



BC STATS

Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Prices

- **British Columbia's all-items consumer price index (CPI) was 1.1% higher in February than the same month in 2000.** This was the lowest year-over-year inflation rate of all the provinces. Nationally, the CPI rose 2.9%. The drop in the inflation rate, however, is likely only temporary, and was largely due to electricity and insurance rebates given to ratepayers in the province by the BC government and ICBC, respectively, in February.

The \$200 rebate provided to all BC hydro residential customers in the province resulted in an 8.4% reduction in the energy index compared to February 2000. This was the first fall since April 1999, and helped to offset rises in fuel costs. Strong increases were seen in the price of piped gas (+54.9%), fuel oil and other fuels (+18.6%) and gasoline (+16.4%). Lower energy costs also helped to reduce the cost of shelter by 3.6%. Although the cost of owned (+1.4%), and rented (+0.9%) accommodation rose, residents paid 33% less for utilities.

Transportation costs rose 3.3% year-over-year in February, the smallest increase since March 1999. The modest rise was a result of a 1.8% drop in automotive insurance costs due to rebates of up to \$100 given to BC drivers by ICBC.

BC's CPI increased in all other major components. The greatest jump was seen in food prices which rose 3.6% year-over-year in February due mostly to a 20.6% increase in the cost of fresh vegetables. Health and personal care services rose 3.3%, while recreation, education and reading services saw a 2.5% price increase.

Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Manufacturing shipments in the province fell 3.7% in January (seasonally adjusted).** BC's decline was the second largest of all the provinces, behind Newfoundland (-11.4%). The only other province to post a decrease was Saskatchewan (-0.9%). Overall, Canadian manufacturing shipments rose slightly (+0.3%).

Shipments of durable goods fell 5.7% in January. This was the first drop since October 2000. Declines were posted in all major groups except non-metallic mineral products which rose (3.8%). The largest industry, wood product manufacturing, saw shipments fall 4.6%. Decreases were also seen in computer and electronic products (-16.8%) and machinery manufacturing shipments (-13.9%).

On the non-durable goods side, shipments fell for the fourth consecutive month, posting a decrease of 0.7% in January. The decline was largely due to a fall in the largest industry in this sector, paper manufacturing (-4.1%), which was partly offset by an increase in the second largest industry, food (+1.6%). Decreased shipments were also seen in leather and allied industries (-15.5%), clothing (-4.0%), plastics and rubber products (-1.2%) and printing and related support activities (-0.4%).

Source: Statistics Canada

- **BC's retail sales fell 1.0% between December and January (seasonally adjusted).** Shoppers spent \$3,064 million in stores in the first month of this year. This was the first drop since October 2000, and the largest monthly decrease since May 1999. BC's decline in sales was the largest of all the provinces. Quebec (-0.8%) and Nova Scotia (-0.8%) also posted reduced sales, although nationally spending in retail stores increased 0.6% to \$23.8 billion.

Source: Statistics Canada

Report

Small business employment

Did you know...

In 1998, July was the most common month to give birth in BC, with 3,784 children being born. By contrast, the least favoured month was November. A total of 3,304 live births were recorded in that month.

- **Wholesale sales in BC rose 1.7% between December and January (seasonally adjusted).** Wholesalers in the province sold \$3,179 million of goods during January. Sales were up across most of the country. Only New Brunswick (-3.1%) and Nova Scotia (-2.2%) saw sales drop. Nationally, wholesale sales increased 0.8% as gains were posted in all but three of the eleven trade groups, including a 2.7% rise in the largest group, motor vehicles, accessories and parts.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Union wage rates for construction workers in Vancouver increased 0.1% between February 2000 and February 2001, while in Victoria they remained unchanged.** The Construction Union Wage Rate Index (1992=100) is calculated from basic wage rates and rates including selected supplementary payments for 16 trades in 20 metropolitan areas. Victoria (109.2) and Vancouver (110.1) had the lowest index of all areas, meaning that, since 1992, wages increases in Victoria and Vancouver have been lower than all areas. The highest indexes were found in Edmonton (130.4) and Calgary (128.3). The national wage rate index was 117.8 in February, up 2.4% from February 2000.

