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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, October 25, 2000
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

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Canada

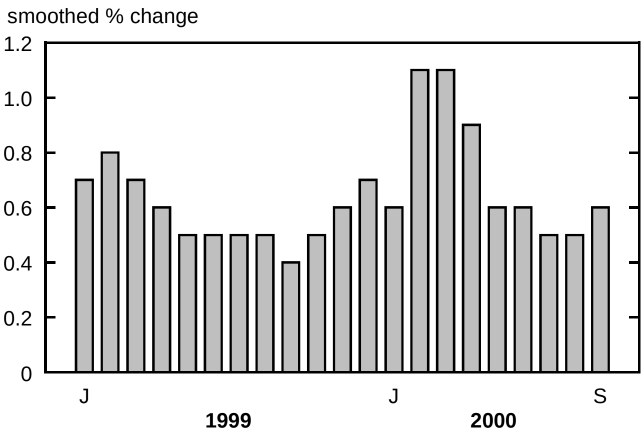
MAJOR RELEASES

Composite Index

September 2000

The deceleration in the leading index that began in April came to an end in September with a 0.6% increase, up from a revised gain of 0.5% in August. Seven of the 10 components advanced, one more than in August, led by household spending. Two components declined.

Composite Index



Household demand resumed its upswing, in line with improved labour market conditions late in the summer. The housing index posted its first gain in three months, as starts in Western Canada pulled out of their summer doldrums; the West also led job growth. Outlays for durable goods jumped 1.3%, after a large gain in labour income in the second quarter.

Firms continued to contribute to overall growth. New orders remained on a strong upward trend, led again by high-tech products. Employment in business services continued to dominate overall growth in services, which accelerated again in September to post its largest gain in three years.

The U.S. leading indicator continued to retreat. The drop that began with rising short-term interest rates spread to the labour market.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 193.

For more information on the economy, the October 2000 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, $23/$227) is now available. See *How to order products.*

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

	April 2000	May 2000	June 2000	July 2000	Aug. 2000	Sept. 2000	Last month of data available
							% change
Composite leading indicator (1992=100)	**161.5**	**162.5**	**163.4**	**164.2**	**165.0**	**166.0**	**0.6**
Housing index (1992=100)[1]	100.3	100.5	99.6	99.3	97.4	97.9	0.5
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,389	2,397	2,407	2,421	2,431	2,451	0.8
TSE 300 stock price index (1975=1,000)	8,967	9,134	9,477	9,733	10,090	10,296	2.0
Money supply, M1 ($ millions 1992)[2]	87,987	88,499	89,663	90,617	91,306	91,193	-0.1
U.S. Composite Leading Indicator (1992=100)[3]	108.4	108.5	108.5	108.4	108.4	108.3	-0.1
Manufacturing							
Average work week (hours)	39.0	38.9	38.9	38.9	38.9	38.9	0.0
New orders, durables ($ millions, 1992)[4]	21,908	22,195	22,112	22,249	22,588	23,211	2.8
Shipments/inventories of finished goods[4]	1.91	1.92	1.91	1.91	1.91	1.92	0.01[5]
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales ($ millions 1992)[4]	1,446	1,452	1,472	1,486	1,490	1,506	1.1
Other durable goods sales ($ millions 1992)[4]	6,707	6,812	6,839	6,842	6,846	6,936	1.3
Unsmoothed composite	162.6	163.7	164.4	166.7	167.6	167.9	0.2

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 the two preceding months.*
5 *Difference from previous month.*

■

OTHER RELEASES

Employment Insurance

August 2000 (preliminary)

The estimated number of Canadians (unadjusted for seasonal trends) who received regular Employment Insurance benefits in August was 447,900, a decrease of 6.1% from August 1999. Led by Alberta (-19.1%), 10 of the 13 provinces and territories recorded year-over-year decreases.

Number of beneficiaries receiving regular benefits

	Aug. 1999	Aug. 2000p	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	unadjusted for seasonality		
			% change
Canada	**477,181**	**447,898**	**-6.1**
Newfoundland	31,570	27,933	-11.5
Prince Edward Island	6,058	5,835	-3.7
Nova Scotia	25,018	26,315	5.2
New Brunswick	24,979	24,848	-0.5
Quebec	162,769	153,213	-5.9
Ontario	109,372	104,869	-4.1
Manitoba	13,947	14,228	2.0
Saskatchewan	11,163	11,138	-0.2
Alberta	33,372	26,997	-19.1
British Columbia	57,151	50,850	-11.0
Yukon	643	565	-12.1
Northwest Territories	699	613	-12.3
Nunavut	376	433	15.2

p *Preliminary figures.*

Regular benefit payments (adjusted for seasonal trends) grew by 3.3% between July and August to $611.9 million, a 7.1% decrease from August 1999. From July to August, the number of claims received decreased by 1.8% to 219,520.

Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada have discovered an underestimation in the calculation of the number of beneficiaries of Employment Insurance. This affects the beneficiaries file from January 1997 to April 2000. Consequently, the departments have agreed to correct the underestimation and conduct an historical revision to correct the data series back to January 1997.

The preliminary data on the number of beneficiaries, aggregated at the provincial level for July and August, were tabulated by Human Resources Development Canada and provided to Statistics Canada. These preliminary data are unadjusted for seasonal trends.

Note: Users are cautioned against making any analytical comparisons between these data and any monthly or historical data previously released in *The Daily* and on CANSIM.

Employment Insurance statistics

	Aug. 1999	July 2000	Aug. 2000	July to Aug. 2000	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	seasonally adjusted				
				% change	
Regular benefits paid ($ millions)	658.6	592.3	611.9	3.3	-7.1
Claims received ('000)	216.1	223.6	219.5	-1.8	1.6
	unadjusted for seasonality				
				% change	
All beneficiaries ('000) (see note to users)	631.5	549.9p	601.5p	9.4	-4.8
Regular beneficiaries ('000)	477.2	397.8p	447.9p	12.6	-6.1
Claims received ('000)	166.6	270.1	170.2	-37.0	2.2
Payments ($ millions)	965.4	809.3	757.1	-6.5	-21.6
	year-to-date (January to August)				
			1999	2000	1999 to 2000
					% change
Claims received ('000)			1,211.5	1,157.4	-4.5
Payments ($ millions)			7,871.7	6,351.1	-19.3

p *Preliminary figures.*

Note: *Note: All beneficiaries includes all claimants receiving regular benefits (e.g., due to layoff) or special benefits (e.g., due to illness).*

Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700-5704, 5735 and 5736.

For more information, or to enquire about concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Justin Lacroix (613-951-4090, fax: 613-951-4087; *labour@statcan.ca*), Labour Statistics Division. ■

Monthly Survey of Large Retailers

August 2000 (preliminary)

August sales by the group of large retailers totalled $6.3 billion, up 6.7% from August 1999. Because of industry restructuring and store closures, several retailers that were included in the 1999 estimates have now left the group; these changes in the composition of the group affect, to some extent, year-over-year sales comparisons. (All data in this release are unadjusted for seasonality.)

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	July 1999	July 2000[r]	July 1999 to July 2000	Aug. 1999	Aug. 2000[p]	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	unadjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Commodities						
Food and beverages	2,206	2,133	-3.3	1,964	2,127	8.3
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,111	1,089	-2.0	1,294	1,229	-5.1
Home furnishings and electronics	823	875	6.4	831	893	7.5
Health and personal care products	452	481	6.3	437	494	13.1
Housewares	291	298	2.5	287	307	7.1
Sporting and leisure goods	291	309	6.1	243	283	16.7
Hardware and lawn and garden products	266	295	11.1	199	228	14.4
All other goods and services	646	699	8.1	636	724	13.8
Total	**6,086**	**6,179**	**1.5**	**5,891**	**6,285**	**6.7**

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*

Sporting and leisure goods (+16.7%) recorded the largest year-over-year sales increase for the group of large retailers in August. Strong sales increases were posted for all types of sporting goods sold by the group, ranging from a 64.3% jump in the sales of exercise and fitness equipment to a 13.0% rise in the sales of team equipment and supplies (e.g., baseball, football, soccer and hockey equipment). August sales of leisure goods (which includes items such as toys, CDs, books, magazines and craft supplies) rose 9.8% compared with August 1999.

Sales of sporting and leisure goods by the group of large retailers

	Aug. 1999	Aug. 2000	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	unadjusted		
	$ millions		% change
Sporting goods	**103.5**	**130.4**	**26.0**
Bicycles, biking equipment and accessories	17.1	20.8	22.2
Hunting, fishing and camping equipment	45.0	56.4	25.4
Hockey, baseball, football, soccer, volleyball and basketball	14.9	16.8	13.0
Ski equipment and accessories	0.7	1.0	42.8
Golf equipment and accessories	9.5	11.6	22.8
Exercise and fitness equipment	6.1	10.0	64.3
All other sporting goods	10.4	13.8	33.2
Leisure goods	**139.3**	**153.0**	**9.8**
Toys, games and hobby supplies	52.6	55.5	5.5
Fabrics, yarns, sewing supplies and notions	9.8	9.4	-3.7
Craft and artists' supplies	4.0	4.4	9.5
Pre-recorded audio and video tapes and discs	42.7	48.7	14.1
Books, newspapers and other periodicals	30.2	35.0	15.7
Total	**242.8**	**283.4**	**16.7**

Sales of hardware and lawn and garden products posted the second largest growth (+14.4%) in August compared with August 1999. Sales of lawn and garden products alone climbed 20.9%, benefiting from robust advances in sales of lawn and garden furniture (+38.5%), nursery stock and cut flowers (+22.5%) and outdoor power equipment (+17.1%). Hardware sales by the group of large retailers were up 9.8% compared with August 1999.

