

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **Exports of BC products fell 14.4% between May and June (seasonally adjusted).** The drop, which followed two months of increases, came as declines were seen in exports to both the US (-15.9%) and overseas (-9.7%). US-bound exports fell partly as a result of a 1.4% drop in the forestry sector. However, declines were also recorded in exports of mineral (-12.5%), agriculture and fish (-0.9%) and other (-29.3%) products. Shipments overseas also decreased in June, falling 9.7%. As with exports to the US, declines were posted in the forestry sector (-9.5%), as well as agriculture and fishing (-47.9%), mining (-0.8%) and all other exports (-14.0%). *Source: BC STATS*
- **British Columbia's consumer price index (CPI) was 1.8% higher in July than the same month in 2000.** This was the lowest year-over-year increase since March. Newfoundland (+1.3%) and New Brunswick (+1.5%) were the only provinces that reported smaller increases: Nationally, the inflation rate was 2.6%, the lowest in four months. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Lower inflation rates across the country were due mostly to a slowing in the rise of energy costs.** Energy costs in BC gained 1.2% in July, year-over-year, a much smaller jump than the previous three months when prices increased by at least 10% in each month. The lower increase was largely due to a 6.1% decrease in the cost of gasoline, which helped to offset a 22.4% rise in the price of piped gas and a 5.9% gain in fuel oil and other fuel prices in July. Gasoline prices had risen every month since April 1999.

Inflation in BC was also driven by increased prices in almost all of the major components of the CPI. Food prices rose 4.7%, the greatest jump since April 1995, as the cost of fresh vegetables (+16.6%) and

fruit (+9.2%) soared. Rises in the price of both rented (+1.3%), and owned (+0.8%) accommodation resulted in a 2.2% jump in the cost of shelter. Consumers also paid more for health and personal care (+2.6%), clothing and footwear (+2.2%), alcoholic beverages and tobacco (+2.1%), and recreation, education and reading (+0.5%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC's workers generated an average gross domestic product per job of \$51,000 in 1996/97, \$15,000 lower than the national average.** The province's business sector labour productivity was the fifth highest in the country behind Alberta (\$66,000), Ontario (\$56,000), Saskatchewan (\$54,000) and Quebec (\$52,000). Across industrial sectors, BC's GDP per job was lower than the Canadian average in 6 out of 9 sectors. The only industries in which productivity was higher were in manufacturing, such as paper, printing, beverages and textiles (\$71,200 in BC compared to \$67,600 in Canada overall), low-wage services, such as retail, accommodation and food industries (\$26,500 in BC compared to \$24,900), and medium-wage services, including transportation, business services and communication (\$54,300 compared to \$51,700). *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **British Columbia's retail sales rose 0.8% in June (seasonally adjusted).** This was the second straight month to see an increase. BC's gain was the second largest of all the provinces behind Prince Edward Island (+1.8%) and equal with Newfoundland (+0.8%). Across the country, retailers in five provinces saw sales decline between May and June. Nationally, sales fell 0.3%. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Wholesale sales in the province fell 1.1% between May and June (seasonally adjusted).** Sales declined in most parts of the country, with

Did you know...

Last year, the average age of family doctors in BC was 45.8. Specialists, however, tended to be slightly older (49.1 years).

gains seen in only three provinces. Canadian sales rose 0.2% in June, mostly as a result of strong automotive sales. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Tourism

- **Visitor entries to BC from the US and overseas were down 0.3% between May and June (seasonally adjusted).** The decline occurred despite a 0.3% rise in the number of visitors from overseas. Most of the increase came from overseas entries from Asia (+2.2%), offsetting a decrease in the numbers from Europe (-4.5%) and Oceania (-6.8%). Visitor entries from the US fell 0.4%. Despite June's decline, total visitor entries were up 3.0%, year-over-year, reaching 722,900. *Source: BC STATS*

BC Park Attendance

- **BC provincial parks saw a 2% increase in campground use in July, compared to the same month of 2000.** Day use decreased by 7%, while boating use remained unchanged. In total, there were 4.67 million visits to BC parks in July, down 5% from 4.94 in July 2000. Total visits year-to-date were 13.17 million, 3% less than the first 7 months of last year. *Source: BC Parks*

Volunteering

- **Fewer British Columbians participated in volunteer activities last year than three years previously.** In 1997, 32% of people aged 15 and older in the province were involved in an unpaid activity as part of a group or organisation. In 2000, the proportion had dropped to 26%, the third lowest in the country. Only Quebec (19%) and Ontario (25%) reported lower participation rates. However, the average annual number of hours that volunteers in BC contributed has remained unchanged between 1997 and 2000, at 154. *Source: SC Catalogue 71-542*

