

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **Municipalities in the province issued permits for construction projects valued at \$438 million (seasonally adjusted) in September.** This was up nearly a quarter (+23.6%) from the previous month. The increase was largely due to planned spending on hospitals and health care institutions, which helped boost the institutional component by 143.2%. Permits for industrial projects were up 33.9%, but planned spending on commercial projects fell 13.4%. A projected building boom in the residential sector (+9.1%) also pushed the value of permits up in September. Planned spending on residential projects was driven up by a strong gain in the value of multi-family permits issued.

Nationally, building permits fell 1.2% as weakness in the non-residential sector pulled down the overall total. The value of permits fell in nine regions.. The decline is most likely related to generally weak economic conditions rather than the events of September 11th. Plans for construction activity, especially in the non-residential sector, are typically made long before the permits are purchased. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Year-to-date, the value of permits issued in BC rose 10.7% (unadjusted), with solid gains seen in both the residential (+13.2%) and non-residential (+7.7%) sectors.** Permits were up strongly in five regions, but declined significantly in North Coast (-32.2%), Kootenay (-25.0%) and Nechako (-10.2%). Thompson/Okanagan (+28.3%), Cariboo (+20.7%) and Northeast (+17.7%) posted healthy gains. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Housing starts in the province increased 10.9% (seasonally adjusted) between September and October, following an 18.4%**

jump in the previous month. Despite a slowdown during the summer, new housing construction in the province has enjoyed a rebound during 2001. Year-to-date, the number of starts in BC was up 18.0% from the first ten months of 2000, marking the first time since 1997 that starts have increased during the first ten months of the year.

Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

- **The cost of new housing in BC's two largest urban centres continued to rise in September.** In Vancouver, contractors received 1.6% more for new housing sold this September than they had a year earlier. The increase in Victoria was 0.7%. Both cities have seen improvements in the market for new housing during the last few months. Victoria's New Housing Price Index has been trending up since March, even though land prices remain depressed. In Vancouver, the index increased for the fifth month in a row.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **The number of consumer bankruptcies registered in BC this September was virtually unchanged from the same month last year.** There were 711 bankruptcies in the province, down marginally from 712 in September 2000. Consumer bankruptcies decreased in most parts of the country, falling from 6,320 to 6,261 at the national level. Ontario and Atlantic Canada were the only regions where the number was higher than in September 2000. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **Seventy business bankruptcies were registered in BC in September.** Most of them were in service industries, including 18 in wholesale or retail trade, 6 in accommodation and food services, 5 in transportation and storage and 24 in various other service industries. The total number of business bankruptcies was down in most

Did you know...

Europe was the most popular destination for British Columbians who travelled overseas last year. Of the 777,000 person-trips abroad, 274,000 were to Europe, 143,000 were to Asia, and 57,000 were cruises. South (8,000) and Central (7,000) America were the least popular destinations.

parts of the country including BC, where it fell 4.1%. Nationally, the number of business failures decreased 18.2%, to 659. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **Restaurant, caterer and tavern receipts in the province fell (-0.5%, seasonally adjusted) in September, as spending at both food service (-0.5%) and drinking (-1.1%) establishments tapered off.** Canadian receipts were virtually unchanged from August, increasing 0.1%.

Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS

September 11

- **Air traffic at the 43 Canadian airports with NAV Canada control towers was 9.8% lower this September than in the same month last year.** Every major airport in the country reported a decline, which was partly due to the closure of Canadian and US airspace following the terrorist attacks. Generally speaking, the biggest airports were most affected by the shutdown. Airports in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal recorded double-digit declines in the number of flights taking off and landing during September. At Vancouver International Airport, aircraft movements decreased 19.8%, falling to 24,216. Traffic was also down at Victoria (-6.9%), Abbotsford (-18.2%), Boundary Bay (-8.4%) and Prince George (-5.3%) Traffic through Kelowna (-0.9%) fell only modestly, while Vancouver Harbour reported a 58.6% increase.

The full effect of the events of September 11th will not be known for some time. Flight statistics tell only part of the story, since they do not differentiate between large and small planes. Overall passenger statistics are not yet available, but Air Canada reported an 18% decrease in total passenger-kilometres flown in September.

