BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca Issue: 09-42 October 23rd, 2009

- **More than a million British Columbians employed in small businesses**
- **Wholesales in the province slip 1.6% in August; Retail sales climb 0.8%**
- **Visitor entries drop 3.0% in July**

## Small Business

- **The number of businesses in British Columbia in 2008 totalled 391,300, about 98% of which were small businesses.** Between 2007 and 2008, the count of small businesses (businesses with 0-49 employees) in the province inched down 0.1%, with some regions of the province faring better than others. BC's Cariboo region outpaced the other development regions in small business growth, with an annual growth rate of 8.2% (an addition of about 1,100 establishments). Vancouver Island/Coast (+1.6%) and Mainland/Southwest (+1.1%) also saw an increase in the number of small businesses in 2008. Conversely, the Kootenay (-15.1%) and North Coast/Nechako regions saw the most notable losses.

  Approximately 1,058,100 jobs in BC were derived from small business last year. This accounted for almost half (46%) of total employment in the province. Small business employment grew for the seventh straight year in 2008, climbing by 1.0%. Both employees of small businesses and self-employed individuals have contributed to the expansion in employment in recent years, although self-employed grew at a slower pace last year (+0.7%) than in previous years. In 2008, self-employment accounted for 18.5% of total employment, down 0.3 percentage points from 2007.

  With an employment surge of 52.0%, the construction industry was the largest provider of new small business jobs between 2003 and 2008. As a result of the recent construction boom in the province, approximately 30,360 jobs were created in this industry over the five year period.

  *Data Source: BC Stats, Small Business Profile 2009*

## The Economy

- **Sales by retailers in the province continued to seesaw in August, climbing 0.8% (*seasonally adjusted*), following a similar decline in July (-0.9%).** Alberta (-0.2%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (-0.9%) were the only provinces where sales declined. Canadian sales increased 0.8%, boosted by solid gains in Ontario (+1.2%), Saskatchewan (+1.2%) and parts of Atlantic Canada. New car dealers (+2.2%) and gasoline stations (+3.9%) helped fuel the growth on the national scene.

  *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in BC were off in August, dropping 1.6% (*seasonally adjusted*), subsequent to a slight increase (+0.3%) in July.** Canadian sales were down 1.4%, with most provinces posting declines. Only wholesalers in Saskatchewan (+6.8%), New Brunswick (+1.3%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (+0.2%) saw sales strengthen.

  *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

## Tourism

- **The number of visitors to Canada via British Columbia fell for the sixth consecutive month in August (-3.0% *seasonally adjusted*).** The slide in entries was due mainly to a drop (–5.4%) in the number of Americans electing to stay overnight, but same-day travel from the US also dipped lower (–1.1%). Total entries from overseas countries inched up in August (+0.6%) with much of the increase coming from Asian (+1.9%) and European (+3.8%) countries. On the other hand,

Report Electronic-Waste Recycling in British Columbia

**Did you know…**

91% of Canadian men and women aged 19 to 50 do not eat the daily recommended amount of vegetables and fruit. *Source: Ipsos Canada*

the number of visitors from "other" countries (-7.1%), which includes Oceania as well as North America (excluding the US) and South America, were down substantially from the previous month.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

## Education

- **Undergraduate tuition fees for full-time Canadian students at British Columbia's universities rose an average of 2.0% for the 2009/2010 academic year.** Tuition fees for full-time undergraduate studies in BC sit at an average of $4,840 for Canadian students. Full-time graduate studies cost an average of $7,668 for the 2009/2010 academic year, an increase of 5.9% over the previous year and the most substantial year-over-year hike in the country. Tuition fees in BC have increased significantly since 2002/03, when a six-year-long freeze was lifted.

  Nationally, full-time undergraduate fees for Canadian students were up 3.6% to $4,917 in 2009/2010. The largest increases in tuition were seen in Ontario (+5.0%), Manitoba (+4.3%) and Quebec (+4.2%). Despite the increase in tuition, Quebec still had lowest tuition fees in the country (an average of $2,272), as the result of a freeze on tuition fees that was lifted only recently.

