

Economic Indicators

Gross Domestic Product

Updated November 8, 2011

British Columbia's real gross domestic product (GDP) expanded 3.0% in 2010, making up lost ground after registering a contraction (-2.1%) in 2009. The pace of economic growth in the province was primarily driven by a 5.3% increase in final domestic demand (total personal, business and government spending) with business investment (+13.9%) and consumer spending (+3.8%) spurring much of the growth.

While residential investment by the business sector was only moderately higher (+4.9%), investment in non-residential structures (+27.1%) and machinery & equipment (+11.9%) saw double-digit growth.

In the government sector, purchases of goods and services advanced only slightly (+1.6%) in 2010. However, total government sector spending in the province rose 10.6% with infrastructure spending rising 15.4%.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

B.C. Employment Rate

Updated December 2, 2011

British Columbia's jobless rate rose 0.4 percentage points (seasonally adjusted) to 7.0% in November. The increase in the job-less rate resulted from people entering the labour market (+4,400, or +0.2%), mostly older workers (aged 55 and up), in tandem with an overall employment loss (-6,600, or -0.3%).

Job losses were concentrated in part-time employment (-1.5%), as full-time employment was up slightly (+0.1%) over October. In the goods-producing sector, employment strengthened in November (+2.4%), while in the service-providing sector, the number of jobs was down slightly (-0.9%).

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey)

Wages in B.C.

Updated December 2, 2011

The average weekly wage in British Columbia was \$847.57 in November, comparable to the national average of \$851.35. BC's average weekly wage rate was the fifth highest in Canada. The average hourly wage in the province was \$23.43. Hourly wages in the province remain slightly ahead of the national level.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey)

Inflation rate in B.C.

Updated November 18, 2011

Consumer prices in British Columbia were up 2.3% in October compared to the same month a year earlier. Much of the increase was due to a rise in the cost of food and energy, primarily gasoline (+17.8%), fuel oil (+19.0%) and electricity (+6.7%). The cost of food was up 3.6%, mainly the result of a jump in the price of grocery bills (+3.9%), which has been climbing since September of 2010. Shelter and transportation costs were also higher, while clothing (-1.4%) was less expensive. Despite recent upturns, BC's inflation rate remains the lowest in the country. *(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)*

Price of New Housing

Updated August 12, 2011

The price of new housing in BC's two largest cities continued to drop in June. Home builders in Victoria saw prices fall by 1.7%, while in Vancouver the average cost for a new home was down 0.7% over the same month in 2010. Building values in Victoria were considerably lower (-1.7%) than a year earlier, and land prices were also down (-1.1%). Meanwhile, in Vancouver, the rate of decrease in the price of a new house (-0.3%) was exceeded by the declining price of land (-1.1%).

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

Retail Sales

Updated November 25, 2011

Retail sales in British Columbia advanced slightly 0.2% (seasonally adjusted) in September, a slowdown in growth from the previous month (+0.7%). While sales at clothing & accessories stores (+1.6%), sporting goods, hobby, book & music shops (+1.3%) and motor vehicles & parts dealers (+1.3%) were higher, these were largely offset by declines in revenues earned at building materials & garden supplies stores (-2.8%). Sales were also weaker at furniture & home furnishings (-1.2%) and food & beverage (-0.4%) stores.

At the national level, retail sales rose 1.0% in September. Sales were up in all provinces, with Nova Scotia (+2.4%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (+2.1%) posting the largest increases. The largest contributions to the rise in national retail sales in dollar terms came from Alberta (+1.6%) and Ontario (+1.0%).

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

Manufacturing sales

Updated November 15, 2011

Manufacturing sales in British Columbia moved ahead 0.1% in September, marking the fourth consecutive monthly increase. Of the 21 manufacturing industries, 10 posted increases. Shipments by machinery manufacturers showed the most strength (+6.1%), while shipments by computer & electronic (+4.2%) and beverage & tobacco (+3.6%) producers were also notably higher. Overall, manufacturers of non-durable goods saw the value of shipments slip 0.4%, while shipments were up 0.6% in the durables sector.