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment Insurance

- **The number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits in BC decreased 8.3% between January 2000 and the same month in 2001.** The actual number of recipients fell by 6,290 to 69,240. Declines were seen all across the country, except Ontario where there was a 0.4% increase in beneficiaries. The number of recipients in Canada as a whole fell 4.3% to 640,760.

Source: Statistics Canada

Rural and Small Town BC

- **BC's population increased in both urban and rural areas between 1991 and 1996.** Predominately urban areas saw a 14.9% jump in population over the period, while in rural areas the increase was larger at 15.6%. These were the largest rises of all provinces and territories, and were well above the Canadian averages of 5.7% and 6.4% respectively. BC also experienced the largest increases in employment in both urban (11.7%) and rural (17.5%) regions. Nationally, ur-

ban employment rose 2.0% while in rural areas the increase was 5.1%.

Source: SC Catalogue 21-006-XIE

Births

- **BC mothers were the second oldest in the country in 1998.** The mean age of mothers who gave birth in that year was 29 years. Only Ontario mums were older on average (29.5). Nationally, the mean age was 28.7 years.

Across the country, by far the largest majority of births occurred in hospitals. Nationally, this accounted for 99.3% of all live births in 1998. BC had the second highest percentage of live non-hospital births (1.0%), equal with Alberta, but behind Northwest Territories (5.0%).

Source: SC Catalogue 84F021-XPB

Divorce

- **British Columbians are getting married later, divorced when they're older and their marriages are lasting longer.** Between 1994 and 1998, the mean age at marriage increased for both men and women. In 1994, men married at age 28.8, on average. By 1998, this had increased to 29.6. The mean age for women to marry increased by 8 months to 26.6 years. The mean duration of marriage has also risen over the period, rising from 12.2 years in 1994 to 12.8 years in 1998. The mean age at divorce has shown a similar trend, rising from 41.0 years for men and 38.1 years for women in 1994, to 42.3 and 39.3 years for men and women respectively, in 1998.

The number of divorces in BC rose 1.4% between 1997 and 1998. Compared to five years previously, however, the number has decreased 16.4% from 11,437 in 1994 to 9,827 in 1998. The number of divorces per 100,000 population fell from 311.7 to 245.8 over the period. In 1998, BC had the third highest rate in the country, behind Yukon (370.4) and Alberta (263.8). Couples in Newfoundland were the least likely to split up, with 173.1 per 100,000 population divorcing. Nationally, the rate was 228.4.

Source: SC Catalogue 84F0213XPB

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Infoline Report: Latest small business employment numbers show three year changes

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Seasonal Swings For Full Time Workers