Sales in the all other goods and services category logged the third largest increase, up 13.8% in August compared with August 1999. Although gasoline prices were down 3.5% from July 2000, gas prices at the pumps remained well above the August 1999 level and continued to be the major contributor to the overall increase in this category. Also in this category, significant sales increases were posted for: pet food and supplies (+20.4%); services (+15.3%); and stationery, office supplies, cards and gift wrap (+14.6%).

Sales of health and personal care products by the group of large retailers also recorded healthy growth (+13.1%) compared with August 1999. Sales of prescription and over-the-counter drugs continued to advance at a brisk pace (+19.3%), and sales of personal care products climbed 8.2%.

Buoyed by sales of home electronics (+13.8%), especially telephones and other home office electronics (+31.8%), sales of the overall home furnishings and electronics category rose 7.5% compared with August 1999. Furniture sales were up 6.0% and sales of appliances advanced more slowly at 4.8%. Household furnishings posted a weaker 1.1% increase.

Compared with August 1999, consumers spent $65.5 million (-5.1%) less on clothing, footwear and accessories at stores belonging to the group of large retailers. With the exception of infants' and children's clothing and accessories, which was essentially unchanged from August of 1999, sales were down for all major components of the category.

Sales of clothing, footwear and accessories by the group of large retailers

	Aug. 1999	Aug. 2000	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	unadjusted		
	$ millions		% change
Clothing and accessories	1,119.8	1,064.9	-4.9
Women's clothing and accessories	571.4	551.6	-3.5
Men's clothing and accessories	315.1	291.3	-7.5
Girls' clothing and accessories	72.3	65.1	-10.0
Boys' clothing and accessories	67.6	64.3	-5.0
Infants' and children's clothing and accessories	84.6	84.8	0.3
Unisex clothing	8.7	7.7	-11.7
Footwear	126.5	120.8	-4.5
Luggage and Leather Goods	17.0	16.9	-0.5
Jewellery and Watches	31.0	26.1	-15.6
Total	1,294.2	1,228.7	-5.1

August was the fourth month since April to record year-over-year declines in the sales of clothing, footwear and accessories.

To order data, or for general information, contact the Client Services Unit (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Catherine Draper (613-951-0669; *drapcat@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. ■

Registered Retirement Savings Plan contributions

1999

Contributions to registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) rebounded to their second highest level ever in 1999.

A record 6,207,000 taxfilers contributed to an RRSP during the 1999 tax year, up 1.4% from the previous year. They contributed $27.8 billion, a 2.6% increase from 1998 (after adjusting for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index).

The number of contributors and the amount of their contributions both recovered, after declining in 1998 for the first time since 1991. Contributions last year were still short of the record $28.2 billion set in 1997.

About 29% of all taxfilers contributed in 1999, or 36% of those eligible to contribute. To be eligible to contribute to an RRSP, a taxfiler must have new room as a result of qualifying income — generally employment income — or must have unused RRSP room from previous years.

Ontario taxfilers contributed $11.9 billion, 43% of the total, although only 37% of eligible taxfilers are from Ontario. Contributors from Quebec deposited $5.9 billion, or 21% of the total.

The number of contributors increased in all provinces except Saskatchewan, where 197,200 people made contributions, down 2.5%. The number of contributors in Saskatchewan peaked in 1996, but has been decreasing since that time.

The amount of contributions declined in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Nunavut showed the largest change, while among the provinces, the largest increase was in New Brunswick, where taxfilers contributed $418 million, up 4.3%.

The average contribution last year was $4,477, compared with $4,576 in 1997 and $4,424 in 1998, after inflation is taken into account. In general, taxfilers with the highest incomes contributed the most. In 1999, the average contribution of those whose total income exceeded $80,000 was $12,535, while for those with total income between $60,000 and $79,999, the average contribution was $6,199.

The median employment income for contributors rose from $36,253 in 1997 (adjusted) to $37,700 in 1999. The median is the point at which half of the contributors fall below and half are above.