  *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

## Health

- **The prevalence of obesity in Canada has increased substantially over the past few decades**. In 1978, an estimated 13.8% of Canadian adults were obese and by 2004, this percentage had jumped nearly 10 percentage points to 23.1%. Men and women are equally likely to be obese and for both sexes, the prevalence of obesity tends to rise with age, peaking in the 45 to 64 age range. Education is also related to obesity, particularly among men. Male adults with a high school diploma or less were more likely to be significantly overweight than were those with a postsecondary education. *Data Source: SC Cat. #82-003-XIE*

## Science and Technology

- **Federal government spending on science and technology (S&T) is expected to total just under $10.7 billion in the 2009/2010 fiscal year, accounting for 4.3% of total federal spending.** Intended S&T expenditure is notably higher (+3.0%) than it was in 2008/2009, when spending amounted to $10.4 billion.

  A total of $7.0 billion (65% of federal S&T spending) is intended for research and development (R&D), with $3.7 billion allocated for related scientific activities (RSA) such as data collection and information services.

  Most of the federal S&T spending is expected to go to funding for natural sciences ($8.0 billion), with the remaining $2.7 billion going to the social sciences. Similarly, much ($5.9 billion) of the R&D expenditures are expected to be in the natural sciences, with the lion's share going to federal government departments and agencies ($2.5 billion) or higher education institutions ($2.3 billion). However, federal expenditures on related scientific activities will be more evenly distributed between natural sciences ($2.0 billion) and social sciences ($1.7 billion). Of the $3.7 billion spent on RSA, $2.7 billion will fund intramural activities performed by the federal government. *Data Source: SC Cat. No.88-001-XIE*

## The Nation

- **The nation's composite leading index rose 1.1% in September, marking its fourth straight gain.** Much of the growth can be attributed to strong performance in the stock market (+4.0% increase in the stock price index) and the housing index (+4.1%). Retail trade showed strength, as expenditure on furniture & appliance goods was flat, but sales of other durable goods increased (+0.9%). In the US, the leading indicator climbed 1.0% in August.

  *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

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# Electronic-waste Recycling in British Columbia

Over the last few decades, technology has evolved at an extremely rapid pace. As a consequence of these technological advances, many types of electronic goods reach obsolescence fairly quickly and are quite often destined to end up in a landfill.

In a study commissioned by Environment Canada in 2003, it was found that approximately 86,000 tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment (including televisions, audio/visual equipment and kitchen and household appliances) were disposed of in Canada in 2002[1]. Of this amount, only about 3% was recycled, with the remainder discarded in a landfill. The projected figure for 2010, if the status quo of 3% recycled material were maintained, is for approximately 129,000 tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment to end up in landfills across the country. These figures do not even include computer and telecommunications equipment, which a separate study estimated added almost 34,000 tonnes to the trash heap in 1999[2]. To put these figures into perspective, if Canadians throw out in the neighbourhood of 160,000 to 170,000 metric tonnes of electronic goods per year, it is equivalent in weight to approximately 950 empty Boeing 747s (give or take 25 planes).

This ever increasing volume of electronic waste is troubling for a number of reasons, but the primary concerns are the waste of valuable resources and the presence of environmentally harmful toxins. Many electronic goods contain valuable materials such as copper, aluminum, gold and so forth, that can be extracted and recycled into new manufactured products. However, they also often contain toxic substances such as lead, mercury and cadmium that pose health and environmental risks when the electronic goods are dumped in a landfill or when they are improperly dismantled.

The value that can be extracted from these discarded goods and the environmental dangers they pose make them a perfect target for recycling efforts. To this end, British Columbia initiated an e-waste recycling program starting in August, 2007. The need for such a program was underlined by an Ipsos Reid study, which found that 36% of households surveyed had obsolete computers, printers or televisions in their home[3].

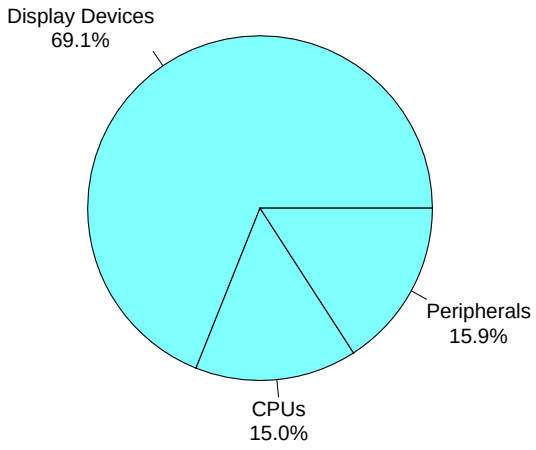
British Columbia's e-waste recycling program is funded through an Environmental Handling Fee, which is assessed on the sale of designated electronic products. The program currently accepts televisions, computer monitors, computers, printers and other computer peripherals, such as keyboards. Based on data from the first five months of the program's operation, display devices (televisions and computer monitors) comprise the bulk of electronic items brought in for recycling. In 2007, between August and December, 69% of recycled electronics in BC were display devices. Printers and other computer peripherals comprised about 16%, with computers making up the remainder of electronic items brought to designated electronics recycling depots in the province.

