

- British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped to 7.7% in March
- Enrolment in BC universities jumped 12.7% in 2000-01
- Revenues generated by hotels and similar establishments in BC topped \$1.5 billion in 2002

## Labour

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped 0.5 percentage points to 7.7% (seasonally adjusted) in March as the number of people employed grew (+0.9%) much faster than the work force (+0.3%).** The unemployment rate fell in six provinces with New Brunswick seeing the largest drop (-0.9 percentage points to 9.8%). The Canadian rate inched down to 7.3% as the number of jobs (+0.1%) increased slightly while the size of the labour force remained the same. With a decline of 0.3 percentage points, Manitoba had the lowest unemployment rate (4.8%) in the country.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Private sector employment in BC increased 0.9% in March.** Public sector employment fell 1.1% after a jump (+4.2%) in February. The number of full-time (+2.3%) and self-employed (+3.0%) workers increased while there were fewer part-time workers (-3.5%). Both women (+0.4%) and men (+1.3%) saw their employment numbers climb in March.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The goods sector was largely responsible for the increase in jobs, as all of its 5 industries had higher employment levels in March.** The manufacturing (+1.4%) and construction (+1.8%) industries made solid gains. The smaller goods industries saw even greater increases as the number of people employed in agriculture (+10.9%) utilities (+9.0%), and forestry, fishing and mining (+6.9%) jumped. On the service side, employment edged up 0.3%. Increases in the number of workers in transportation and warehousing (+2.7%) and education services (+2.5%) more than offset job losses in other service industries such as trade (-1.5%) and

public administration (-3.8%).

*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Unemployment rates were down in all regions of the province except Kootenay in March compared to the same month of 2002.** However, the jobless rate in Kootenay (14.4%, three-month moving average), Cariboo (12.8%) and North Coast/Nechako (11.4%) remain in the double digits. Mainland/Southwest (7.4%), Vancouver Island/Coast (9.0%), and Thompson/Okanagan (9.7%) all saw unemployment rates decline, and Northeast (7.1%) earned the lowest rate in the province. Victoria's unemployment rate dropped nearly two percentage points to 6.0%, and the jobless rate in Vancouver fell to 7.4%.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

## The Economy

- **There were 731 consumer bankruptcies registered in the province in January, down (-9.2%) from 805 in the same month last year.** Consumer bankruptcies declined in the larger provinces, falling 2.4% at the national level. Quebec (-6.5%) and Ontario (-4.2%) both had fewer people declare bankruptcy in January. The Atlantic provinces had the largest increases as Nova Scotia (+20.4%), Newfoundland (+26.0%) and Prince Edward Island (+72.7%) all saw many more consumers in financial trouble than in January 2002.

The number of business bankruptcies registered in the province totalled 101 in January, down marginally from 103 in January 2002. Construction (21), manufacturing (11), and retail trade (11) industries had the most insolvent firms. The total liabilities of bankrupt businesses in BC were \$22.7 million in January.

*Source: Industry Canada*

**Did you know...**  
**Nearly one-third (31%) of Canadian businesses had a website in 2002, up from 26% in 2000.**

### Education

- **Enrolment in British Columbia's universities jumped (+12.7%) in 2000-01, the largest increase of the provinces.** There were 88,356 students enrolled in universities in BC during the 2000-01 school year. The number of people in general arts and science programs grew to 19,848 (+12.8%), making it the most common among the categories. Mathematics and physical science (+7.0%), humanities (+5.6%), and health professions and occupations (+4.0%) also saw significant jumps in enrolment. The number of students enrolled in education programs (-1.8%) dropped the most. Nationally, enrolment increased 2.1%, with mathematics and physical science programs (+5.1%) accounting for the largest rise in the student population. With the exception of Alberta (-6.4%) and Newfoundland (-0.5%), all provinces had more students in 2000-01 compared to 1999-00.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

### Tourism

- **Room revenues at hotels and other establishments in British Columbia climbed 2.2% in 2002 to over \$1.5 billion.** This was equal to the increase in 2001, still far below the rate at which revenues had been expanding during the latter half of the 1990s. There was a strong increase in the first quarter of 2002 (+5.2%, seasonally adjusted) compared with the last quarter of 2001. Revenues fell in the second (-1.6%) and third (-1.9%) quarters, but rebounded (+4.3%) at the end of the year.