Donating

- **A total of 2,403,000 British Columbians, or 74% of the population aged 15 and over, donated money to charitable or non-profit organizations in 2000, with total donations reaching \$613.6 million.** The average donation was \$255, with a median amount of \$70. The largest proportion (34%) of total donations was given by people in the age range 45-54. This age group also gave the largest average amount (\$415). Women were more likely

than men to donate money, with 56% giving an average of \$262. *Source: SC Catalogue 71-542*

Health

- **The total number of physicians in British Columbia rose 5.9% between 1996 and last year.** In 2000, there were 7,943 licensed physicians in the province, up from 7,502 in 1996. Although there were more family doctors (55%), than specialists (45%), the number of specialist physicians has increased more (+7.3% compared to +4.7% for family doctors) over the period 1996 to 2000. The total number of physicians has increased in all parts of the country, except Yukon (-12.8%). The greatest rises were seen in Alberta (+12.2%) and Nova Scotia (+8.8%). Nationally, the number of doctors rose 5.3%.

Last year, the number of physicians in BC, per 100,000 population, was the third highest in the country, and greater than the national average. There were 195 licensed physicians per 100,000 population in BC compared to a national rate of 187. The only provinces to have higher rates were Quebec (214) and Nova Scotia (201). BC also had more family doctors per 100,000 population (106) than the Canadian average (94), although fewer specialists (88 compared to 93). The rates for both family doctors (+0.8%) and specialists (+3.2%) in the province increased between 1996 and 2000. *Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information*

Internet Use

- **Older British Columbians are more plugged in to the Internet than their counterparts in the rest of the country.** One in five people in the province aged 60 and over used the Internet last year, compared to a national average of 1 in 8. Younger Canadians, however, are far more likely to make use of the Internet, with more than 90% of people aged 15 to 17 logging on in 2000. *Source: SC Catalogue 56F004MIE*

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British Columbia Student Labour Market—July 2001

Summary . . . This article focuses upon recent labour force activity of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. during the month of July who plan on returning to school in the fall. Overall summer student labour market conditions improved substantially in July 2001 from July 2000, particularly for older students. The overall summer student unemployment rate fell to 15.8 per cent in July 2001 from 18.0 per cent in July 2000. This was fully accounted for by older students aged 20 to 24. Older students aged 20 to 24 also saw a jump in their employment rate (employment to population ratio) to 61.2 per cent, up from 54.4 per cent in July 2000. This large gain by older students pushed up the overall student employment rate, though the level by younger students was little changed from a year ago.

Introduction . . . The monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada provides information on labour market characteristics of full-time students in B.C. A supplement to the Labour Force Survey conducted in the months of May to September focuses on the labour market performance of recent full-time students during the summer months.

Many post-secondary students are available for summer employment (especially full-time work) from May through August, while secondary school students will more likely be available for jobs (especially full-time work) in only July and August. This article focuses upon the month of July only, when both secondary and post-secondary students are available for summer work.

Definitions and issues associated with student labour force data . . .

Full-time students—Youths (aged 15 to 24) are given the status of "full-time student" if they reported that they were attending school full-time

in March of the current calendar year when they are surveyed in the summer months.

Returning and not returning students—Students are further categorised by their intentions to return or not return to school full-time in the Fall or if they are unsure of their intentions. There was little change in levels of students during the 1980's as higher school participation rates offset a fall in youth population. The number of total full-time students aged 15 to 24 rose substantially since the early 1990s, rising from 229,700 in July 1990 to 328,300 in July 2001, an increase of 42.9 per cent. The number of returning students rose over this period by 56.7 per cent, and students who were not returning (including students who are not sure if they are returning) decreased by 12.4 per cent. The returning students category remains significantly larger in numbers and proportion than the "not sure/not returning" category. The proportion of returning students to total students stood at 87.8 per cent in July 2001.

Age of students surveyed—The two age groups of full-time students (returning or not) covered include those aged 15 to 19 (a good portion of whom would be secondary school students) and those aged 20 to 24 (most likely all attending either a public or private post-secondary institution). In terms of relative size, the age 15 to 19 group of full-time students (223 thousand in July 2001) is just over twice as large as the age 20 to 24 group (105 thousand).