Source: Statistics Canada

University Enrolment

- **The number of students enrolled at BC universities increased to 78,400 in the 1999/2000 school year.** Enrolment was up 2.2% over the previous year, largely due to a 6.6% increase in the number of part-time students. Full-time enrolment was virtually unchanged from 1998/99, at 54,200 (+0.4%). Enrolment was up in six provinces, rising 2.0% at the national level. Al-

berta universities (+10.4%) saw the biggest growth in the number of students on campus. Ontario and Quebec have traditionally been the primary training grounds for Canadian university students. These provinces are home to about 60% of all Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24, but accounted for two-thirds of the total student body in the early 1990s. There has been a shift in recent years, with more young people choosing to get their education in Alberta (10%, up from 8%) and BC (9%, up from 8%). Nevertheless, Ontario and Quebec continue to account for a bigger share of the student body (64%) than of the population (60%), while the two westernmost provinces have a smaller share of total enrolment (18%) than of the university-age population (24%).

Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS

Health Care

- **BC government spending on health care is forecast to top the \$10 billion mark this fiscal year, increasing 11.6% over the value in 2000/01.** Alberta (+17.1%) is the only province expected to see a bigger increase. Total Canadian expenditures are forecast to rise to \$69.2 billion (+7.4%).

Per capita spending in BC is expected to reach \$2,441, more than in any other province except Newfoundland (\$2,447) and well above the national average (\$2,229). Taking inflation into account, per capita expenditures on health care have expanded 67% since 1975. Hospital care makes up the biggest share of forecast health care expenditures in 2001/02, at \$917 per person. Physicians' services (\$522), other health care institutions (\$327) and public health and administration (\$208) also account for sizeable portions of total spending. Average expenditures on drugs are expected to reach \$172, more than in any other province except Ontario (\$195). Per capita spending on physicians' services (forecast at \$522 this year) is the highest in the country. Spending in other provinces ranges from \$283 in PEI to \$498 in Ontario.

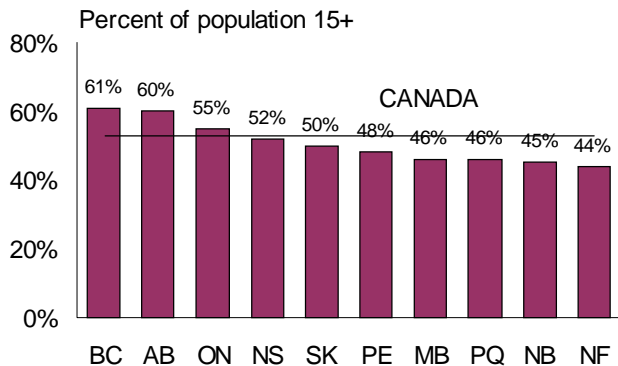
Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

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On the Net

The Internet has become part of everyday life, a tool for work and school, a source of entertainment and information and a means of communication for many. Just over half of Canadians aged 15 years and over had used the Internet in a twelve month period ending in 2000, according to the 2000 General Social Survey (GSS) on Access To and Use of Information Communication Technology¹. BC had the highest proportion of users at 61% while the user rate was lowest in Newfoundland at 44%. Ontario's user rate was 55%, in third place after Alberta at 60%.

More than half of Canadian adults used the Internet



Users are accessing the Internet at many points—home, work, school, libraries, Internet cafes, as well as at the homes of friends and relatives. Just over 40% of Canadian households were connected to the Internet; BC again ranked first at 50%.

In BC, the highest rates of Internet use were among youth with more than 90% of 15 to 24 year olds having used the Internet recently. Less than 30% of those 55 and older had been re-

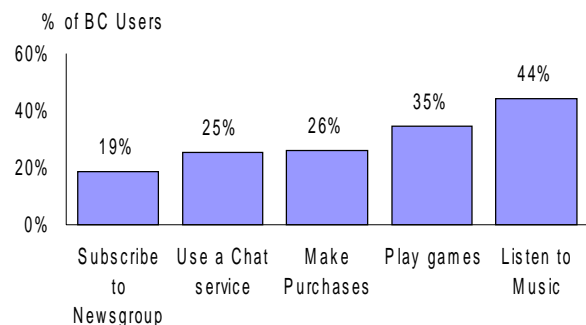
cently on the Net. Males were somewhat more likely than females to be users—66% compared with 57%.

