



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, November 1, 2002

INSIDE

◆ Leading indicator grows steadily

The leading indicator continued to rise for the fourteenth straight month with a 0.2% gain in September. A return to growth in housing and further gains in manufacturing outweighed further losses in the stock market.

◆ Drug stores drive retail sales rebound

Consumer spending in retail stores edged up 0.2% to \$25.7 billion in August after a decline in July. Retailing activity remained strong despite little growth since January. Drug stores posted the largest increase, at 0.6%.

◆ Foreign investors turn attention to Canadian bonds

Foreign investors turned their attention to Canadian bonds in August, buying \$2.6 billion worth, mainly outstanding federal issues. Canadian investors' demand for foreign securities abated, as a small investment in foreign stocks was completely erased by a reduction in their holdings of foreign bonds.

◆ Radio listening steady for the fourth consecutive year

Canadians listened to the radio an average of 20.1 hours per week in the fall of 2001. This listening time has been about the same since 1998, when four consecutive years of decline came to an end.

Falling energy prices slow rate of inflation

In September, consumers paid 2.3% more for the goods and services in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket than a year ago. This increase followed a 2.6% rise in August from August 2001.

September's smaller increase is explained by the 1.8% drop in energy prices since September 2001; energy prices had remained stable in August. The 12-month change in the CPI excluding energy was 2.8% in September, similar to the increases in August and July.

Cigarette prices, which rose 39.7% from September 2001, once again exerted the strongest upward pressure on the all-items CPI. This rise was essentially the result of increases in provincial and federal taxes in the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002.

Automotive vehicle insurance premiums jumped 15.7% and electricity prices rose 12.8% from September 2001. Electricity prices were up mostly because of sharp increases in Ontario.

(continued on page 2)

Consumer Price Index, September 2002
% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
Canada	2.3	2.0	1.1	2.9	-1.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	2.7	0.9	1.4	8.1	0.7
Prince Edward Island	3.9	3.0	0.1	8.5	1.6
Nova Scotia	3.4	2.6	1.4	7.3	2.5
New Brunswick	4.1	3.1	1.2	8.5	4.1
Quebec	2.3	1.0	1.3	2.4	-0.3
Ontario	2.3	2.4	1.8	2.2	-0.2
Manitoba	1.2	2.1	0.0	-0.7	-5.2
Saskatchewan	2.4	1.9	0.9	-0.1	-3.2
Alberta	2.9	2.4	-1.0	5.7	-9.9
British Columbia	1.8	2.0	-0.4	2.6	-3.7
Whitehorse	0.3	-2.2	-1.4	3.3	-2.5
Yellowknife	3.0	0.3	3.3	2.5	1.7



Falling energy prices... (continued from page 1)

Homeowners' replacement cost, the prices of restaurant meals and rent also added to the upward pressure on the all-items CPI.

The marked decrease in natural gas prices (-25.8%) and the drop in mortgage interest cost (-3.3%) had the strongest moderating effect on the rise of the all-items CPI. Declines in traveller accommodation and gasoline prices also helped to slow the rise.

On a monthly basis, the CPI remained unchanged from August to September, following a 0.4% rise in August.

The women's clothing index rose 4.1%, largely because of higher prices for new fall line items.

Students paid 4.8% more in tuition fees this year, a slight acceleration over the increases of the last two years. This rise was nonetheless among the lowest in the past 15 years.

The natural gas index was up 5.2% in September from August as a result of price increases in Alberta.

In September, fresh vegetable prices fell 12.4%. Decreases were attributed mainly to the ongoing supply of local products.

With the end of the summer tourist season, traveller accommodation prices fell on average 5.4%. The residents of every province except Newfoundland and Labrador (+4.4%) saw a drop in prices.

The cost of air transportation fell 3.9% in September after rising 2.2% in August. This drop was largely because of the move from high-season to intermediate-season prices on transatlantic and transpacific routes.

*The September 2002 issue of **The Consumer Price Index** (Internet: 62-001-XIB, \$8/\$77; paper: 62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For general information, contact Client Services (1-866-230-2248; 613-951-9606; infounit@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Joanne Moreau (613-951-7130), Prices Division. (See also "Current Trends" on page 6.)*

Leading indicator grows steadily

The leading indicator continued to rise gradually for the fourteenth straight month with a 0.2% gain in September. A return to growth in housing and further gains in manufacturing outweighed further losses in the stock market.

Excluding the stock market, the index increased 0.5%, the same increase it has posted since June.

