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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

MAJOR RELEASES

Retail trade

July 1999

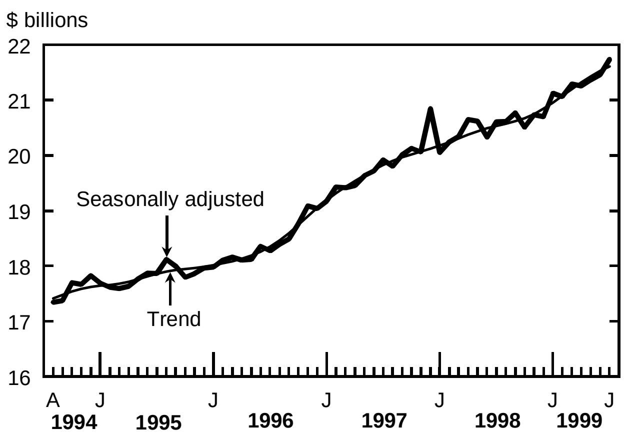
Retail sales rose 1.3% in July to $21.7 billion. This strong increase followed sales advances in June (+0.4%) and May (+0.5%).

Retailers have been experiencing strong sales since October 1998 (up 6.0% over the period) and July's increase was twice the average monthly gain observed since then. Previously, retail sales had slowed in the spring and summer of 1998 after generally increasing since the start of 1996.

About a third of July's increase in total retail sales resulted from higher prices, which were mainly due to increasing costs for gas at the pump. Excluding the effect of prices, retail sales increased 0.9% in July. Sales in gasoline service stations were up 1.8%, but excluding the price effect, they were down 1.3%. The remaining sectors posted little or no change in prices.

Retail sales were up in most sectors, with clothing stores (+3.1%), general merchandise stores (+2.1%) and stores in the automotive sector (+2.0%) leading the way. Furniture stores (-0.3%) reported the only decline while sales in food stores remained unchanged.

Retailers reported strong sales in July



Clothing store sales bounced back

Consumers spent more in all types of clothing stores in July (+3.1%) after staying away in June (-2.9%). July's increase was the largest in the last 12 months for this group. Sales in clothing stores increased considerably in 1999 after a period of weaker sales during most of 1998 — July's sales were 5.6% higher than in December 1998. Most of the recent strength is coming from the other clothing category which includes unisex and family clothing stores.

In July, strong sales by department stores (+3.7%) led to a 2.1% increase for the general merchandise sector. Sales by stores in the other general merchandise category were unchanged. After experiencing weak sales during most of 1998, retailers of the general merchandise sector have performed well this year — sales were up 7.0% in July compared with December 1998.

Auto sector in high gear

Higher sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+3.0%) and gasoline service stations (+1.8%) led to a 2.0% increase for the automotive sector in July. Stores selling automotive parts, accessories and services showed a 2.1% decline in sales after four straight months of gains. Retailers in the automotive sector have enjoyed strong sales advances since the fall of 1998 after experiencing more modest increases that started in the spring of 1997.

The return of higher gas prices in July (+4.1%), after a temporary decline in June (-1.5%), pushed up sales in gasoline service stations to their highest level since January 1997. As well, gas prices have jumped 16.6% from their low in February this year. Sales by gasoline service stations have increased since the start of the year after a period of general declines which started in the spring of 1996.

Furniture stores showed the only decline

In July, consumers spent slightly less in furniture stores (-0.3%) after a spending spree during the previous two months. Sales in these stores jumped 2.8% in June and 5.2% in May. Overall, sales in furniture stores have been increasing since the spring of 1996. The easy availability of credit may have helped to sustain this high sales growth.

Retail sales advanced in most provinces

In July, retail sales rose in all provinces except in Nova Scotia (-3.6%), Newfoundland (-1.5%) and Prince Edward Island (-1.0%). Sales advances in other provinces ranged from 0.8% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to 2.0% in Alberta. Retailers in each of the Prairie provinces enjoyed higher sales in July and

June but have shown little progress in sales since the end of 1997.

Retail spending in Ontario increased 1.8% in July. So far this year, retailers in the province have been reporting increases every month, with sales rising 7.8% since December 1998. Sales in Ontario have generally been increasing since mid-1996.

In Quebec, higher retail sales in July (+1.3%) completely offset the decline in June (-0.8%). Sales in Quebec have remained relatively unchanged since the start of the year, after advancing in the second half of 1998. Previously, retailers in Quebec experienced volatile sales in the first half of 1998 and flat sales for most of 1997.