[1] RIS International Ltd in association with Five Winds International and Electro Federation Canada, Baseline Study of End-of-Life Electrical and Electronic Equipment in Canada, June 2003.

[2] Enviros RIS, Information Technology and Telecommunication Waste in Canada, October 2000.

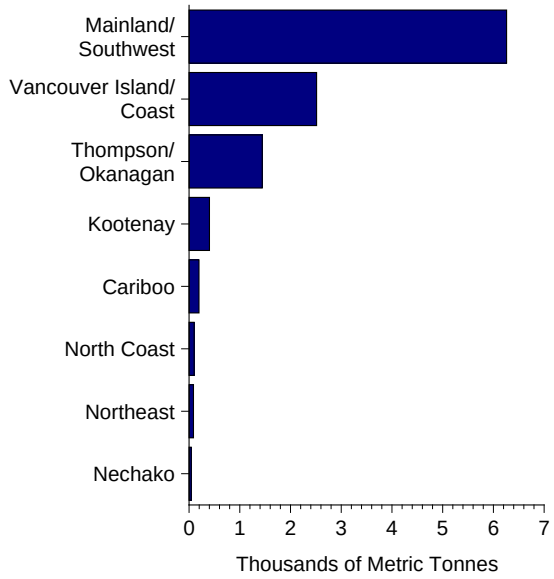
[3] Electronics Stewardship Association of BC, 2007 Annual Report.

Display devices (televisions and computer monitors) made up the bulk of recycled electronics in BC in 2007




Source: Electronics Stewardship Association of BC

In the first full year of BC's e-waste recycling program, over 11,000 metric tonnes of electronic products were recycled



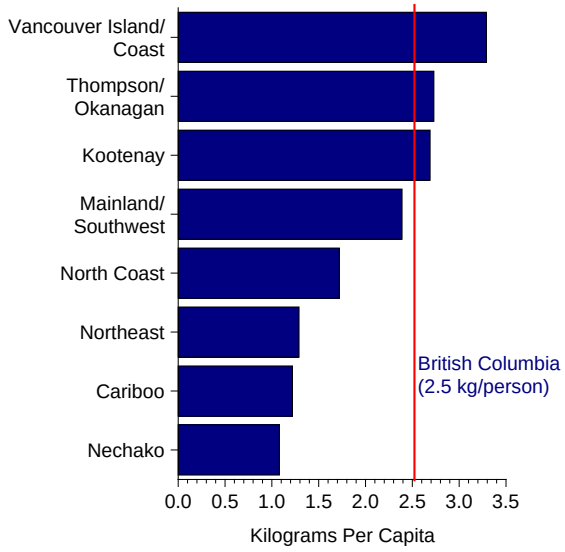

Source: Electronics Stewardship Association of BC
(Data aggregated to Development Regions by BC Stats)

Over the first five months of operation, BC's electronics recycling program collected almost 2,700 metric tonnes of material. In 2008, the first full year of the program, over 11,000 metric tonnes of electronic products were recycled. The program has grown substantially in just the first year and a half, with the average monthly collection climbing from 223.7 metric tonnes in 2007 to 920.4 metric tonnes in 2008, an increase of over 300%.

The strong growth is due to a combination of factors, including a greater number of electronic recycling locations and increased public awareness of the program.