Housing and sales of related goods continued to benefit from strong household demand. The housing index edged up 0.5% in September when existing home sales turned up. Starts of single-family dwellings continued to rise, nearly equalling the 12-year high set in May. Purchases of household goods have expanded steadily since early 2000.

The strength of household demand reverberated in manufacturing, contributing to a sixth consecutive increase in new orders for durable goods. However, neither the average

work-week nor employment rose in manufacturing. The growth in shipments accompanied another dip in inventories, boosting their ratio to the highest level since early 2001. Elsewhere, business services employment firmed and an upturn in non-residential building permits occurred over the summer, an encouraging sign for business investment.

The U.S. leading indicator was unchanged for the second month in a row, after a revision nullified a drop in August. As in Canada, the stock market remained the principal source of weakness, helping to pull down consumer confidence in the process.

*For more information on the economy, the October 2002 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (paper: 11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For analytical information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. (See also "Current trends" on page 6.)*

Drug stores drive retail sales rebound

Consumer spending in retail stores edged up 0.2% to \$25.7 billion in August, after a decline in July. In constant dollars, retail sales remained unchanged in August, following a 0.6% drop in July.

Retailing activity remained strong despite little growth since January. Sales by retailers for the first eight months of 2002 were up 6.1% from the same period of 2001.

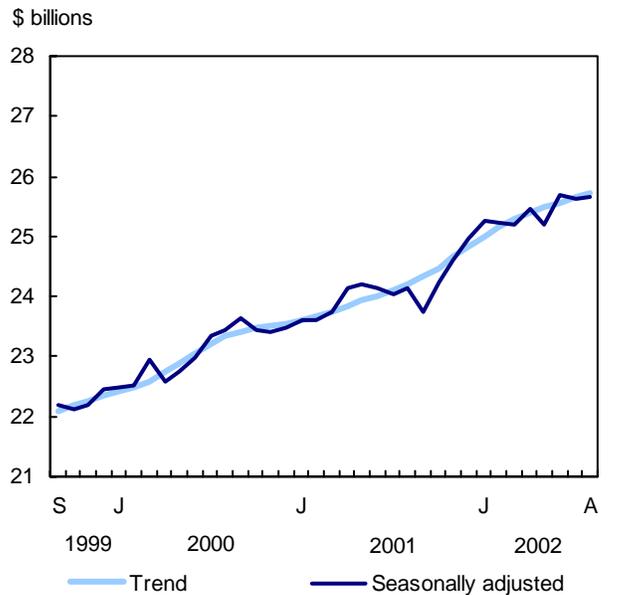
Sales in drug stores advanced 0.6% in August after remaining almost flat in July. As in 2001, drug stores continued to be one of the leading retail sectors, surpassed only by the furniture sector. Year-to-date sales in drug stores were up 9.0% from the same period of 2001.

Retailers in the food sector posted a 0.3% sales gain in August after a 0.7% increase in July. Sales in the food sector have been advancing rapidly so far this year; cumulative sales were up 4.5% from the first eight months of 2001.

Sales increases were moderate in the automotive sector for the second consecutive month. In spite of lower sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers in August and July, higher gasoline prices at the pump helped to sustain the level of sales in the automotive sector.

Sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers were down 0.2% in August despite a rise in the number of new motor vehicles sold in the month. Both sales by motor and recreational

Retail sales



vehicle dealers and the number of new motor vehicles sold have remained more or less flat since the start of 2002.

Consumer spending in the furniture sector remained unchanged in August after drops of 1.0% in both June and July. The exceptionally strong sales growth enjoyed by retailers in this sector in the fall of 2001 has weakened since the start of 2002.

Retailers in the clothing sector reported no change in sales in August, continuing the period of essentially flat sales observed since the start of 2002. August's declines in shoe stores (-2.5%), women's stores (-1.3%) and men's stores (-0.6%) were offset by increased sales in other clothing stores (+1.5%).

For the second month in a row, consumers stayed away from stores in the general merchandise sector, where sales were down 0.9% in August. This decline came entirely from lower sales by department stores (-1.8%).

Ontario (+0.6%), Manitoba (+0.6%) and Nova Scotia (+0.3%) were the only provinces to report retail sales gains in August; all remaining provinces posted declines ranging from 0.1% to 0.5%.