Retailers in British Columbia posted increasing sales in July (+1.0%), following a 0.6% gain in June. Sales in British Columbia have been advancing since the fall of 1998, recapturing most of the decline observed earlier that year. Prior to 1998, sales in British Columbia had generally been increasing since the end of 1995.

Related indicators

Total employment remained unchanged in August reflecting the pattern observed since the start of the year. This period of stable employment follows strong job growth in the second half of 1998. The number of housing starts edged up slightly in August (+0.3%). According to the Consumer Price Index, the price of gasoline jumped 6.3% in August compared with July.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2299, 2397-2416 and 2418-2420.

The July 1999 issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XPB, $21/$206; 63-005-XIB, $16/$155) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3549; 1 877 421-3067; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; *gratpau@statcan.ca*), Retail Trade Section, Distributive Trades Division. □

Retail sales

	July 1998	April 1999^r	May 1999^r	June 1999^r	July 1999^p	June to July 1999	July 1998 to July 1999
	seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Food	**4,842**	**4,877**	**4,955**	**4,887**	**4,884**	**0.0**	**0.9**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,480	4,521	4,589	4,523	4,524	0.0	1.0
All other food stores	362	357	366	363	360	-0.8	-0.5
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,096**	**1,106**	**1,113**	**1,112**	**1,121**	**0.8**	**2.4**
Clothing	**1,167**	**1,198**	**1,211**	**1,176**	**1,212**	**3.1**	**3.9**
Shoe stores	138	141	141	128	135	6.0	-2.2
Men’s clothing stores	131	127	127	124	129	4.1	-1.5
Women’s clothing stores	367	370	375	367	374	1.8	2.0
Other clothing stores	531	559	568	557	574	3.0	8.1
Furniture	**1,071**	**1,070**	**1,125**	**1,157**	**1,154**	**-0.3**	**7.8**
Household furniture and appliance stores	871	862	916	956	940	-1.6	7.9
Household furnishings stores	199	208	209	201	214	6.0	7.1
Automotive	**7,884**	**8,246**	**8,119**	**8,300**	**8,469**	**2.0**	**7.4**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	5,374	5,623	5,479	5,662	5,831	3.0	8.5
Gasoline service stations	1,310	1,393	1,401	1,393	1,418	1.8	8.2
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,200	1,230	1,239	1,245	1,219	-2.1	1.6
General merchandise stores	**2,337**	**2,446**	**2,490**	**2,482**	**2,535**	**2.1**	**8.5**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,215**	**2,311**	**2,356**	**2,349**	**2,361**	**0.5**	**6.6**
Other semi-durable goods stores	681	700	712	711	722	1.5	6.0
Other durable goods stores	568	585	582	579	581	0.4	2.3
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	966	1,026	1,062	1,059	1,058	-0.1	9.5
Total, retail sales	**20,611**	**21,255**	**21,369**	**21,462**	**21,736**	**1.3**	**5.5**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**15,237**	**15,631**	**15,890**	**15,801**	**15,905**	**0.7**	**4.4**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland	324	335	347	347	342	-1.5	5.8
Prince Edward Island	89	90	94	99	98	-1.0	10.1
Nova Scotia	642	632	668	689	664	-3.6	3.5
New Brunswick	502	523	544	535	541	1.1	7.7
Quebec	4,766	4,983	4,990	4,950	5,012	1.3	5.2
Ontario	7,727	8,111	8,188	8,233	8,385	1.8	8.5
Manitoba	729	742	730	739	744	0.8	2.2
Saskatchewan	634	635	634	635	640	0.8	0.9
Alberta	2,358	2,347	2,340	2,386	2,432	2.0	3.2
British Columbia	2,773	2,786	2,762	2,777	2,805	1.0	1.2
Yukon	26	27	28	28	27	-1.6	3.4
Northwest Territories	..	28	30	31	32	5.2	..
Nunavut	..	15	14	15	14	-5.8	..