Older students not covered in survey—Full-time students covered in the Statistics Canada supplemental summer survey are limited to students between the ages of 15 to 24. However, persons aged 25 and older are a growing and significant component of overall full-time post-secondary students in B.C. For example, the estimated number of full-time students in B.C. aged 25 to

29 more than doubled from 9,300 in November 1990 to 21,900 in November 2000.

Part-time students not surveyed—Students aged 15 to 24 who attend, or recently attended school part-time are not reported in the summer student data published by Statistics Canada. However it should be noted that there are significant and growing numbers of part-time students of all ages. In November 2000 there were 33,300 part-time students aged 15 to 24 compared to 17,300 in November 1990.

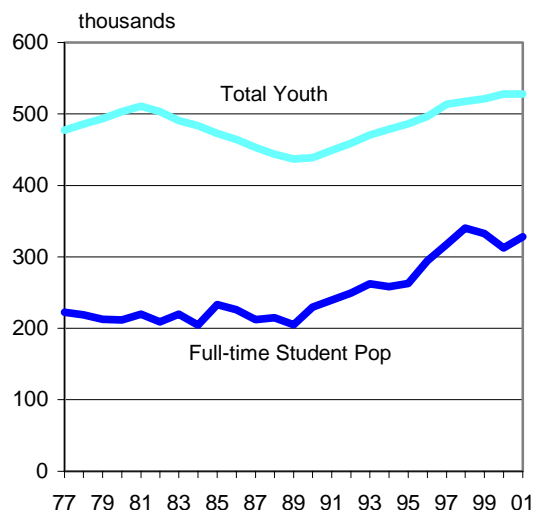
Semester systems and co-op programs may also complicate generalisations about the length and timing of the school year for those in post-secondary studies. Those on different semester systems who are not attending school full-time in March or are on a work placement program, may not be covered by the survey.

Growth in the student population . . .Figure 1 shows that the estimated number of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. (both returning and those not returning or undecided), remained relatively unchanged during the 1980s. While the population of this age group fell during the 1980s, student numbers held as participation rates in education rose.

The number of full-time students during the 1990s rose steadily due to both increased population and education participation increases. This large increase in numbers of students since the early 1990s has increased the competitiveness of the summer student job market relative to the situation in the late 1980s.

After decreasing slightly in 1999 and 2000, the number of full-time students in B.C. aged 15 to 24 rose by 15,600 in July 2001 from July 2000. This increase was all accounted for by additional older returning students aged 20 to 24, likely nearly all who were at the post-secondary level.