The August 2002 issue of Retail trade (Internet: 63-005-XIB, \$16/\$155) is now available. For general information, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; paul.gratton@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Retail sales, August 2002 Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	25,671	0.2	6.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	423	-0.4	0.5
Prince Edward Island	111	-0.3	2.5
Nova Scotia	765	0.3	6.1
New Brunswick	610	-0.3	5.0
Quebec	5,862	-0.3	6.7
Ontario	9,694	0.6	6.5
Manitoba	901	0.6	8.9
Saskatchewan	760	-0.5	9.6
Alberta	3,119	-0.1	7.1
British Columbia	3,332	-0.1	4.8
Yukon	35	1.2	17.6
Northwest Territories	42	-0.9	15.2
Nunavut	18	4.2	14.6

Foreign investors turn attention to Canadian bonds

Foreign investors turned their attention to Canadian bonds in August, buying \$2.6 billion worth, mainly outstanding federal issues, after reducing their holdings by a total of \$2.0 billion over June and July.

Underlying August's investment was the largest purchase of existing bonds in the secondary market since April 2000. The secondary market investment (\$3.5 billion) was focussed mainly on federal issues. The investment in Canadian bonds came mainly from European investors, followed by American investors.

New bonds sold in foreign markets in August shrank to \$1.0 billion, their lowest level since December 2000. This was offset by \$2.4 billion of retiring foreign-held Canadian bonds in August, the third month in a row that retirements exceeded the amount of new issues sold abroad.

In August, foreign investors made their first significant divestment in 2002 of Canadian money market paper, at \$1.3 billion. The reduction in August lowered their accumulated investment in this market so far this year to a negligible \$0.6 billion.

For the third consecutive month, the combination of rising Canadian short-term rates and falling comparable American rates pushed up the differential to the highest level in recent years (134 basis points).

After selling off a near-record \$3.5 billion in Canadian stocks in July, foreign investment was negligible in August. Underlying this, however, was continued heavy selling of existing shares in the secondary market, offset by a large issuance of new treasury shares in foreign markets by a major Canadian corporation.

American investors did most of the selling of existing shares in August, as well as the bulk of the buying of the newly issued Canadian shares abroad. The four-month slide in Canadian stock prices came to a halt in August. After losing a total of 1,246 points (S&P/TSX composite index), representing 15.9% of their value from April to July 2002, the index managed to squeak out a small gain in August.

Canadian investors continued to add to their holdings of foreign stocks in August, but at a much slower pace than earlier in 2002. Three-quarters of the \$14.0 billion invested in foreign stocks so far in 2002 went to American equities, with the balance going to overseas shares.

Canadian investors reduced their holdings of foreign bonds by \$0.7 billion in August, their first divestment since March 2002. In August, they acquired \$0.9 billion worth of overseas bonds but sold off a larger \$1.8 billion in US treasuries.

*The August 2002 issue of **Canada's international transactions in securities** (Internet: 67-002-XIB, \$14/\$132; paper: 67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176) is now available. For more information, contact Donald Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.*

Effects of selection criteria and economic opportunities on characteristics of immigrants

The study *Effects of selection criteria and economic opportunities on characteristics of immigrants* examined the characteristics of immigrants arriving in Canada from the United States and the United Kingdom, focussing on those admitted under the skilled worker category.

Although the analysis indicated that, for both of these source countries, more educated individuals were more likely to be observed as emigrants to Canada, it also showed that higher educated individuals from the United States were less likely to apply and that the opposite was the case for migrants from the United Kingdom. This reflects the economic opportunities available in these countries to the highly skilled relative to those available in the Canadian labour market. It also reflects the workings of the immigration selection process in determining who from the pool of available candidates ultimately comes to Canada.

*The research paper **Effects of selection criteria and economic opportunities on characteristics of immigrants**, no. 182 (11F0019MIE, free) is now available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). For more information, contact Abdurrahman Aydemir (613-941-6367), Family and Labour Studies Division.*

Radio listening steady for the fourth consecutive year

Canadians listened to the radio an average of 20.1 hours per week in the fall of 2001. This listening time has been about the same since 1998, when four consecutive years of decline came to an end.

Overall, the level of listening did not vary greatly from one province to another. The exception was Prince Edward Island, where the average listening time was 23.5 hours per week, up nearly four hours from 2000. The lowest number of listening hours was recorded in British Columbia (19 hours per week), closely followed by New Brunswick.

Teenagers listened to the radio the least. They spent half as much time listening to the radio as adults, continuing a trend that goes back more than 15 years. The difference was most notable during weekdays from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm, with an average listening time of only 4.7 hours for teens compared with 16.1 hours for adults. Adults have easier access to the radio than teenagers during weekdays. On weekends and evenings, levels of listening were similar for teens and adults.

Stations offering a music format captured the largest share of total listening in the fall of 2001 (68.0%). The adult contemporary format, despite a slight decrease, was the first choice among listeners and accounted for 23.1% of total listening hours.