^r *Revised figures.*
^p *Preliminary figures.*
.. *Figures not available.*

Retail sales

	July 1998	June 1999[r]	July 1999[p]	July 1998 to July 1999
	unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Food	**5,194**	**4,939**	**5,369**	**3.4**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,808	4,559	4,984	3.7
All other food stores	386	379	385	-0.3
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,088**	**1,094**	**1,105**	**1.5**
Clothing	**1,076**	**1,145**	**1,138**	**5.7**
Shoe stores	130	140	128	-1.6
Men's clothing stores	113	126	116	2.1
Women's clothing stores	358	372	370	3.4
Other clothing stores	474	508	523	10.3
Furniture	**1,065**	**1,127**	**1,173**	**10.1**
Household furniture and appliance stores	858	911	951	10.8
Household furnishings stores	207	216	222	7.0
Automotive	**8,601**	**9,736**	**9,120**	**6.0**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	5,821	6,877	6,202	6.6
Gasoline service stations	1,456	1,467	1,583	8.7
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,325	1,391	1,335	0.8
General merchandise stores	**2,197**	**2,388**	**2,411**	**9.7**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,429**	**2,440**	**2,619**	**7.8**
Other semi-durable goods stores	713	763	756	6.0
Other durable goods stores	594	569	605	1.8
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,121	1,108	1,258	12.2
Total, retail sales	**21,651**	**22,869**	**22,935**	**5.9**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**15,830**	**15,992**	**16,733**	**5.7**
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland	351	374	376	7.1
Prince Edward Island	106	110	120	13.0
Nova Scotia	688	726	718	4.3
New Brunswick	543	584	593	9.2
Quebec	5,076	5,335	5,353	5.5
Ontario	8,023	8,829	8,727	8.8
Manitoba	753	777	773	2.6
Saskatchewan	662	674	671	1.4
Alberta	2,430	2,505	2,528	4.0
British Columbia	2,942	2,874	2,993	1.8
Yukon	32	32	33	2.7
Northwest Territories	..	35	36	..
Nunavut	..	14	15	..

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*
.. *Figures not available.*

■

Composite Index

August 1999

The growth of the composite index was little changed at 0.2% in August, maintaining its average gain since June. The sectors showing strength and weakness were also little changed; housing and the stock market led the advance, while services and other durables lagged behind.

The housing index continued to rise, although the 0.7% gain this month was the slowest since the winter as ground-breaking for new homes levelled off. Still, sales of existing homes were brisk enough to support solid growth in demand for furniture and appliances.

Demand for other durable goods was not as strong as for housing-related items. Flat retail sales helped to slow demand for manufactured goods. However, the auto sector should get a large boost from inventory stockpiling as a hedge against possible strikes this autumn. Services employment continued to weaken, as both the personal and business sectors fell.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.

For more information, the September issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, $23/$227) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group.

Composite Index

	March 1999	April 1999	May 1999	June 1999	July 1999	August 1999	Last month of data available
							% change
Composite leading indicator (1981=100)	**212.0**	**213.3**	**214.3**	**215.0**	**215.3**	**215.7**	**0.2**
Housing index (1981=100)[1]	125.6	127.5	129.6	132.0	133.8	134.8	0.7
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,340	2,346	2,346	2,336	2,320	2,304	-0.7
TSE 300 stock price index (1975=1,000)	6,321	6,446	6,573	6,706	6,835	6,928	1.4
Money supply, M1 ($ millions, 1981)[2]	41,714	41,709	41,583	41,406	41,137	40,883	-0.6
U.S. composite leading indicator (1967=100)[3]	227.3	227.9	228.4	228.8	229.2	229.7	0.2
Manufacturing							
Average workweek (hours)	38.8	38.8	38.7	38.7	38.7	38.7	0.0
New orders, durables ($ millions, 1981)[4]	16,405	16,703	16,855	16,914	16,927	16,976	0.3
Shipments/inventories of finished goods[4]	1.63	1.64	1.66	1.67	1.69	1.70	0.01[5]
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales ($ millions, 1981)[4]	1,408	1,417	1,424	1,426	1,432	1,443	0.8
Other durable goods sales ($ millions, 1981)[4]	4,650	4,689	4,732	4,763	4,764	4,763	0.0
Unsmoothed composite	216.3	215.6	215.3	214.9	214.8	216.6	0.8

1 *Composite index of housing starts (units) and house sales (multiple listing service).*
2 *Deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items.*
3 *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the month immediately preceding.*
4 *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for two preceding months.*
5 *Difference from previous month.*

■

OTHER RELEASES

Inequalities in literacy skills among youth in Canada and the United States
1994

The monograph, "Inequalities in literacy skills among youth in Canada and the United States", available today, examines literacy skills and the inequalities in their distribution among young adults aged 16 to 24 in Canada and the United States. The study is based on the 1989 U.S. National Adult Literacy Study and the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey, both of which examined three domains of literacy (prose, document and quantitative).