Figure 1: All Full-time Students and Youth Population, Age 15–24



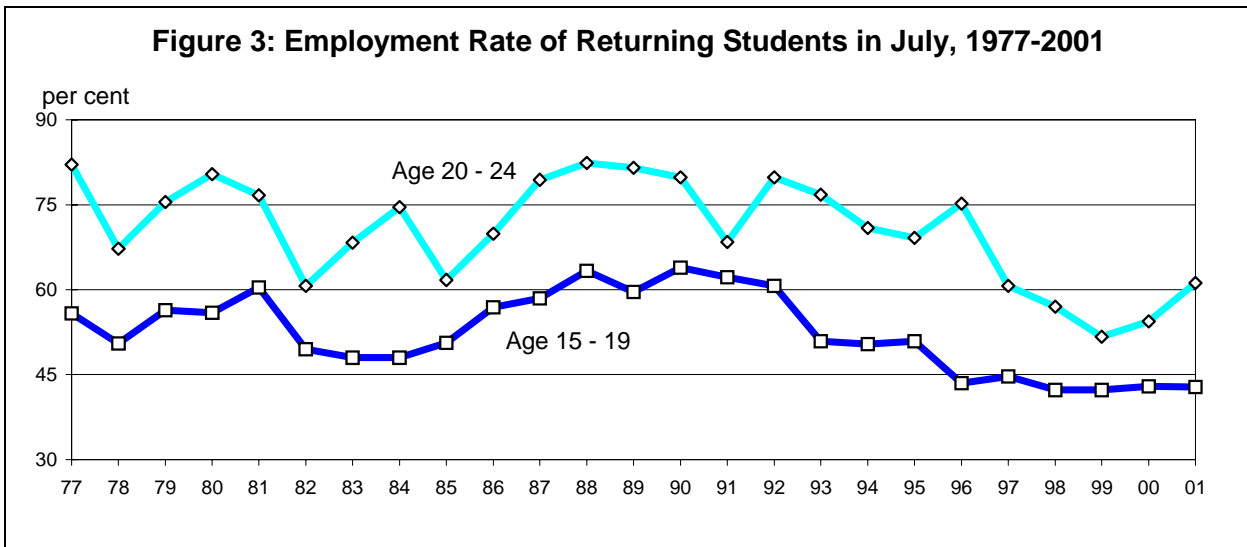
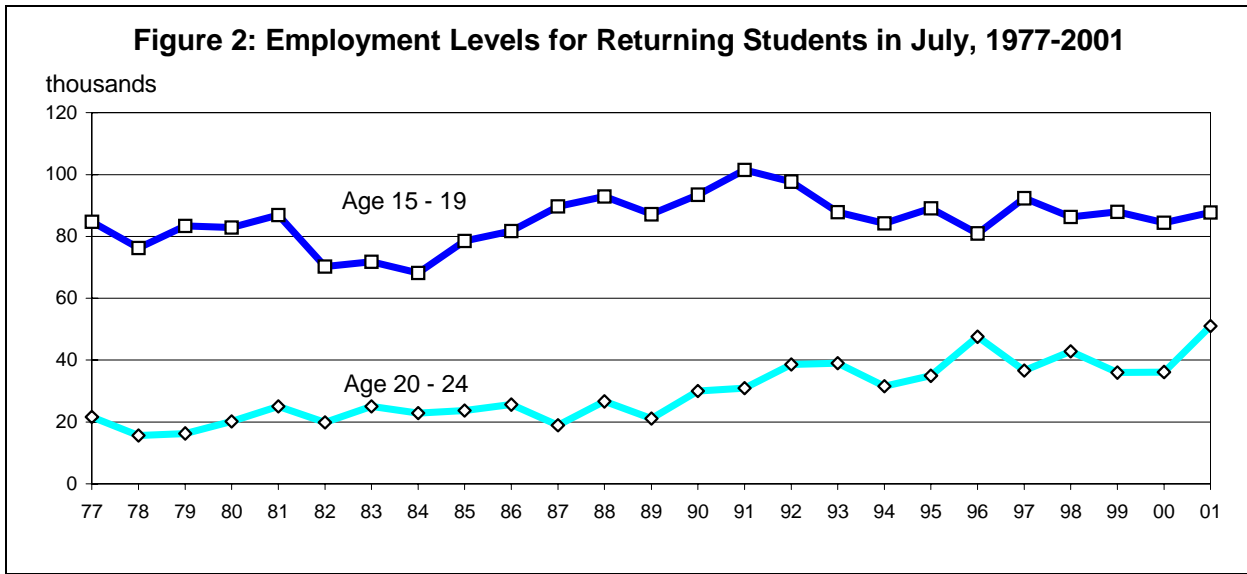
Employment for returning students . . . Employment levels in the month of July for returning students in B.C. during the 1980s saw slow but steady increases (see Figure 2). In part this reflected the extended recovery of the economy from the 1981/82 recession.

Beginning in 1991, the number of employed summer students aged 15 to 19 started declining back to levels seen in the mid 1980's. By contrast, employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has generally been rising since 1987.

More recently the employment level for returning students overall aged 15 to 24 in July 2001 was up 18,200 from July 2000. This more than offsets the cumulative decline seen over the previous two years when the employment level of full-time returning students fell by 8,600.

Employment levels for returning students aged 15 to 19 increased to 87,700 in July 2001, up by 3,300 from July 2000. Summer employment of younger returning students remains well below their high of 102,000 in 1991, despite the fact the population of younger returning students has expanded by 40,000 since that time.

Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 rose significantly to 51,000 in July 2001, up 14,900 from July 2000. This places employment levels for older returning students at an all-time



high for the month of July, though the population of older returning students is also at an all-time high.

Employment level changes alone provide insufficient information to gauge summer student labour market changes. Both population changes and focus upon those participating in the labour force need also be considered. Employment rates and unemployment rates incorporate these factors and are reviewed next.

Employment rates for returning students ...

Figure 3 displays the employment rate (employment to population ratio) for returning full-time students in the month of July. This measure declined for both age groups in the first half of the 1990s, particularly for those aged 15 to 19. While it continued to edge lower for those aged 20 to 24 in the second half of the 1990s, it stabilized for the younger group since 1996.

The employment rate for full-time returning students overall aged 15 to 24 was 48.1 per cent in July 2001, up from 45.9 per cent a year ago. This remains significantly lower than the em-

ployment rate of 55.0 per cent for all returning students in July 1995 and well below levels just over 60 per cent in the early 1990s.