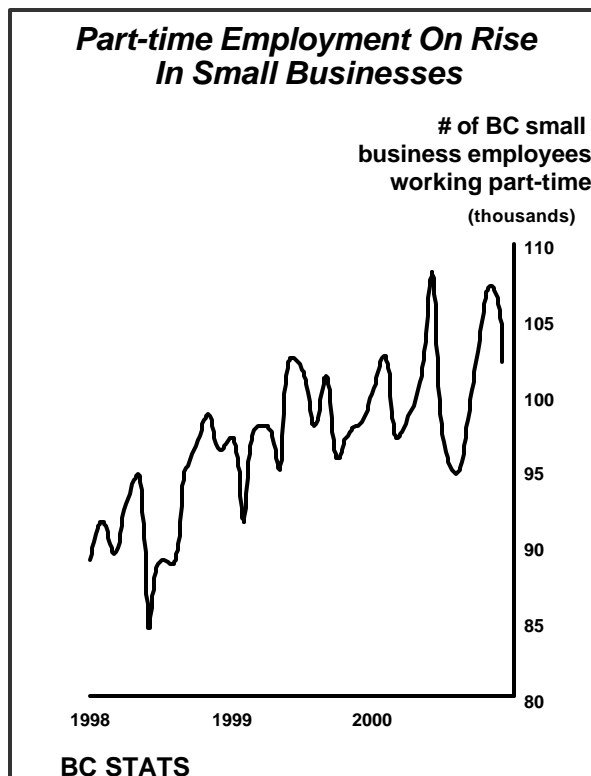
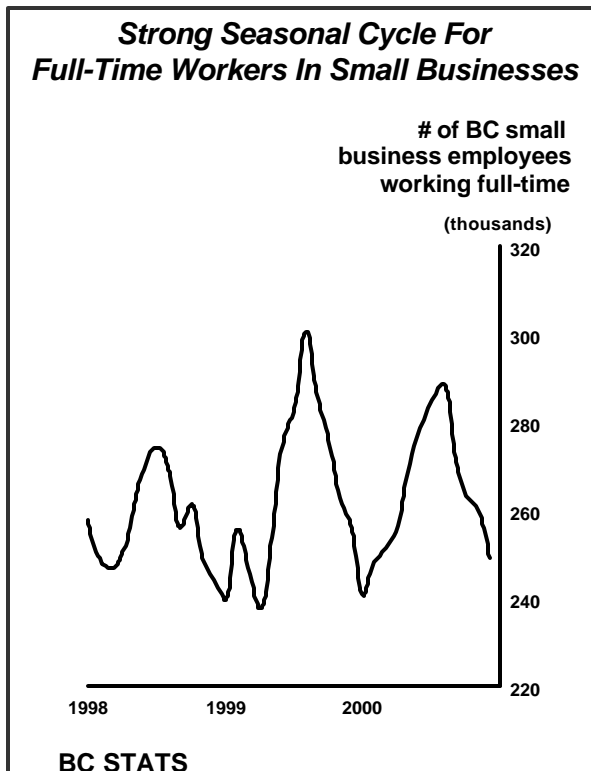
Employment figures from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey for 1999 and 2000 show a marked seasonal pattern in the number of full time employees of small businesses in British Columbia. The Survey defines small businesses as those with less than twenty employees.

But underneath these seasonal patterns, there is no evidence of small businesses hiring greater numbers of full-time workers in the past two years. Monthly numbers of full-time small business employees ranged from summer peaks around 290 thousand to winter lows of around 240 thousand.

For part-time employees, on the other hand, there has been significant growth since 1998. Numbers of part-time small business employees averaged 101 thousand in 2000, up from 92 thousand in 1998 and 98 thousand in 1999. Increases in part-time employment have not been unique to small businesses. The numbers of part-time employees in larger businesses were also growing over these years, expanding from 147 thousand in 1998 to 154 thousand in 2000.

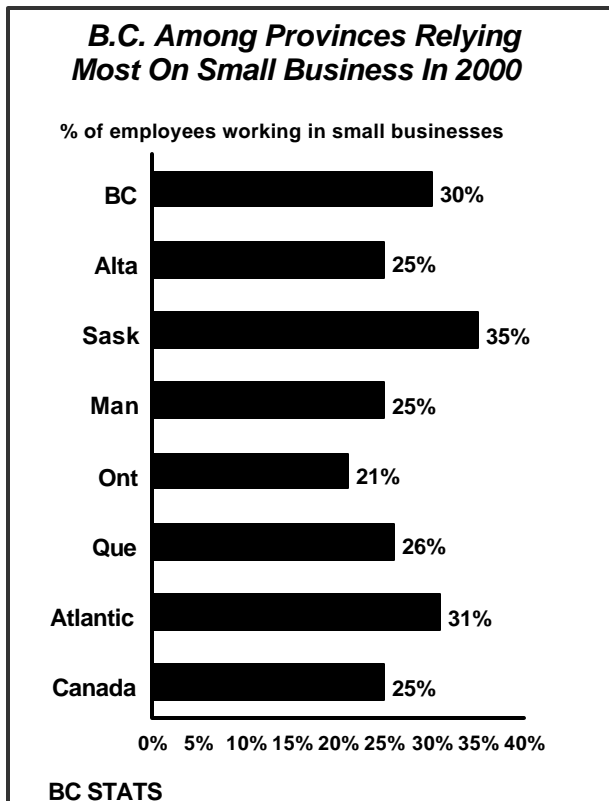
But in small businesses, part-time employment has been expanding faster than full-time employment, while in larger businesses both have expanded at the same pace. The result is that part-time work has become more prevalent in small businesses, while workers in larger businesses are no more or less likely to be working part-time in 2000 than they were in 1999 or 1998.

