



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, February 10, 2000

For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

There are no major releases today.

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New Housing Price Index

December 1999

The New Housing Price Index rose 0.2% from November to December. On an annual basis, this index of contractors' selling prices of new houses increased 1.7%, the highest annual increase in 1999.

In response to very good market conditions, the highest monthly increase occurred in Hamilton (+0.5%) as higher prices for building materials and labour were passed on to new home buyers. In Ottawa-Hull, Regina and Calgary, the index rose 0.4% compared with November, mostly as a result of higher prices for building materials such as drywall and lumber. Vancouver registered a marginal 0.2% increase — its first monthly increase since July 1999. Victoria was the only metropolitan area with a decrease. Nine of the 21 areas surveyed showed no change from November to December.

New Housing Price Index

(1992=100)

	Dec. 1999	Dec. 1998 to Dec. 1999 % change	Nov. to Dec. 1999
Canada total	102.0	1.7	0.2
House only	103.5	2.7	0.3
Land only	102.3	0.3	0.1
St. John's	96.1	0.7	-
Halifax	113.4	4.6	-
Charlottetown	105.2	0.6	-
Saint John-Moncton-			
Fredericton	94.6	1.4	0.1
Quebec City	100.8	2.3	-
Montréal	106.0	3.4	-
Ottawa-Hull	102.8	4.6	0.4
Toronto	105.4	2.4	0.3
Hamilton	104.7	1.7	0.5
St. Catharines-			
Niagara	105.4	4.5	0.2
Kitchener-Waterloo	103.2	2.7	0.2
London	99.4	1.0	0.1
Windsor	106.0	1.2	-
Sudbury-Thunder Bay	98.8	-1.4	-
Winnipeg	116.0	3.2	0.3
Regina	130.6	4.1	0.4
Saskatoon	114.6	1.7	-
Calgary	131.1	3.7	0.4
Edmonton	111.1	2.1	-
Vancouver	83.8	-2.2	0.2
Victoria	73.1	-5.8	-0.4

- Nil or zero.

Annual increases were noted in 18 of the 21 areas surveyed. The largest increase (+4.6%) occurred in both Halifax and Ottawa-Hull followed by St. Catharines-Niagara (+4.5%). As in November, Victoria

registered the highest annual decrease (-5.8%). New housing prices in Vancouver and Sudbury-Thunder Bay also decreased on a year-over-year basis.

Note: The total New Housing Price Index for December 1999 is below the level of its two components, the House-only Index and the Land-only Index. This situation has occurred because the component index series is derived and linked independently. Linking, in particular, creates total indexes that are not, in a strict sense, averages of their sub-indexes.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 9921.

The fourth quarter 1999 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB,\$24/\$79) will be available in March. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Louise Chaîné (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Client Services Unit, Prices Division. ■

RRSPs in the 1990s

1991 to 1997

The analytical article, "RRSPs in the 1990s", which is available today, provides a statistical portrait of registered retirement savings plans between 1991 and 1997 in terms of participation, growth of contributions, unused room and withdrawals.

Total RRSP contributions rose from \$13.5 billion in 1991 to \$24.1 billion in 1997. This 79% increase was the result of growth in both the number of contributors, from 4.6 million to 6.1 million, and the average contribution, from \$3,000 to \$3,900. (All amounts are in 1997 dollars.)

Average contributions during the period rose for both sexes. Contributions by men consistently exceeded those by women — in line with their higher average earnings. In 1997, the average male contributor put about \$4,500 into his RRSP, compared with \$3,200 for women. However, the growth in women's average contributions slightly surpassed those of men, in line with improvements in the female-to-male wage ratio.

Only a small proportion of taxfilers with RRSP room use all of their room. In 1997, for example, only 11% of all eligible taxfilers — mostly those with earnings of \$80,000 or over — used 95% or more of their room.

With the introduction of the carry-forward option in 1991, taxfilers used less and less of the amount they were eligible to contribute throughout the 1990s. In 1991, taxfilers used about 29% of a possible \$46.7 billion, leaving unused room of \$33.3 billion. By 1997, they used only about 12% of the \$200.4 billion that they were eligible to contribute, leaving unused room of \$176.4 billion.

This growth in unused room, which increased more than four-fold during the period, is not surprising. It surpassed the combined effects of growth in both the number of contributors and the average amounts put into RRSPs.