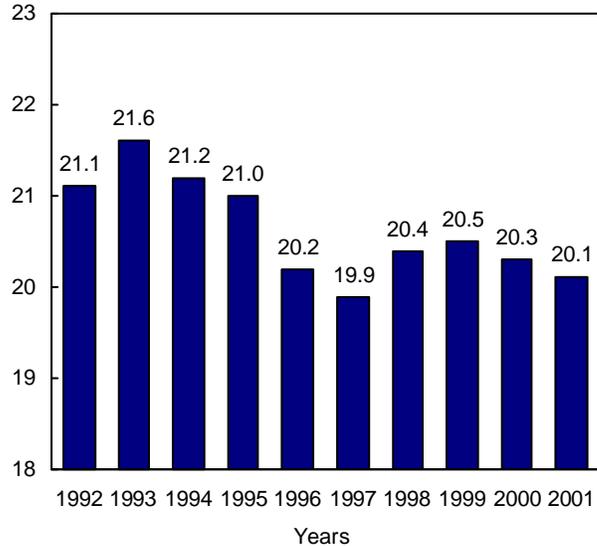
The gold/oldies/rock format ranked second, accounting for 18.2% of listening hours, compared with 14.0% in the fall of 2000, narrowing the gap that separates it from adult contemporary. It was followed by talk radio, which accounted for 13.3% of listening hours, compared with 10.3% in fall of 2000. This strong increase on the part of talk radio stations may be attributable in part to the events of September 11.

Although the adult contemporary format ranked first nationally, this was not the case in all provinces. In four of the 10 provinces — Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Alberta — country music was the most popular format.

Teens devoted an average of 35.0% of their listening time to the contemporary music format, followed by adult contemporary

Radio listening time

Hours per week



(20.0%) and gold/oldies/rock (19.0%). For adults aged 18 to 64, adult contemporary music stations accounted for the largest share of their listening time. Adults aged 65 and over spent more than 40% of their listening hours tuned to the CBC or to talk radio.

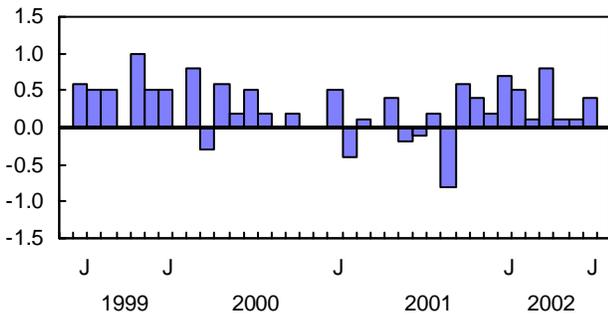
The higher the level of education, the higher the proportion of radio listening time that was devoted to the CBC. In the fall of 2001, Canadians with a grade school education or less spent 4.0% of their radio listening time tuned to the CBC; those with a university degree spent 18.0% of their listening time on this format.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-307-3382; cult.tourstats@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Lotfi Chahdi (613-951-3136, lotfi.chahdi@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

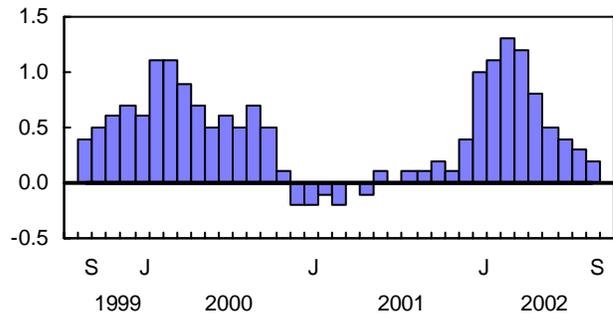
% change, previous month



Total economic activity rose 0.4% in July, following a 0.1% increase in June.

Composite Index

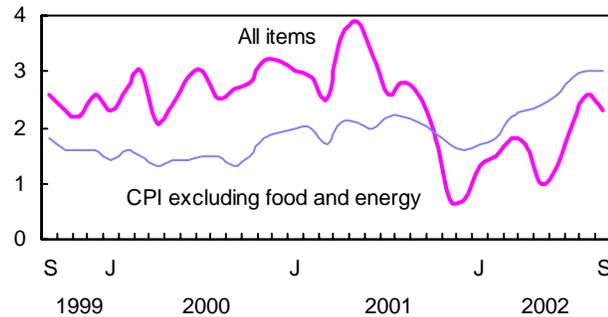
% change, previous month



The leading indicator gained 0.2% in September. Growth in housing and manufacturing outweighed a further drop in the stock market.