Regionally, Vancouver Island/Coast led the way in 2008, with residents of that region bringing in 3.29 kilograms of electronics for recycling per capita. Thompson-Okanagan residents recycled 2.73 kilograms per person to rank second, followed by the Kootenay region, at 2.69 kilograms per capita. These three regions were the only ones to exceed the provincial average of 2.52 kilograms per capita. While Mainland/Southwest, the region containing Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, ranked fourth

Vancouver Island/Coast recycled the most e-waste per capita in BC in 2008




Source: BC Stats using data from Electronics Stewardship Association of BC

in per-capita diversion of electronics from landfills, at 2.39, it was the source of almost 57% of all electronics brought in for recycling in the province in 2008.

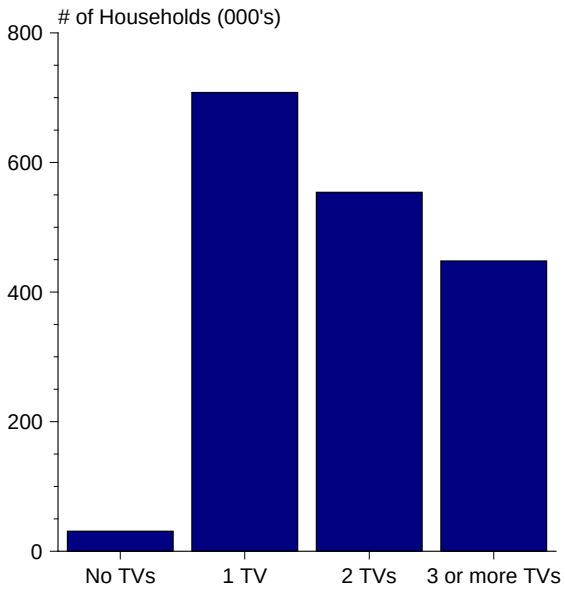
The regional differences can likely be attributed to a combination of things, including varying levels of access to electronic recycling locations and different degrees of awareness of the program.

Given the proliferation of electronic devices within British Columbia, it is probable that the amount of e-waste collected at designated depots in the province will continue to grow. According to Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending, about 84% of British Columbians owned a computer in 2007 and 98% had at least one television. With the average lifespan of a desktop computer ranging from two to five years, it is inevitable that many of those computers will reach end-of-life in the near future.

The need to recycle televisions could increase significantly after August 31, 2011 as that is the date when Canada will switch all television signals from analog to digital. While many people will likely buy converters that will allow their current analog television sets to pick up the digital signals, there will probably be a significant jump in the number of televisions getting junked. Based on the Statistics Canada survey, just over a quarter of British Columbia households owned three or more colour televisions in 2007. Another 32% had two sets. It is highly likely that a significant number of these will fall out of use once television goes digital and will be headed toward either a landfill or, preferably, to a recycling depot.

In addition to computer equipment and televisions, there is also likely to be growth in obsolescence of other electronic equipment. For example, video cassette recorders are falling out of favour as digital video recorders become more popular and Blu-ray players are beginning to displace DVD and CD players. According to the Survey of Household Spending, over 80% of British Columbia households owned a DVD or CD player in 2007 and 79% owned at least one VCR. Currently, British Columbia's electronic recycling program does not include these goods,

Approximately a quarter of all BC households owned three or more televisions in 2007




Source: Statistics Canada

but on July 1, 2010, the program will be expanded to include not only these items, but also telecommunications equipment, small appliances and some other types of electronics. Two years after that, additional items will be added to the list of recyclable electronics.

**Schedule for Phasing in Other Electronic Products**

| Phase 1 - Complete | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---|---|---|
| • Televisions<br>• Computers<br>• Computer monitors, keyboards, mice and other peripherals<br>• Printers | • IT and telecommunications equipment<br>• Small appliances<br>• Audio-visual and consumer equipment<br>• Lighting equipment (also captures all light bulbs including mercury-containing light bulbs)<br>• Toys, leisure and sports equipment<br>• Monitoring and control instruments (also captures mercury-containing thermostats)<br>• Batteries used in Phase 2 products | • Large appliances<br>• Electrical and electronic tools (except large-scale stationary industrial tools)<br>• Medical devices (with the exception of all implanted and infected products)<br>• Automatic dispensers<br>• Batteries used in Phase 3 products |
| August 1, 2007 | July 1, 2010 | July 1, 2012 |

Source: BC Ministry of Environment

(http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/recycling/electronics/info.htm)

The expansion of the electronics recycling program in BC will ensure that hundreds of tonnes of e-waste will be diverted from British Columbia landfills. In addition, since the recycling companies have to be approved by the Electronic Stewardship Association of BC (ESABC), which ensures that both the primary recyclers and sub-contractors handle the material responsibly, British Columbians can feel confident that their electronic trash does not end up in a developing country:

ESABC operates in accordance with their Stewardship Plan, approved by the BC Provincial Government in November 2006, to ensure materials are diverted from landfills, processed and recycled in a manner that safeguards the environment, worker health and safety and is prevented from being exported to developing countries[4].