Revenues generated by establishments in Kootenay (+11.2%) expanded the most in 2002, after experiencing weak growth (+0.6%) in the previous year. Thompson-Okanagan (+7.7%) and Northeast (+6.3%) also made significant gains. The most populated region, Mainland/Southwest (-0.5%), saw revenues fall sharply through the last three quarters of 2001, and remain weak during much of 2002. North Coast (-1.3%) and Nechako (-1.3%) were the only other regions that posted declines.

*Source: BC Stats*

### Population

- **Vancouver's population growth rate (+1.7% annual average) ranked sixth highest of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in Canada between 1995 and 2002.** This is significantly higher than the national CMA average (+1.3%). Calgary (+2.7%), Toronto (+2.2%) and Oshawa (+1.9%) made the biggest gains.

*Source: SC, Catalogue 91-213-XPB*

### Aboriginals

- **Unemployment rates for Aboriginals with post-secondary education have been higher than the equivalent rates of their non-Aboriginal counterparts.** In a 2001 survey, 19% of Aboriginal respondents who graduated from college, university, or similar institutes in BC were unemployed. This compares to 12% of non-Aboriginal former students. The discrepancy in the jobless rate has narrowed since a similar survey in 1999 when unemployment rates for Aboriginals (24%) were 10 percentage points higher than for non-Aboriginal former students.

*Source: BC Ministry of Advanced Education*

### The Nation

- **The Canadian economy expanded 0.4% (seasonally adjusted) in January after experiencing marginal growth in the previous two months.** Gains in both the goods (+0.6%) and service (+0.3%) producing industries drove the growth in GDP. On the goods side, only the construction industry (-0.9%) slipped, while manufacturing (+0.7%), agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (+1.1%) and utilities (+2.2%) saw strong gains. Wholesale trade boasted the largest increase (+2.6%) on the service side but the retail sector was weak (-0.2%). Accommodation and food (-0.6%) and information and cultural (-0.5%) services were the only other service industries that receded. Increases in other industries ranged from 0.1% in health care and social assistance to 0.9% in arts, entertainment and recreation.

*Source: Statistics Canada*

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## B.C.'s Experienced Labour Force by Occupation — Highlights of the 2001 Census—

**Introduction . . .** On February 11, 2003, data from the 2001 Census regarding the experienced labour force was released by Statistics Canada. This data included characteristics by occupation, age, sex, province and city. The experienced labour force consists of persons who were employed or unemployed during the week prior to Census Day (May 15, 2001), but had worked (for pay or in self-employment) at some point since January 1, 2000.

This article looks at the experienced labour force by occupation, using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), and makes some comparisons between the 1991 and 2001 Census. We will highlight the occupations with the most employees (for men and for women), followed by a look at the occupations with the largest percentage increases and decreases since 1991. Occupations with the highest proportion of older workers are noted, as well as changes in the ratio of younger to older workers. Lastly we will look at the new detailed occupational classifications under the National Occupational Classification for Statistics, (NOC-S) 2001, which provide more detail about computer occupations.

**Largest Occupations . . .** The SOC identifies 142 minor group occupations (i.e. at the 3 digit SOC level). The largest minor group occupation for men in B.C. in 2001 was motor vehicle and transit drivers (the largest component being truck drivers). For women, the largest minor group occupations were general office clerical and childcare and home support workers. See Figure 1 for a list of the 15 largest minor group occupations for men and women in 2001.

**Growth in B.C. Labour Force . . .** Overall, the total experienced labour force in B.C. grew from 1,721,690 in 1991 to 2,014,600 in 2001, a 17.0 per cent increase. In 2001, women represented 47.0 per cent of the experienced labour force, up from 44.7 per

cent in 1991. Above average growth in the experienced labour force was seen in 63 minor group occupations. Of those, 26 occupations grew by more than 50 per cent. Between 1991 and 2001, 37 occupations decreased in size.