The part-time rate for small businesses in British Columbia rose from 26 per cent in 1998, to 27 per cent in 1999, to 28 per cent in 2000. Over the same years, the part-time employment rate for larger businesses remained unchanged at 18 per cent.



British Columbia Still A Small Business Province

Small business employment figures for 2000 also show that British Columbia continues to rely more on small businesses for jobs than most provinces. Only Saskatchewan and the Atlantic Provinces (as a whole) recorded larger percentages of their total employee workforces in small businesses.



In 2000, the portion of all private sector employees who were working for small firms was 30 per cent in British Columbia, as compared to 35 per cent for Saskatchewan, and 31 per cent in the Atlantic region. For Canada as a whole the ratio was 25 per cent. Ontario, with its concentration of large companies, recorded the lowest provincial ratio of only 21 per cent of employees working in small businesses.

Small Businesses Are Relatively Highly Unionised In British Columbia

Small business employees anywhere in Canada are much less likely to be unionised than employees in large firms. Four per cent of all employees of small private sector firms in Canada were union members in 2000, as compared to 23 per cent of employees of larger firms (those with 20 or more employees).

British Columbia is one of the most heavily unionised places in Canada. Small business employees here are more likely to be unionised than almost anywhere else in Canada. Six per cent of all British Columbia employees of small firms were unionised in 2000, as compared to 28 per cent of employees in larger businesses in the province.

Only in Quebec was a higher proportion of small business employees unionised. Quebec employees of small firms included 7 per cent who were union members. Thirty per cent of employees of larger businesses in Quebec were union members.

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BC at a glance . . .		
POPULATION (thousands)		% change on one year ago
	Oct 1/00	
BC	4,072.5	0.8
Canada	30,714.7	0.8
GDP and INCOME		% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>	1999	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	118.783	4.2
GDP (\$ 1992 millions)	104.323	2.1
GDP (\$ 1992 per Capita)	25.899	1.3
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1992 per Capita)	16.700	0.0
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Dec	3,155	-4.9
Merchandise Exports (raw) Dec	2,888	21.1
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jan	3,064	5.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Feb '01	
BC	112.6	1.1
Canada	115.2	2.9
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on one year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Feb '01	
Labour Force - BC	2,102	0.4
Employed - BC	1,949	0.1
Unemployed - BC	153	3.8
	Feb '00	
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	7.3	7.0
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	6.9	6.8
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 21/01	Mar 22/00
Prime Business Rate	6.75	6.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.70	7.60
- 5 year	7.25	8.35
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 21/01	Mar 22/00
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$	1.5726	1.4718
US \$ <i>(reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6346	0.6803
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Feb '01	
BC	643.13	2.7
Canada	627.72	3.8
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate		} Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm		

Find your community!

- ◆ 457 different areas within BC
- ◆ 6 pages each
- ◆ free, on our Internet site

Community Census Profiles

Two lookup pages are provided. One features all regions with dropdown boxes that include all available components for a region. The region's profile and link to a map are found just above each drop box. The second lookup option consists of incorporated municipalities listed in alphabetical order. This may be more helpful if you don't know in which region your community is found.

There are several ways to find your community profile. There is a direct link from our home page, under the **News** section in the centre of the page. Alternatively you can drill down through New Releases in the **Current Releases** block on the left of the page or through Census under the **Popular Topics** block.

Printed copies are available on a fee basis: \$5 per profile (six pages), \$10 minimum, \$2000 for a complete set (2,742 pages.)

Released this week by BC STATS

- 2001 Consumer Price Index, February 2001

Next week

- Business Indicators, March 2001
- Current Statistics, March 2001