Canadian manufacturing sales climbed 2.6% with the petroleum & coal industry (+13.7%) reporting the largest gains in September. Nine provinces posted stronger sales, with New

Brunswick (+13.3%), Alberta (+5.9%), Quebec (+2.3%) and Ontario (+1.0%) responsible for much of the national boost.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

Wholesale Sales

Updated November 25, 2011

Wholesalers in British Columbia saw revenues rise 0.5% (seasonally adjusted) in September, led by stronger motor vehicle sales. Nationally, wholesale sales increased 0.3%, marking a fifth straight monthly increase. Growth was largely concentrated in Saskatchewan (+7.3%) and Alberta (+2.0%). In all, six provinces registered lower wholesale sales, with PEI (-5.5%), New Brunswick (-4.0%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (-3.1%) being the hardest hit.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

International Trade (Exports)

Updated December 12, 2011

The value of exports from British Columbia fell 12.9% (seasonally adjusted) in October. Exports of all major commodities were weaker during the month, most notably the double-digit drop in the value of shipments of industrial & consumer goods (-22.5%) and energy products (-16.9%). Agriculture & fish (-8.5%), forestry (-3.6%) and machinery and equipment & automobile (-3.0%) products were also down moderately.

The value of shipments bound for the US remained virtually unchanged compared to the previous month (-0.2%); however, exports to the rest of the world dropped 21.8%.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: BC Stats)

Housing Starts

Updated November 8, 2011

The number of housing starts in British Columbia rose 2.4% (seasonally adjusted) in October. Total urban housing starts were up slightly (+1.5%) due to continued growth in the number of new multiple-unit housing projects (+5.5%). However, there was a sharp decline in the number of single-family detached starts (-9.5%). Rural starts in BC were up substantially (+13.0%) in October.

Nationally, housing starts slipped 0.6% in October. Total housing starts plunged in Nova Scotia (-45.0%), PEI (-30.8%), Quebec (-25.3%) and New Brunswick (-20.4%). Meanwhile starts soared in Manitoba (+68.9%), Alberta (+28.5%) and Ontario (+11.9%).

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Residential and Non-Residential Building Permits - B.C. Regional

Updated December 12, 2011

Through the first ten months of 2011, the value of building permits issued in British Columbia was down 10.3% compared to the same period last year. While municipalities in North Coast (+139.3%) and Northeast (+11.0%) development regions reported higher values, the rest of the

province has posted slowdowns. Nechako (-34.9%), Thompson/Okanagan (-26.7%), Kootenay (-25.4%) and Cariboo (-23.5%) registered the deepest decline year-to-date, while building permit values have slipped moderately in Mainland/Southwest (-7.9%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (-6.7%).

(Prepared by BC Stats, Sources: BC Stats and Statistics Canada)

Tourist visits

Updated November 18, 2011

The number of travellers entering Canada via British Columbia was up (+0.5%, seasonally adjusted) in September. Entries from South of the border remained flat (+0.0%), as a drop-off in same-day travel (-2.3%) was offset by an increase in the number of Americans electing to stay overnight (+1.2%).

Total entries from over-seas countries were notably higher in September (+1.8%), with much of the increase coming from “other” countries (+4.5%), which includes Oceania as well as North America (excluding the US) and South America. The number of visitors from Asia (+1.1%) and Europe (+1.0%) also increased over the previous month.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

Population

Updated October 26, 2011

As of July 1, British Columbia’s population was estimated at 4,573,321, up nearly 1.0% from the same time in the previous year. BC’s population growth increased at a rate that was similar to the national average (+1.0%). However, PEI (+1.7%), Alberta (+1.6%), Saskatchewan (+1.3%), Manitoba (+1.3%) and Ontario (+1.1%) all posted growth. Newfoundland and Labrador (-0.1%) was the only province where the population declined.

(Prepared by BC Stats, Source: Statistics Canada)

Independent Economic Forecast Council on economic growth

B.C.’s economy is expected grow moderately over the next year according to B.C.’s independent Economic Forecast Council. On average, the council forecasts B.C.’s GDP growth at 2.7 per cent for this year. This is down from Budget 2010, when economic growth was projected at 3.1 per cent. For 2012, the council’s forecast is unchanged at 3.0 per cent. The council’s average annual forecast for 2013-2015 is 2.8 per cent.

B.C.’s top credit rating reconfirmed

The Dominion Bond Rating Service, Standard & Poor, and Moody's Investment Service have all reconfirmed B.C.'s strong credit rating. The most recent report from Moody's notes the Province's debt reduction efforts of the past few years have put British Columbia in a stronger position to face the economic downturn. DBRS rates B.C. AA (High); Standard & Poor, AAA; and Moody's, AAA.