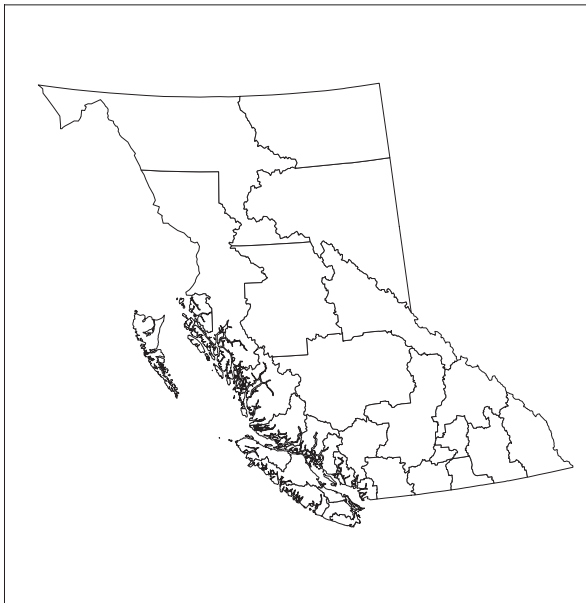
This 1999 edition of the *British Columbia Regional Population Projection* encompasses not only a projection of the number of British Columbians and households by region in the year 2026, but also the developments that may lead to this total figure. Life expectancy gains, fertility trends, and migration levels all affect the final count and are important in their own right. British Columbia's evolving age structure will also have a profound impact on this province in the 21st century.

The projections are available in the following formats:

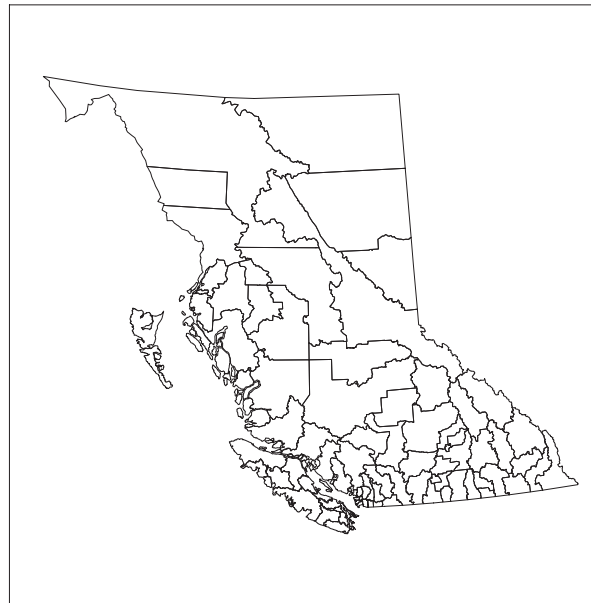
- Population Estimates and Projections
  - by 28 Regional Districts
    - \$80.00 (*printed copy*)
    - \$400.00 (*diskette*); update \$200
  - by 83 Local Health Areas
    - \$150.00 (*printed copy*)
    - \$400.00 (*diskette*); update \$200

To order additional copies, call: (250) 387-0327


Data Services  
BC STATS  
Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations  
P.O. Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1




Regional Districts



Local Health Areas

 fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

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

## BC at a glance . . .

<b>POPULATION (thousands)</b>	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
<b>GDP and INCOME</b>	1997	% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>		
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	109,347	3.3
GDP (\$ 1992 millions)	98,201	2.2
GDP (\$ 1992 per Capita)	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1992 per Capita)	16,340	-2.3
<b>TRADE (\$ millions)</b>		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) May	3,001	14.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) May	2,355	13.6
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) May	2,757	-0.5
<b>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX</b>		% change on one year ago
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Jun '99	
BC	111.5	1.0
Canada	110.5	1.6
<b>LABOUR FORCE (thousands)</b>		% change on one year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Jun '99	
Labour Force - BC	2,073	1.6
Employed - BC	1,896	2.4
Unemployed - BC	178	-6.7
		Jun '98
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	8.6	9.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.6	8.4
<b>INTEREST RATES (percent)</b>	July 21/99	July 22/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.70	6.55
- 5 year	7.50	6.95
<b>US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE</b>	July 21/99	July 22/98
<i>(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$</i>	1.5010	1.4954
<i>US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6668	0.6688
<b>AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS</b>		% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Apr '99	
BC	623.64	1.4
Canada	608.15	0.0
<b>SOURCES:</b>		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada		
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see <a href="http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm">www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm</a>		

## Our favourite links

Our site now has a page detailing the information and statistical sites we at BC STATS use most often. Go to our home page at

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

and click on

**Subjects**

then click

[Click here for a more detailed list](#)

then click:

[Links to Statistical Sites we use](#)

If you want to jump right there, go to

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/links/linkstat.htm](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/links/linkstat.htm)

One of the gems in the selection of Internet sites is BC Hydro's bid to help companies determine a location for new business development. Their site includes a series of community profiles that is among the best we have ever seen. The address of the community profile page is

[http://eww.bchydro.bc.ca/mcs/cust\\_dev/business\\_invest\\_comm.html](http://eww.bchydro.bc.ca/mcs/cust_dev/business_invest_comm.html)  
[continued]

### Released this week by BC STATS

- No subscription releases

### Next week

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 1<sup>st</sup> Half, 1999
- Business Indicators, July 1999
- Current Statistics, July 1999