**Figure 1: Largest Minor Group Occupations in B.C. for Men and Women, 2001**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Men</i>
Motor vehicle and transit drivers	52,445
Computer & information systems professionals	34,290
Retail salespersons and sales clerks	32,565
Managers in retail trade	29,125
Cleaners	28,985
Labourers in processing, manufact. & utilities	23,410
Carpenters and cabinetmakers	22,960
Primary production labourers	20,765
Auditors, accountants & investment professionals	20,705
Chefs and cooks	20,700
Longshore workers and material handlers	20,395
Machinery & transportation equip. mechanics	19,870
Motor vehicle mechanics	19,710
Senior management occupations	18,690
Other sales and related occupations	18,025
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Women</i>
Clerical occupations, general office skills	54,300
Child care and home support workers	54,300
Retail salespersons and sales clerks	50,250
Secretaries, recorders and transcriptionists	41,330
Secondary & elementary school teachers & counsellors	36,085
Finance and insurance clerks	33,970
Administrative and regulatory occupations	32,150
Occupations in food and beverage service	31,965
Cashiers	30,635
Cleaners	28,835
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers	27,435
Nurse supervisors and registered nurses	26,040
Finance & insurance administrative occupations	24,220
Assisting occup. in support of health services	24,065
Managers in retail trade	21,150

Figure 2 shows the minor group occupations (with experienced labour force of over 4,000) that experienced the greatest change in percentage terms between 1991 and 2001. The minor group occupation, which saw the fastest growth in experienced labour force in B.C. was computer and information systems professionals (up 189 per cent). Technology appears to have had a major impact both in terms of large percentage gains and decreases. Growth was seen in computer professionals, life science professionals and electrical/electrician assemblers (areas where technol-

ogy tended to create new work), while declines were seen in a number of machine operator occupations (areas where technology tended to displace jobs). Health occupations, including optometrists, chiropractors and other (107.7 per cent) therapy and assessment professionals (100.9 per cent), life science professionals (85.4 per cent) and pharmacists, dieticians and nutritionists (68.7 per cent), saw strong growth, although nurse supervisors and registered nurses decreased in size.

**Figure 2: Selected Large Minor Group Occupations in B.C. with the Greatest Percentage Change between 1991 to 2001**

	<i>Increase</i>		<i>Decrease</i>
<b>All occupations</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	Machinery & transportation equipment mechanics (except motor vehicle)	-1.0%
Computer & information systems professionals	189.2%	Agriculture & horticulture workers	-1.3%
Auditors, accountants & investment professionals	116.4%	Other elemental service occupations	-3.0%
Optometrists, chiropractors & other health diagnosing and treating professionals	107.7%	Nurse supervisors & registered nurses	-5.8%
Customer service & related information clerks (includes call center representatives)	105.0%	Recording, scheduling & distributing occupations	-6.2%
Human resources & business service professionals	102.4%	Supervisors, processing occupations	-7.2%
Therapy & assessment professionals (includes physiotherapists)	100.0%	Machining, metalworking, woodworking & related machine operators	-9.5%
Life science professionals	85.4%	Machine operators & related workers in pulp & paper production & wood processing	-12.7%
Legislators & senior management	83.3%	Other occupations in protective service	-14.5%
Other attendants in travel, accommodation & recreation	82.6%	Secretaries, recorders & transcriptionists	-15.2%
Athletes, coaches, referees & related occupations	78.5%	Upholsterers, tailors, shoe repairers, jewellers & related occupations	-17.3%
Other occupations in personal service	74.3%	Logging & forestry workers	-17.6%
Photographers, graphic arts technicians & technical occupations in motion pictures, broadcasting & the performing arts	72.7%	Insurance & real estate sales occupations & buyers	-20.8%
Mechanical, electrical & electronics assemblers	72.3%	Machine operators & related workers in food, beverage & tobacco processing	-25.7%
Pharmacists, dietitians & nutritionists	68.7%	Finance & insurance clerks	-27.0%
Administrative & regulatory occupations	67.1%	Printing machine operators & rel. occupations	-27.7%
Paralegals, social services workers & occupations in education & religion	65.9%	Trades helpers & labourers	-30.0%
Creative & performing artists	60.4%	Office equipment operators	-34.8%
Policy & program officers, researchers & consultants	60.4%	Clerical supervisors	-41.3%
Writing, translating & public relations professionals	60.0%	Public works & other labourers	-46.5%