This is an important guarantee as there have been instances recorded in the media of North American companies dumping electronic goods in developing countries, where both children and adults work at breaking apart the electronics to get to the material of value, but end up being exposed to toxic materials at the same time. For example, National Geographic published a report in its January 2008 issue, titled "High-Tech Trash," which chronicled the dangers posed by electronics dumped in countries such as Ghana and China. An ABC News online report dated August 2, 2009 and titled "U.S. Electronic Waste Gets Sent to Africa" also gave details of e-waste dumped in Ghana. According to that report, the environmental group Greenpeace claimed to have found computers with the label of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

These reports mainly singled out companies in the United States, but a CBC News report titled "E-waste Dumping Ground," aired on October 22, 2008, gave details of Canadian companies that also engaged in this type of unethical practice, including at least one company in BC.

Given the procedures in place to audit how the electronics entering the ESABC recycling program are handled, these kinds of problems should not be an issue if e-waste is brought to an approved collection facility in British Columbia. According to ESABC's 2008 Annual Report, most of the materials collected at approved "Return-It" locations are processed in either Canada or the United States, with the exception of some circuit boards, which are shipped to Belgium.

[4] Electronics Stewardship Association of British Columbia, ESABC 2008 Annual Report.

British Columbia's electronics recycling program diverted more than 13.7 million kilograms of e-waste from BC landfills from its launch in August 2007 to the end of 2008 and the amount of material brought in for recycling will likely continue to grow, particularly as the program expands to accept more types of electronics. Considering the short life span of many types of electronics, recycling programs such as the one in British Columbia have the potential to offer substantial environmental benefits as a result of removing toxins from landfills. They may also prove to be economically lucrative due to the value of the materials that can be recovered from the waste products.

**TABLE 1**
**Metric Tonnes of Electronic Products Recycled in British Columbia**

| Development Region | 2007* | 2008 | Population 2008 | Kilograms Recycled Per Capita |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vancouver Island/Coast | 772.4 | 2,514.6 | 764,314 | 3.29 |
| Mainland/Southwest | 1,371.7 | 6,259.7 | 2,614,509 | 2.39 |
| Thompson/Okanagan | 312.7 | 1,442.6 | 527,652 | 2.73 |
| Kootenay | 115.5 | 402.3 | 149,769 | 2.69 |
| Cariboo | 39.8 | 195.8 | 160,419 | 1.22 |
| North Coast | 30.9 | 100.4 | 58,243 | 1.72 |
| Nechako | 15.3 | 43.0 | 39,627 | 1.08 |
| Northeast | 25.8 | 86.6 | 67,070 | 1.29 |
| **British Columbia** | **2,684.2** | **11,044.9** | **4,381,603** | **2.52** |

* August 1 to December 31
Source: Electronics Stewardship Association of British Columbia
(Data aggregated to Development Regions by BC Stats)

**TABLE 2**
**Growth in Electronic Product Recycling in British Columbia**

| | Monthly Average (Metric Tonnes) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Development Region | 2007 | 2008 | % Growth |
| Vancouver Island/Coast | 64.4 | 209.5 | 225.6% |
| Mainland/Southwest | 114.3 | 521.6 | 356.3% |
| Thompson/Okanagan | 26.1 | 120.2 | 361.3% |
| Kootenay | 9.6 | 33.5 | 248.3% |
| Cariboo | 3.3 | 16.3 | 391.9% |
| North Coast | 2.6 | 8.4 | 224.9% |
| Nechako | 1.3 | 3.6 | 180.8% |
| Northeast | 2.2 | 7.2 | 235.7% |
| **British Columbia** | **223.7** | **920.4** | **311.5%** |

Source: BC Stats using data from the Electronics Stewardship Association of British Columbia