Not surprisingly, those with higher household incomes had higher user rates. About 46% of persons in households with income below \$30,000 had used the Internet recently, while, when household incomes were \$100,000 and greater, almost double that percentage were users. Again, the more highly educated a person was, the greater likelihood of being an Internet user: 82% of those with university degrees compared with 44% of those with less than grade 12.

For those whose major activity was going to school, fully 95% were Internet users, while for those whose major activity was working at a paid job or business, the rate was 71%.

For many, the Internet has provided an opportunity to meet new people and broaden their choices. Fourteen percent of respondents who used the Internet said they had met and become friends with others on the Internet. Nine percent report having used the phone through the Internet. A quarter used the Internet for electronic banking. Thirteen percent have put up their own web page.

The Internet provides new options for activities...



¹ The survey was staggered throughout 2000 and "use/recent use" was defined as having used the Internet/email in the 12 months prior to the month surveyed unless otherwise stated.

The Internet also brings a myriad of information to the screen—not always verifiable and not always wanted—but it has changed the way many do research. People's Internet practices and interests also have implications for information providers and advertisers. Some of the types of information commonly sought are about products/services (77%), arts, entertainment & sports (54%), medicine or health (49%), travel (49%), business & economic news (30%), jobs (28%) and community services and activities (25%). As well, 66% of Internet users report having received unsolicited commercial email. Fifty-one percent report having come across pornographic sites and 15% accessed sites promoting hate or violence, either unexpectedly or deliberately.


E-mail has quickly become a popular communication tool with almost half of the population 15 years and older in Canada reporting having used it in the last 12 months. Use rates range from a high of 56% in BC to a low of 37% in Newfoundland. Of BC's e-mail users, more than a third (36%) use it every day and another 29% use it several times a week.

As with the Internet, youth are the most likely to have recent e-mail experience with 78% having used it in the previous 12 months. Use of e-mail declines with age but up to age 54, 60+% had recent experience. This includes people at work, school and home, regardless of their principal activity. By gender, there was only a three percent difference—57% for men, 54% for women.

Of persons without recent Internet experience, 27% expressed an interest in using the Internet. Four-fifths of all adult British Columbians felt that it is important that everyone have access to the Internet.

Note: Totals exclude "Not Stated".

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 14

 **fax** transmission information service from **BC STATS**

 **Email** transmission information service from **BC STATS**

 also on the **Internet** at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)		% change on one year ago
	Jul 1/01	
BC	4,095.9	0.9
Canada	31,081.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>	2000	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	127,564	5.0
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)	124,464	3.1
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)	30,664	3.1
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)	25,195	2.8
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Aug	2,833	-7.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Aug	2,532	-10.6
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Aug	3,182	5.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Sep '01	
BC	116.7	2.1
Canada	117.4	2.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on one year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Oct '01	
Labour Force - BC	2,093	-1.3
Employed - BC	1,921	-2.0
Unemployed - BC	172	7.1
	Oct '00	
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	8.2	7.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.3	6.9
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Nov 7/01	Nov 8/00
Prime Business Rate	4.50	7.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.75	7.90
- 5 year	6.70	8.25
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Nov 7/01	Nov 8/00
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$	1.5836	1.5427
US \$ <i>(reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6255	0.6485
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Oct '01	
BC	643.68	-0.7
Canada	637.02	2.3

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.bankofcanada.ca

Canadian Importers Database

what? The Canadian Importers Database provides lists of companies importing goods into Canada, by product and by city. This new offering from Industry Canada is worth a look. But it is difficult to find so key in the link below and be sure to bookmark it.

why? Import substitution occurs when a domestic firm supplies domestic needs that were formerly met by importing products into the country. This creates jobs, investment and profits in the domestic economy.

opportunity! The Importers Database is only one side of the equation. BC STATS publishes a directory of BC manufacturers on line at <http://www.made-in-bc.ca>. That's the other side. Given the beleaguered Canadian dollar, costly border delays, and the strong likelihood of lower transportation costs, there may well be opportunities for would-be or existing British Columbia based manufacturing/processing firms. Opportunity also for matchmakers, wholesalers, shippers, and others with a nose for business.

where?

http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_mrkti/cid/engdoc/index.html

The link above should be enabled in your browser if you are viewing the email or web copy of Infoline. It is repeated on two lines below for fax clients.

http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_mrkti/cid/engdoc/index.html

Good hunting!

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, October 2001

Next week

- No subscription releases