**Occupations by Age Group . . .** Figure 3 shows unit group occupations (i.e. at the 4- digit SOC level) in 2001 that had a high proportion of workers aged 55 or older. A number of occupations, including judges (54 per cent), metallurgical engineers (34 per cent), specialist physicians (30 per cent), university professors (30 per cent) and fire-chiefs (30 per cent), had above average proportions of workers aged 55 and older, mainly due to the level of education and experience required. Other occupations including farmers (46 per cent), shoe repairers (38 per cent) and grain elevator operators (33 per cent) reflect an aging workforce in occupations which have decreased in size and added few new young workers.

**The Ageing of the Labour Force . . .** Looking closer at occupations with a large proportion of older workers, we can also compare the ratio of younger workers aged 20 to 34 to older workers aged 55 and older, and the changes that have taken place between 1991 and 2001. The 20-24 age group represents young workers who have recently entered the work force, and will likely be in the work force for some time. The group 55 and older, represent the older workers who will likely leave the work force within the next 7 to 15 years. Changes in the ratio of younger workers to older workers gives an indication as to which occupations are ageing the fastest, and may also indicate occupations where relative opportunities for future new workers may be strong.

**Figure 3: B.C. Unit Group Occupations with the Largest Proportion of Workers Aged 55 and Older, 2001**

	<i>% of Total</i>
<b>All occupations - British Columbia</b>	<b>13%</b>
Judges	54%
Farmers and farm managers	46%
Property administrators	41%
Shoe repairers and shoemakers	38%
Supervisors, textile processing	37%
Metallurgical & materials engineers	34%
Grain elevator operators	33%
Specialist physicians	30%
Legislators	30%
Psychologists	30%
Fishing masters and officers	30%
University professors	30%
Fire chiefs & senior fire-fighting officers	30%
Real estate agents and salespersons	30%
Harvesting labourers	29%
Ministers of religion	28%
Oil and solid fuel heating mechanics	28%
Physicists and astronomers	27%
Accommodation service managers	27%
Painters, sculptors & other visual artists	27%
Water well drillers	27%
Senior managers - Goods production, utilities, transportation and construction	27%
Archivists	27%
Program officers unique to government	26%
Writers	26%
Bus drivers & other transit operators	26%

Four-digit SOC unit group classification level

Figure 4 presents those occupations with a high percentage of older workers in the experienced labour force in 2001, and which have also experienced a large drop in the ratio of young workers to older workers between 1991 and 2001.

A number of skilled trades occupations, including millwrights, machinists, gas fitters and bricklayers, saw both an above average proportion of workers aged 55 and older in 2001, and notable drops in the proportion of younger to older workers. This was also the case for both university professors and college/vocational instructors. Registered nursing assistants and registered nurses (RNs) both saw a steep decline in ratio of younger to older workers. In 1991 there was 3.4 younger RNs for every RN aged 55+, but by 2001 this had fallen to 1.3 to 1.

**Figure 4: Occupations that Experienced Significant Aging in the B.C. Experienced Labour Force between 1991 and 2001**

	<i>Experienced Labour Force Total 2001</i>	<i>Proportion Aged 55+ in 2001</i>	<i>Number of 20-34 year olds to one 55+ year old in 1991</i>	<i>Number of 20-34 year olds to one 55+ year old in 2001</i>
All occupations	2,014,600	12.7%	3.7	2.4
University professors	1,505	29.8%	1.0	0.5
Physicists and astronomers	310	27.4%	4.8	1.0
Architects	2,350	23.4%	2.0	0.9
Upholsterers	835	22.8%	2.4	0.7
Machinists and machining and tooling inspectors	3,760	20.7%	3.1	1.3
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	7,145	19.9%	1.8	0.6
Gas fitters	955	19.9%	3.8	1.2
Bookkeepers	19,775	19.2%	2.2	1.0
Secretaries (except legal and medical)	29,435	19.2%	3.8	1.0
Industrial instrument technicians and mechanics	940	19.1%	6.9	1.0
College and other vocational instructors	11,990	18.7%	2.2	1.0
Bricklayers	1,365	18.7%	2.2	1.2
Geological and mineral technologists and technicians	920	17.9%	5.9	1.3
Civil engineering technologists & technicians & construction estimators	3,100	17.4%	2.5	1.2
Dental technicians and laboratory bench workers	1,180	16.5%	13.5	1.2
Registered nursing assistants	5,690	16.1%	2.7	1.1
Lawyers	8,690	15.7%	3.3	1.4
Truck drivers	31,530	15.5%	3.6	1.7
Registered nurses	26,890	15.1%	3.4	1.3
School and guidance counsellors	2,830	14.1%	3.5	1.3
Secondary school teachers	20,585	13.2%	2.9	2.0
Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	1,425	9.1%	5.4	3.2

