



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, October 4, 1999

For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Building permits, August 1999** 2
 After three straight monthly increases, the total value of building permits issued by municipalities declined 9.4% to \$2.9 billion in August. Both residential and non-residential sectors recorded decreases in construction intentions.
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Profiling Canada

Statistics Canada, in partnership with Industry Canada, announces a new incentive for elementary and secondary schools to develop Web sites using Statistics Canada data. This initiative, called Profiling Canada, is a component of Industry Canada's SchoolNet GrassRoots program, which funds a broad range of online classroom projects.

Profiling Canada challenges schools to develop an electronic portrait of Canada and Canadians based on data available on Statistics Canada's Web site. Students are invited to use text and images in combination with data to depict the development of the country, their region or community. Profiling Canada provides funds to schools with classes from kindergarten to Grade 12, while it builds Canadian content online and develops new information technology skills in the next generation.

One of the principle benefits of Profiling Canada will be its contribution to professional development for teachers in the areas of statistics and data analysis. Five regional education representatives will assist teachers in the selection and analysis of data appropriate to their needs.

The SchoolNet GrassRoots Program provides assistance to schools for teachers developing online classroom projects. Working with its provincial partners and other federal organizations, SchoolNet will support the development of 20,000 projects by March 31, 2001.

For more information, contact the Statistics Canada education representative in your region toll-free at 1 800 263-1136, or contact the program manager, Linda McCormick (613-951-6478; education@statcan.ca), Dissemination Division.



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MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

August 1999

After three straight monthly increases, the total value of building permits issued by municipalities declined 9.4% to \$2.9 billion in August. Both residential and non-residential sectors recorded decreases in construction intentions.

In August, the housing sector declined 4.2% to \$1.7 billion, mostly as a result of a weaker demand for multi-family permits. Construction intentions in the non-residential sector dropped 15.6% to \$1.2 billion, led by a slowdown in industrial projects.

Nonetheless, so far this year, municipalities have issued \$23.3 billion in building permits, up 4.5% over the same period in 1998 to mark the best performance for the first eight months of any year since 1990.

Note to readers

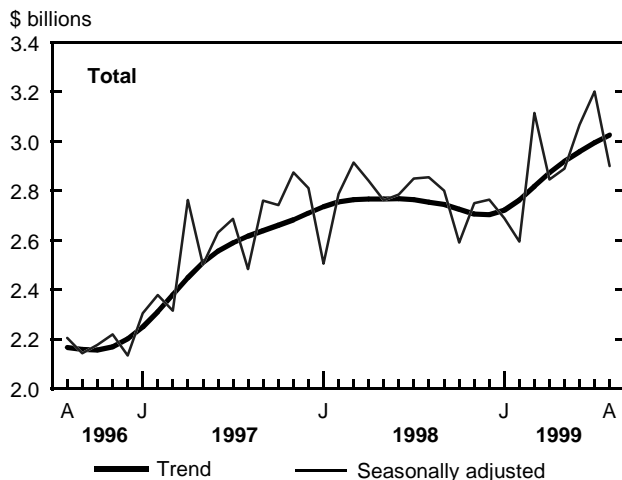
Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.

The Building and Demolitions Permits Monthly Survey covers 2,600 municipalities representing 94% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 6% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers, and culverts) and land.

Data for the territory of Nunavut were introduced with the release of April 1999 figures. At the same time, this has affected the geographical coverage and data of the Northwest Territories.

Total value of permits down



From January to August 1999, the residential sector led the way with a notable 8.4% increase to \$12.9 billion over the same eight-month period last year, supported by gains in single-family (+8.7%) and multi-family (+7.6%) dwelling intentions. However, the value of permits in the non-residential sector remained virtually unchanged from the same period last year at \$10.4 billion.

Residential sector: First decline in four months

Construction intentions in the housing sector decreased for the first time since April. Multi-family intentions declined 16.3% to \$441 million in August, more than offsetting a 1.1% gain in single-family dwellings to \$1.2 billion.

Despite this setback in August for housing intentions, other factors point to an active housing market. Housing affordability is still very positive, supported by a recent mortgage rate decrease. Consumer confidence remains strong, reflecting stable full-time employment and ongoing economic growth. Moreover, despite a 2% drop from July, the resale of homes so far this year is running 7.5% above that of last year.