Consumer Price Index

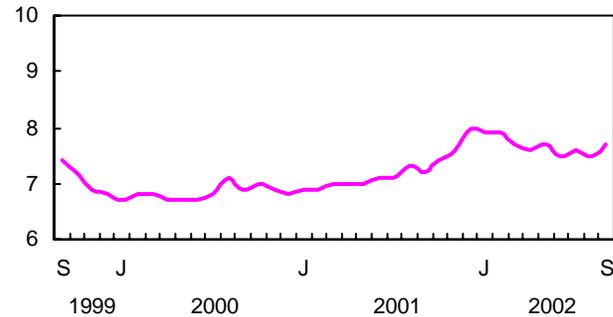
% change, previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.3% higher in September than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 3.0%.

Unemployment rate

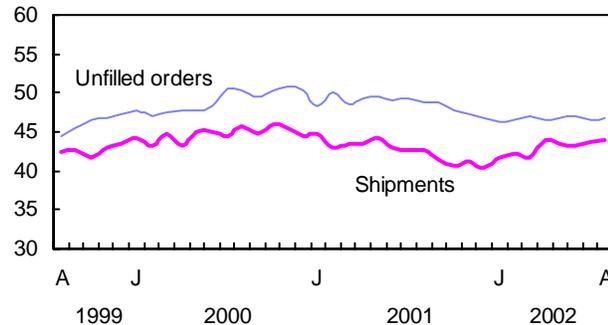
%



In September, the unemployment rate rose 0.2 percentage points to 7.7%.

Manufacturing

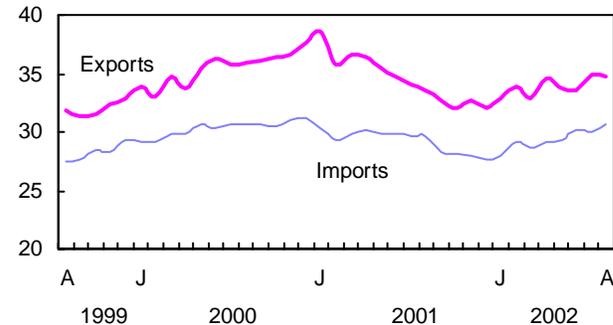
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rose 0.6% in August to \$43.9 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders gained 0.8% to \$46.8 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In August, the value of merchandise exports fell 0.6% to \$34.8 billion. Imports rose 2.6% to \$30.7 billion.

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billions, 1997) ¹	August*	979.3	0.1%	3.2%
Composite Index (1992=100)	September	179.1	0.2%	7.6%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q2 2002	38.8	10.7%	-0.2%
Capacity utilization rate (%) ²	Q2 2002	83.2	1.3†	-0.1†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billions)	August	25.7	0.2%	6.4%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	August	145.7	4.1%	8.8%
Wholesale trade (\$ billions)	August	35.1	1.1%	5.6%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	September	15.5	0.3%	2.9%
Unemployment rate (%)	September	7.7	0.2†	0.5†
Participation rate (%)	September	67.2	0.2†	1.4†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	August*	679.08	0.3%	1.6%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	September	124.2	-2.1%	-10.4%
Regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries (in thousands)	August*	557.8	-2.7%	3.4%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	August	34.8	-0.6%	3.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	August	30.7	2.6%	3.7%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	August	4.1	-1.0	0.0
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billions)	August	43.9	0.6%	2.9%
New orders (\$ billions)	August	44.3	3.0%	5.0%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)	August	46.8	0.8%	-4.1%
Inventory/shipments ratio	August	1.43	0.01	-0.08
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	September	120.1	0.0%	2.3%
Industrial Product Price Index (1997=100)	September*	108.5	0.7%	0.5%
Raw Materials Price Index (1997=100)	September*	116.9	2.1%	5.6%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	August	111.0	0.5%	4.2%

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.

* new this week

† percentage point

¹ 1997 replaces 1992 as the base year used in determining prices for gross domestic product by industry. Also, valuation has been changed from factor cost to basic prices.

² Calculation of the rates of capacity use is now based on the 1997 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), which has replaced the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

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Published by the Official Release Unit, Communications Division,
Statistics Canada, 10th floor, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Price per issue: paper, \$4; online at www.statcan.ca, \$3. Annual subscription:
paper, \$145; online, \$109. All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude
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SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price (\$) (issue/subscription)
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Hate crime study: Summary results of consultations		85-557-XIE	free
Juristat: Adult correctional services in Canada	2000-2001	85-002-XIE	8/70
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