Four-digit SOC unit group classification level

**New Occupations . . .** Statistics Canada's revised occupational classification system is called the National Occupational Classification for Statistics (NOC-S) 2001. It expands upon the Standard Occupational Classification 1991 system. The NOC-S 2001 is a minor revision of 1991 SOC that addresses the need for increased attention to occupations in computer and information technology. Note that the 2001 Census was coded in both NOC-S 2001 and SOC 1991, to allow some comparisons with previous Census surveys. Because of the extensive revision to occupations in computer and information technology, it was necessary to create two new minor groups: C07 Com-

puter and Information Professionals and C18 Technical Occupations in Computer and Information Systems. Together they contain eight new unit group occupations. Also C047 Computer Engineers (except software engineers) was created under minor group C04 Other Engineers. Figure 5 shows the experienced labour force in these new occupations for 2001. The largest occupation, computer programmers and interactive media developers accounted for over one quarter of these workers. A larger than average percentage of workers in these occupations were found in Vancouver Census Metro Area.

**Figure 5: B.C. Experienced Labour Force in Computer and Information Technology Occupations**

	<i>2001</i>	<i>Proportion found in Vancouver Metro</i>
<b>All occupations</b>	<b>2,014,600</b>	<b>52.1%</b>
<b>Computer and Information Technology Occupations</b>	<b>45,570</b>	<b>74.7%</b>
C047 Computer engineers (except software engineers)	2,845	84.0%
C071 Information systems analysts and consultants	9,700	70.5%
C072 Database analysts and data administrators	1,635	64.5%
C073 Software engineers	4,195	86.1%
C074 Computer programmers & interactive media developers	11,330	77.7%
C075 Web designers and developers	4,195	71.2%
C181 Computer and network operators and web technicians	6,145	69.5%
C182 User support technicians	4,570	73.3%
C183 Systems testing technicians	955	80.6%

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## BC at a glance . . .

<b>POPULATION (thousands)</b>	Jan 1/03	% change on one year ago
BC	4,155.8	0.8
Canada	31,499.6	0.8
<b>GDP and INCOME</b>		% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>	2001 Revised	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	130,859	1.2
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)	123,912	-0.2
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)	30,252	-1.1
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)	19,513	1.2
<b>TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)</b>		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jan	2,878	-0.4
Merchandise Exports - Jan	2,466	0.7
Retail Sales - Jan	3,440	2.1
<b>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX</b>		12-month avg % change
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Feb '03	
BC	119.6	2.6
Canada	122.3	2.8
<b>LABOUR FORCE (thousands)</b>		% change on prev. month
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Mar '03	
Labour Force - BC	2,188	0.3
Employed - BC	2,020	0.9
Unemployed - BC	168	-5.7
		Feb '03
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	7.7	8.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.3	7.4
<b>INTEREST RATES (percent)</b>	Apr 2/03	Apr 3/02
Prime Business Rate	4.75	3.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.35	5.00
- 5 year	6.85	7.30
<b>US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE</b>	Apr 2/03	Apr 3/02
<i>(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$</i>	1.4761	1.5889
<i>US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6803	0.6289
<b>AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE</b>		% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Mar '03	
BC	682.00	2.8
Canada	658.12	1.6

### SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, } Statistics  
 Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Canada  
 Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics  
 For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see [www.bankofcanada.ca](http://www.bankofcanada.ca)

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- Tourism Sector Monitor, March 2003

### Next week

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