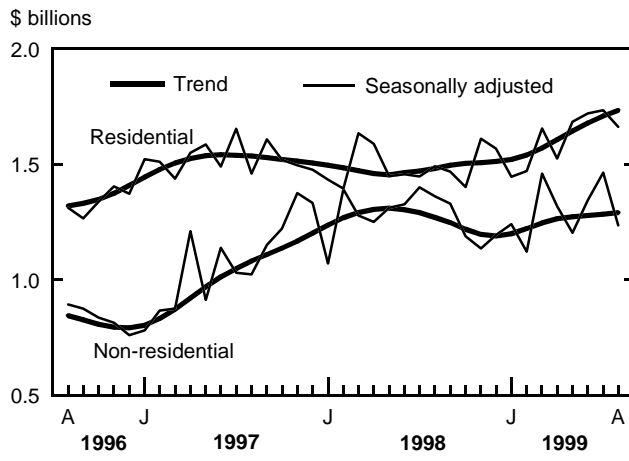
At the provincial level, the main declines (in dollar terms) were in Ontario (-10.8% to \$791 million) and in Manitoba (-15.2% to \$28 million). In both provinces, these losses have been more acute in multi-family dwelling intentions than in single-family dwellings. In July, Ontario and Manitoba had recorded strong increases in the residential sector.

Among provinces showing gains, Quebec recorded its fourth straight monthly increase (+10.1% to \$279 million), which was mostly due to single-family dwelling intentions. Gains in Atlantic Canada also helped counteract losses elsewhere. Most notably, permits in Nova Scotia rose 16.3% to \$40 million with a strong increase in multi-family dwelling intentions.

So far this year, all provinces east of Manitoba have recorded strong increases in residential construction

intentions compared with the first eight months of 1998. In contrast, both British Columbia and Alberta registered declines, while levels in Manitoba and Saskatchewan remained comparable to those of 1998.

Both sectors down in August



Non-residential sector: Industrial component led decline

Following two monthly gains, the non-residential sector declined 15.6% to \$1.2 billion from July. All three components (industrial, commercial and institutional) pushed down the non-residential permit levels, with the industrial component accounting for more than 75% of the decrease. For the first eight months of 1999, permits for non-residential construction showed no noticeable change (\$10.4 billion) compared with the same period in 1998.

In August, decreases in all industrial building groups pushed the overall component down 42.3% to \$238 million, following a 43.2% increase in July. So far this year, municipalities have issued \$2.5 billion

in industrial permits, down 7.8% over the same eight-month period last year.

Permits in the institutional component declined 10.3% to \$294 million, following a 17.0% drop in July and a substantial 44.0% increase in June. The most significant loss in August occurred in the education group. So far in 1999, the total value of institutional building permits has increased 6.7% over the same period in 1998.

The commercial component made the smallest contribution in the overall non-residential decline with a 2.8% decrease to \$704 million in August. Reductions came mostly from the trade/services and recreation groups. Despite the decline, commercial permits issued between January and August this year were 1.1% higher than the same period in 1998.

Provincially, the most significant decreases in the non-residential sector (in dollar terms) were in Alberta (-34.3% to \$144 million), Ontario (-8.2% to \$524 million), Saskatchewan (-46.0% to \$40 million) and Quebec (-13.7% to \$201 million). All three components declined in Alberta and Quebec.

The largest increase was recorded in Prince Edward Island (+142.6% to \$9 million), followed by Yukon (+279.4% to \$5 million).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3-7 and 33-48), 129, 137, 443, 989-992, 994, 995 and 4073.

The August 1999 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIB, \$19/\$186) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

The September 1999 building permit estimate will be released on November 4.