**TABLE 3**

**British Columbia Household Ownership of Selected Electronic Products, 2007**

| Type of Product | Estimated number of households (000) | Percentage reporting |
|---|---|---|
| Home computer | 1,465 | 84.1% |
| Colour televisions | 1,710 | 98.2% |
| 1 | 708 | 40.7% |
| 2 | 554 | 31.8% |
| 3 or more | 448 | 25.7% |
| Compact disc player | 1,419 | 81.5% |
| DVD player | 1,512 | 86.9% |
| Video cassette recorders | 1,377 | 79.1% |
| 1 | 955 | 54.8% |
| 2 or more | 422 | 24.2% |
| Cellular telephone | 1,318 | 75.7% |
| 1 | 619 | 35.5% |
| 2 | 466 | 26.8% |
| 3 or more | 233 | 13.4% |

Source: Statistics Canada

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# BC at a glance . . .

| POPULATION (thousands) | Jul1/2009 | % change on one year ago |
|---|---|---|
| BC | 4,455.2 | 1.6 |
| Canada | 33,739.9 | 1.2 |
| **GDP and INCOME (Revised Apr 27)** | | |
| *(BC - at market prices)* | 2008 | % change on one year ago |
| Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)* | 199,214 | 3.5 |
| GDP *($ 2002 millions)* | 164,161 | -0.3 |
| GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)* | 37,466 | -1.9 |
| Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)* | 26,110 | 3.3 |
| **TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)** | | % change on prev. month |
| Manufacturing Shipments - Aug | 2,660 | 0.0 |
| Merchandise Exports - Aug | 1,954 | -8.2 |
| Retail Sales - Aug | 4,437 | 0.8 |
| **CONSUMER PRICE INDEX** | % change on | 12-month avg |
| *(all items - Sep 2009)* | one year ago | % change |
| BC | -1.2 | 0.4 |
| Vancouver | -1.0 | 0.6 |
| Victoria | -1.0 | 0.6 |
| Canada | -0.9 | 0.6 |
| **LABOUR FORCE (thousands)** | | % change on |
| *(seasonally adjusted)* | Sep '09 | prev. month |
| Labour Force - BC | 2,453 | 0.2 |
| Employed - BC | 2,270 | 0.6 |
| Unemployed - BC | 183 | -4.5 |
| | | Aug '09 |
| Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)* | 7.4 | 7.8 |
| Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)* | 8.4 | 8.7 |
| **INTEREST RATES (percent)** | Oct 21/2009 | Oct 22/2008 |
| Prime Business Rate | 2.25 | 4.00 |
| Conventional Mortgages - 1 year | 3.80 | 6.35 |
| - 5 year | 5.84 | 7.20 |
| **US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE** | Oct 21/2009 | Oct 22/2008 |
| *(avg. noon spot rate)* Cdn $ per US $ | 1.0412 | 1.2499 |
| *(closing rate)* US $ per Cdn $ | 0.9560 | 0.7970 |
| **AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE** | | % change on |
| *(industrial aggregate - dollars)* | Sep '09 | one year ago |
| BC | 810.38 | 2.5 |
| Canada | 813.44 | 2.1 |

**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

## Small Business Profile 2009

The 2009 Edition of the annual profile of small business in British Columbia is now available. The report provides information on British Columbia's small businesses, including number of businesses, employment and small business' contribution to the provincial economy.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/sm_bus.asp#sbp

## Population & Household Projections

The latest British Columbia population projections (PEOPLE 34) are now available. BC Stats produces population and household projections for British Columbia and for a number of sub-provincial geographies in the province, including: Development Regions, Regional Districts, Health Authorities, Health Service Delivery Areas, Local Health Areas, College Regions, School Districts, and six Special Regions.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/popproj.asp

## British Columbia Wellness Atlas 2008

The dynamic and highly configurable atlas allows users greater flexibility to explore the regional variations and correlations of the wellness data. In total, 40 indicators are drawn from the CCHS (Canadian Community Health Survey) and 27 indicators are from the 2006 Census of Canada and 2008 Socio-Demographic variables from BC Stats. The Wellness Atlas presents information in a geographical context (Health Service Delivery Areas), revealing spatial variations and patterns across British Columbia. To display your own unique dataset, contact Pat Bluemel to discuss.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/georef/geopage.asp

## Released this week by BC Stats

- No subscription releases

## Next week

- Business Indicators, October 2009
- Current Statistics, October 2009

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