Canadian and American youth do not meet the literacy standards set by most of their European counterparts. A typical Canadian youth, whose parents had completed high school, scored about the same on the prose and document tests as their counterparts in Germany and Switzerland, but considerably lower than those in Sweden and the Netherlands. On the quantitative test, Canadians were outscored by youths in all other European countries except Poland.

Meanwhile, American youth whose parents had a similar level of education (secondary completion) scored about two to three years of schooling lower than Canadians. In Canada, young women scored about one year of schooling higher than young men on the prose test and one year lower on the quantitative test.

As one might expect, recent immigrant youth scored considerably lower on the literacy tests than those who were born in Canada. However, the inequality in skill levels declined as the number of years spent in the country increased. For young immigrants who had been in the country for more than 10 years, regardless of mother tongue, the differences between their literacy scores and those of non-immigrant youth were virtually non-existent in Canada and accounted for a difference of less than six months' schooling in the United States.

The level of literacy attained by youth varies considerably across different provinces and states. Prose test scores, for example, were lowest in California, New York and Texas (almost two years below the North American average). Scores in Iowa, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were the highest (almost two years above the average). In other words, the difference between the three best and three worst performing educational jurisdictions in North America was equivalent to more than three years of schooling.

Note: Prose literacy includes understanding and using information from texts such as stories and editorials. Document literacy includes understanding and using information from texts such as job applications, transportation schedules and maps. Quantitative literacy includes finding and using mathematical operations incorporated in texts such as weather charts found in the newspaper or the calculation of interest using a loan chart.

The monograph *Inequalities in literacy skills among youth in Canada and the United States* (89-552-MPE, no. 6, $10; 89-552-MIE, no. 6, free) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Doug Drew (613-941-9039), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. ■

Construction-type plywood
July 1999

Canadian firms produced 156 719 cubic metres of construction-type plywood during July, a 28.8% increase from the 121 703 cubic metres produced during July 1998.

January-to-July 1999 production totalled 1 135 888 cubic metres, an increase of 12.1% from the 1 013 169 cubic metres produced during the same period in 1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 122 (level 1).

The July 1999 issue of *Construction-type plywood* (35-001-XIB, $5/$47) 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. ■

Pulpwood and wood residue statistics
July 1999

Pulpwood receipts in July totalled 2 383 534 cubic metres, up 5.5% from 2 259 658 cubic metres in July 1998. Wood residue receipts totalled 6 713 787 cubic metres, up 13.7%

from 5 903 484 cubic metres in July 1998. Consumption of pulpwood and wood residue amounted to 9 927 334 cubic metres, a 13.8% increase from 8 727 186 cubic metres in July 1998.

The closing inventory of pulpwood and wood residue increased 3.6% to 12 404 682 cubic metres, up from 11 979 012 cubic metres in July 1998. Year-to-date consumption of pulpwood and wood residue (65 745 751 cubic metres) increased 8.7% from 60 491 192 cubic metres a year earlier.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 54.

The July 1999 issue of *Pulpwood and wood residue statistics* (25-001-XIB, $6/$55) 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

Pulpwood and wood residue statistics, July 1999
Catalogue number 25-001-XIB
(Canada: $6/$55).

Construction-type plywood, July 1999
Catalogue number 35-001-XIB
(Canada: $5/$47).

Industry price indexes, July 1999
Catalogue number 62-011-XPB
(Canada: $22/$217; outside Canada: US$22/US$217).

Inequalities in literacy skills among youth in Canada and the United States, September 1999, no. 6
Catalogue number 89-552-MIE
(Free).

Inequalities in literacy skills among youth in Canada and the United States, September 1999, no. 6
Catalogue number 89-552-MPE
(Canada: $10/$; outside Canada: US$10/US$).

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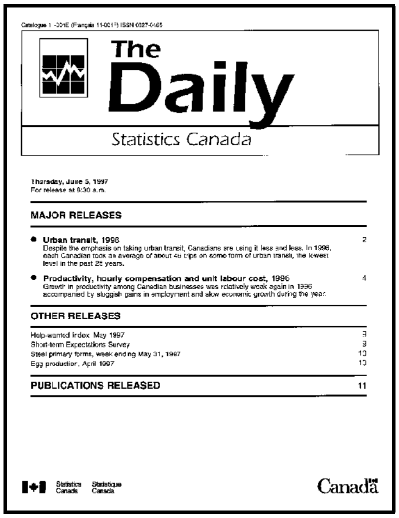

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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** — 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** — 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED — 11

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Canada

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