In terms of withdrawals, taxfilers in the key 25-to-64 age group took out \$4.9 billion from their RRSPs in 1997, up from \$4.0 billion in 1993. For every \$5 put into an RRSP by individuals in this age group in 1997, \$1 was withdrawn, compared with about \$1 for every \$4 contributed in 1993. The decline in this proportion during this period occurred at a time of improved economic and employment conditions.

The analytical article "RRSPs in the 1990s" is now available by fax or in PDF format from the *In depth* module on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). The article will be published in the spring 2000 issue of *Perspectives on labour and income* (75-001-XPE), which will be available on March 8. To obtain a fax copy of the article, contact Cynthia Fortura (613-951-0525; fortcyn@statcan.ca).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Ernest B. Akyeampong (613-951-4624; akyeern@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division. ■

Steel primary forms

Week ending February 5, 2000 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending February 5, 2000, totalled 321 574 tonnes, up 0.9% from the week-earlier 318 595 tonnes and up 4.4% from the year-earlier 307 918 tonnes. The cumulative total at the end of the week was 1 631 962 tonnes, a 12.8% increase compared with 1 446 711 tonnes for the same period in 1999.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Greg Milsom (613-951-7093; milsomg@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins

December 1999

Chemical firms produced 214 576 tonnes of polyethylene synthetic resins in December, an 11.1% increase from 193 209 tonnes in December 1998.

Production for January to December 1999 totalled 2 481 884 tonnes, up 8.7% from 2 282 649 tonnes produced in 1998.

Data are also available on production of 3 other types of synthetic resins and 24 industrial chemicals.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 951.

The December 1999 issue of *Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins* (46-002-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 Suzette DesRosiers (613-951-9836; desrosi@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy division. ■

Cement

December 1999

Manufacturers shipped 835 984 tonnes of cement in December, down 0.1% from 836 474 tonnes (revised) in December 1998, and down 26.7% from 1 140 729 tonnes (revised) in November 1999.

Shipments for January to December 1999 totalled 12 624 924 tonnes, up 4.1% from 12 124 058 tonnes (revised) during the same period in 1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 92 and 122 (series 35).

The December 1999 issue of *Cement* (44-001-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 Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-9837; sainteti@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Cable television

1998

The cable and other program distribution industry reported revenues of \$3.1 billion in 1998, up 10.0% from 1997. This relatively strong growth is due in large part to the fast growing non-basic services segment. While revenue from basic services grew moderately

(+2.1%), revenue from non-basic and other services increased 29.0%. The industry's profit before interest and income taxes represented 18.0% of its revenue in 1998 compared with 24.0% the previous year.

The industry reported 8.3 million (direct and indirect) subscribers at the end of August 1998, a 3.7% increase over 1997.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1819 and 1822-1829.

A summary of these data appears in *Communications service bulletin* (56-001-XIB, \$10/\$32), which 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 Daniel April (613-951-3177; fax: 613-951-9920), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division. ■

Airport activity

First quarter 1999 (preliminary)

Data on airport activity for the first quarter of 1999 are now available.

The February issue of the *Aviation statistics centre service bulletin* (51-004-XIB, \$8/\$82) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality for this release, contact Rolf Hakka (613-951-0068), Aviation Statistics Centre, Transportation Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Cement, December 1999
Catalogue number 44-001-XIB
(Canada: \$5/\$47).

All prices exclude sales tax.

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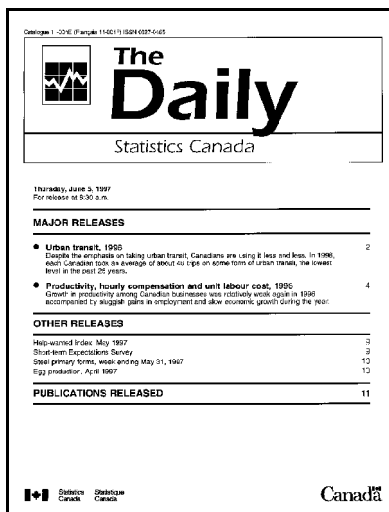
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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001E.

Published each working day by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-H, R.H. Coats Bldg., Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

To access *The Daily* on the Internet, visit our site at <http://www.statcan.ca>. To receive *The Daily* each morning by E-mail, send an E-mail message to listproc@statcan.ca. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message, type "subscribe daily firstname lastname".

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