The largest group of RRSP contributors were those 35 to 44 years of age, followed by those 45 to 54. Each of these groups contributed 30% of the total dollars.

RRSP contributors
1999

	Number of contributors	Change from 1998	Dollars contributed	Change from 1998 (adjusted)
		%	'000	%
Canada	**6,207,190**	**1.3**	**27,789,265**	**2.6**
Newfoundland	65,520	1.7	274,007	1.2
Nova Scotia	145,220	2.0	587,427	-0.1
Prince Edward Island	21,070	1.3	81,028	-1.4
New Brunswick	108,100	3.1	418,164	4.3
Quebec	1,456,950	2.9	5,889,684	4.2
Ontario	2,479,610	1.4	11,911,276	2.5
Manitoba	231,450	0.2	882,935	0.0
Saskatchewan	197,180	-2.5	758,612	-2.2
Alberta	664,340	0.8	3,109,245	3.5
British Columbia	822,640	0.2	3,800,575	1.7
Yukon	5,900	2.3	26,324	-2.0
Northwest Territories	7,060	0.9	36,877	-1.3
Nunavut	2,150	5.4	13,111	12.3

Databanks for RRSP contributors (17C0006, price is variable) and Canadian taxfilers (17C0010, price is variable) are available for Canada, the provinces and territories, cities, towns, Census Metropolitan Areas, Census Divisions, and areas as small as forward sortation areas (the first three characters of the postal code) and letter carrier routes.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (613-951-9720; fax: 613-951-4745; *saadinfo@statcan.ca*), Small Area and Administrative Data Division. ■

Natural gas sales
August 2000 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 4 114 million cubic metres in August, up 20.1% over August 1999. All three sectors — residential, commercial and industrial — recorded higher sales. Use by the industrial sector (including direct sales) jumped 22.3% over August 1999, owing to higher use of natural gas for electricity generation and stronger demand by the chemical industry.

Year-to-date sales were up 6.0% over the same period in 1999. Industrial sector sales (including direct sales) continued to grow strongly, posting a 9.7% increase over the same period of 1999. Consumption by the residential sector increased 0.7%, while the commercial sector decreased 1.0%.

Natural gas sales

	Aug. 2000^p	Aug. 1999	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Natural gas sales	**4 113 887**	**3 425 796**	**20.1**
Residential	400 364	360 318	11.1
Commercial	314 005	284 782	10.3
Industrial	1 791 541	1 458 745	22.3
Direct	1 607 977	1 321 951	
	year-to-date		
	2000^p	1999	1999 to 2000
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Natural gas sales	**47 217 138**	**44 542 328**	**6.0**
Residential	9 892 011	9 827 386	0.7
Commercial	6 932 743	7 001 498	-1.0
Industrial	14 367 933	13 510 583	9.7
Direct	16 024 451	14 202 861	

^{p} *Preliminary figures.*

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1052-1055.

The August 2000 issue of *Natural gas transportation and distribution* (55-002-XIB, $13/$125) will be available in November. See *How to order products.*

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gary Smalldridge (613-951-3567; *smalgar@statcan.ca*) or Tom Lewis (613-951-3596; *talewis@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Construction type plywood
August 2000

Canadian firms produced 155 327 cubic metres of construction-type plywood during August, up 1.6% from the 152 875 cubic metres produced in August 1999.

Year-to-date production totalled 1 323 763 cubic metres, an increase of 2.7% from the 1 288 763 cubic metres produced during the same period in 1999.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 122 (series 1).

The August 2000 issue of *Construction type plywood* (35-001-XIB, $5/$47) is now available. See *How to order products.*

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

NEW PRODUCTS

Construction type plywood, August 2000
Catalogue number 35-001-XIB ($5/$47).

RRSP contributors
Catalogue number 17C0006 (Price is variable).

Canadian taxfilers
Catalogue number 17C0010 (Price is variable).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB are electronic versions on diskette and -XCD are electronic versions on compact disc.

How to order products

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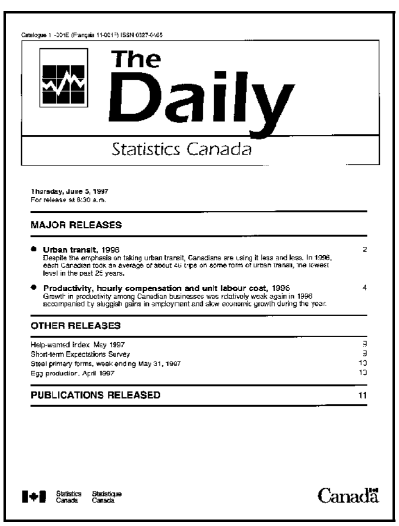
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **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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