For more information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; burejoa@statcan.ca). To enquire about the methods, concepts or data quality of this release, contact Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-2025; sebastien.larochelle-cote@statcan.ca) Investment and Capital Stock Division. □

Value of building permits

	July 1999 ^r	August 1999 ^p	July to August 1999	August 1998 to August 1999
seasonally adjusted				
	\$ millions		% change	
Canada	3,199.6	2,898.9	-9.4	1.6
Residential	1,735.3	1,663.0	-4.2	11.4
Non-residential	1,464.3	1,235.9	-15.6	-9.2
Newfoundland	40.8	16.9	-58.4	-14.8
Residential	10.3	11.2	8.6	10.9
Non-residential	30.4	5.7	-81.1	-41.3
Prince Edward Island	8.5	16.6	95.5	58.2
Residential	4.7	7.3	57.0	31.6
Non-residential	3.8	9.2	142.6	88.3
Nova Scotia	83.1	84.6	1.8	37.6
Residential	34.6	40.2	16.3	-3.4
Non-residential	48.5	44.4	-8.5	123.5
New Brunswick	44.4	30.5	-31.4	-42.7
Residential	20.2	21.4	5.7	2.6
Non-residential	24.2	9.1	-62.4	-71.9
Quebec	486.5	480.2	-1.3	7.2
Residential	253.8	279.3	10.1	22.1
Non-residential	232.8	200.9	-13.7	-8.4
Ontario	1,458.2	1315.6	-9.8	10.5
Residential	887.4	791.4	-10.8	26.4
Non-residential	570.8	524.2	-8.2	-7.1
Manitoba	74.1	69.4	-6.3	-9.7
Residential	33.3	28.3	-15.2	4.2
Non-residential	40.7	41.1	0.9	-17.3
Saskatchewan	98.3	65.7	-33.1	10.2
Residential	25.0	26.2	4.8	-1.2
Non-residential	73.3	39.6	-46.0	19.4
Alberta	458.8	382.6	-16.6	-18.1
Residential	239.4	238.3	-0.4	-2.0
Non-residential	219.4	144.2	-34.3	-35.6
British Columbia	434.0	423.9	-2.3	-6.6
Residential	217.5	214.1	-1.6	-16.5
Non-residential	216.5	209.8	-3.1	6.2
Yukon	2.8	6.6	133.8	72.6
Residential	1.4	1.3	-7.7	-34.7
Non-residential	1.4	5.3	279.4	192.9
Northwest Territories	3.4	2.1	-37.6	-77.0
Residential	2.0	0.6	-67.4	-84.3
Non-residential	1.4	1.4	6.0	-70.9
Nunavut	6.7	4.1	-39.3	...
Residential	5.6	3.2	-43.8	...
Non-residential	1.1	0.9	-16.5	...

^p Preliminary data.

^r Revised data.

... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.

Note: Data may not add to totals due to rounding.

■

OTHER RELEASES

Sawmills and planing mills

July 1999

Sawmills in Canada produced 5 450.4 thousand cubic metres of lumber and ties in July, an increase of 7.7% from 5 060.9 thousand cubic metres (after revisions) produced in July 1998.

January-to-July production was 40 455.7 thousand cubic metres, up 4.4% from 38 742.2 thousand cubic metres (after revisions) produced over the same period in 1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 53 and 122 (series 2).

The July 1999 issue of *Sawmills and planing mills* (35-003-XIB, \$9/\$86) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Gilles Simard (613-951-3516; simales@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction, and Energy Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Supply and disposition of crude oil and natural gas, June 1999
Catalogue number 26-006-XPB
(Canada: \$19/\$186; outside Canada: US\$19/US\$186).

Sawmills and planing mills, July 1999
Catalogue number 35-003-XIB
(Canada: \$9/\$86).

All prices exclude sales tax.

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote a paper version.

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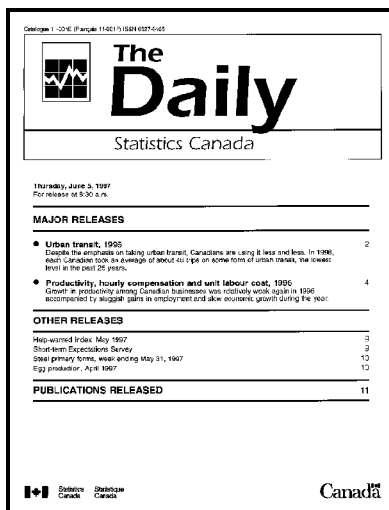
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