The proportion of B.C. returning students aged 15 to 19 who were employed (employment rate) was 42.3 per cent in July 2001, little changed from July 2000 and well below the 50.9 per cent level seen in July 1995. The employment rate of returning students aged 20 to 24 rose to 61.2 per cent in July 2001, up from the 54.4 per cent seen in July 2000. However, it remains well below the employment rates of the early 1990s.

Unemployment rates for returning students...

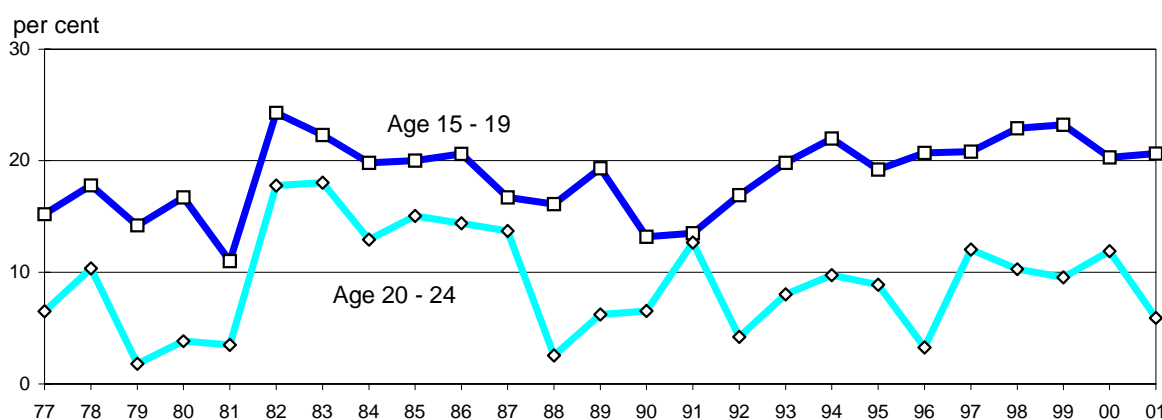
Figure 4 shows the unemployment rate for full-time returning students aged 15 to 19 rose sharply in the early 1990s, but has remained fairly stable since 1994. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated since 1990, and have remained at about half of the level of full-time students aged 15 to 19 in recent years.


The overall unemployment rate for returning students aged 15 to 24 stood at 15.8 per cent in July 2001, down from 18.0 per cent in July 2000, and stands at its lowest level since 1996.

The unemployment rate for returning students aged 15 to 19 in July 2001 stood at 20.6 per cent, up slightly from July 2000. Unemployment rates for this younger group have remained near the 20 per cent level in July for the past eight years. Similarly high summer unemployment rates for returning younger students in the month of July are also typical in other provinces. For example, the unemployment rate for this group in July 2001 in Alberta was 18.1 per cent.

The unemployment rate for the older group of students aged 20 to 24 dropped significantly to 5.9 per cent in July 2001 from 11.0 per cent in July 2000. This decrease occurred due an upward jump in employment growth, which outpaced labour force growth for older returning students comparing July 2001 from July 2000.

Figure 4: Unemployment Rate for Returning Students in July, 1977-2001



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

BC at a glance . . .		
POPULATION (thousands)		% change on one year ago
	Apr 1/01	
BC	4,087.2	0.8
Canada	30,949.9	0.9
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.) Jun	2,902	-8.7
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jun	2,771	-3.8
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jun	3,178	6.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Jul '01	
BC	116.3	1.8
Canada	117.1	2.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on one year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Jul '01	
Labour Force - BC	2,108	1.2
Employed - BC	1,955	1.2
Unemployed - BC	152	1.3
	Jul '00	
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	7.2	7.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.0	6.8
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Aug 22/01	Aug 23/00
Prime Business Rate	6.00	7.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.20	7.90
- 5 year	7.60	8.25
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Aug 22/01	Aug 23/00
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$	1.5436	1.4875
US \$ <i>(reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6482	0.6736
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Jul '01	
BC	638.50	0.4
Canada	631.21	2.9
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade,	} Statistics } Canada	
Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate		
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm		

Socio-Economic Profiles

Free on our website!

The profiles consist of charts and tables for the 27 Regional Districts and 78 Local Health Areas within the Province of British Columbia. Each region contains the following information:

1. Maps
2. Demographic profile
3. Economic hardship
4. Labour market structure
5. Education concerns
6. Crime
7. Health problems
8. Children at risk
9. Youth at risk

Released this week by BC STATS

- Exports, June 2001
- Consumer Price Index, July 2001
- Earnings and Employment Trends, July 2001

Next week

- Business Indicators, August 2001
- Current Statistics, August 2001