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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, June 5, 2000
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

There are no major releases today.

OTHER RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

Department store sales and stocks

April 2000

Department store sales advanced 1.4% in April from March to $1.50 billion (seasonally adjusted). The increase followed two consecutive declines in March (-0.4%) and in February (-2.6%) and a strong gain in January (+7.1%).

The general decline observed in department store sales since the end of the summer of 1999 seems to have halted during the last few months. Sales recorded for April were 5.1% lower than the peak of $1.58 billion posted in August 1999. Previously, department store sales had been generally rising since early 1996, with the exception of a pause observed in the spring and summer of 1998.

Department store sales including concessions

	April 1999	April 2000	April 1999 to April 2000	Jan. to April. 2000	Jan.-April 1999 to Jan.-April 2000
	unadjusted				
	$ millions		% change	$ millions	% change
Canada	**1,339.9**	**1,392.6**	**3.9**	**4,688.9**	**3.4**
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island[1]	22.6	28.4	25.9	92.2	13.8
Nova Scotia	39.4	44.0	11.7	138.6	3.1
New Brunswick	29.2	32.3	10.3	104.4	8.8
Quebec	256.2	262.3	2.4	867.5	3.2
Ontario	569.5	586.5	3.0	2,001.2	3.6
Manitoba	57.6	57.2	-0.8	195.5	2.1
Saskatchewan	44.8	49.8	11.1	165.8	9.1
Alberta	155.0	167.3	7.9	560.9	4.7
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut[1]	165.6	164.9	-0.5	562.8	-1.5

1 *For reasons of confidentiality, data for Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island are combined, as are data for British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.*

Unadjusted for seasonality, department store sales at the national level advanced 3.9% in April compared with April 1999. However, the sales change varied considerably from one region to another. The region formed by Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island posted the strongest year-over-year sales gain (+25.9%). In general, department store sales in this region have been rising steadily since the first half of 1999. This performance continues to reflect the good overall retail sales results observed in 1999 in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

Two other regions saw sales declines in the same April-to-April period: Manitoba (-0.8%), and the region formed by British Columbia, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut (-0.5%).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113.

To order data, or for general 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 or data quality of this release, contact Clérance Kimanyi (613-951-6363; *kimacle@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. ■

Domestic sales of refined petroleum products

April 2000 (preliminary)

Sales of refined petroleum products totalled 6 797 500 cubic metres in April, down 4.9% from April 1999. Total motor gasoline sales were off 2.3% from April 1999, and sales of mid- and premium grades dropped by 31.3% and 15.0%, respectively. Light fuel oil decreased by 10.0%. Heavy fuel oil continued a downward trend, falling 24.9%.

Year-to-date sales of refined petroleum decreased by 192 600 cubic metres or 0.6% over the same period in 1999. Sales increased for four of the seven major product groups; the largest advances were in sales of diesel fuel (+531 700 cubic metres or +7.9%) and other refined products (+320 000 cubic metres or +13.7%). Sales of heavy fuel oil fell 24.9%, and petrochemical feedstocks dropped 12.3%.

Sales of refined petroleum products

	April 1999[r]	April 2000[p]	April 1999 to April 2000
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Total, all products	**7 147.4**	**6 797.5**	**-4.9**
Motor gasoline	3 005.7	2 937.7	-2.3
Diesel fuel oil	1 674.1	1 655.8	-1.1
Light fuel oil	391.2	352.1	-10.0
Heavy fuel oil	615.1	461.8	-24.9
Aviation turbo fuels	468.2	442.8	-5.4
Petrochemical feedstocks[1]	414.7	355.1	-14.4
All other refined products	578.5	592.2	2.4

	Jan. 1999 to April 1999[r]	Jan. to April 2000[p]	Jan.-April 1999 to Jan.-April 2000
Total, all products	**29 699.4**	**29 506.8**	**-0.6**
Motor gasoline	11 833.1	11 866.2	0.3
Diesel fuel oil	6 698.3	7 230.0	7.9
Light fuel oil	2 548.3	2 305.0	-9.5
Heavy fuel oil	2 804.1	2 107.0	-24.9
Aviation turbo fuels	1 797.3	1 867.3	3.9
Petrochemical feedstocks[1]	1 675.9	1 469.0	-12.3
All other refined products	2 342.4	2 662.4	13.7

r *Revised.*
p *Preliminary.*
1 *Materials produced by refineries that are used by the petrochemical industry to produce chemicals, synthetic rubber and a variety of plastics.*

Available on CANSIM: matrices 628-642 and 644-647.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Eleonore Harding (613-951-5708; *hardele@statcan.ca*) or Michael Westland (613-951-3060; *westmic@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Average air fares for 10 major Canadian cities
1983 to 1998

Between 1994 and 1998, average domestic air fares decreased in western cities, but increased in eastern cities.

The average domestic air fare reached a record high of $199.70 in 1994. In 1996, fares for all cities dropped significantly, then in 1997 began to increase again. However, in 1998, air fares in the western cities remained below their record 1994 levels, while fares in the east surpassed previous record levels.

Average domestic air fares for 10 major Canadian cities

	1994	1998	1994 to 1998
	$		% change
Canada	**199.70**	**192.70**	**-3.5**
Vancouver	216.80	192.60	-11.2
Edmonton	190.40	173.40	-8.9
Calgary	199.70	178.10	-10.8
Regina	194.40	168.50	-13.3
Saskatoon	183.40	161.60	-11.9
Winnipeg	219.20	214.10	-2.3
Toronto	218.70	224.80	2.8
Ottawa	202.40	209.60	3.6
Montréal	187.90	194.70	3.6
Halifax	188.20	196.70	4.5

The divergence of fares between eastern and western cities was the result of many factors. In February 1996, WestJet began scheduled service in the western provinces, and in July of that year Greyhound Air began scheduled trans-Canada flights, creating additional competition. Both carriers featured regular low fares, which the major carriers quickly matched. In addition, the charter carriers continued to offer increasing competition to the scheduled carriers. In 1997, VistaJet entered the eastern market as a low-cost carrier, but ceased operations in September, followed shortly by Greyhound Air. In 1998, air fares also began to reflect new user charges for air navigation services and some airport improvement fees.

The proportion of business class passengers was also higher in the eastern cities than in the west. The Canadian Travel Survey showed that, in 1998, the eastern air travel market consisted largely of business travel, while the western market was mostly personal travel. In the largest eastern market, Ontario-Québec, 72% of the air travel trips in 1998 were for business purposes, while in the Alberta-B.C. market, 67% of air trips were for personal purposes. Personal air travel markets may be more price-sensitive, while business travellers may be more concerned with frequency of flights, international connections and other factors, and may be less price-sensitive. Since 1983, City Express, Wardair, Nationair, Intair, Greyhound Air, and VistaJet have each, in turn, unsuccessfully contested the eastern market by offering low-cost scheduled flights.

Average domestic air fares are now available, for both quarterly and annual data, for 10 major Canadian cities from 1983 to 1998. The average domestic air fares are the average for all coupons originating in that city, for all domestic destinations. The level of average fares can be affected by changes in travel patterns, as well as prices. The survey is based on the scheduled operations of Level I Canadian air carriers and their affiliates.

The May issue of *Aviation service bulletin* (51-004-XIB; $8/$82) is now available. A print-on-demand service is also available. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bradley Snider (613-951-0071; *snidbra@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins

April 2000

Chemical firms produced 228 486 tonnes of polyethylene synthetic resins, a 12% increase from 204 088 tonnes in April 1999.

Year-to-date production at the end of April totalled 891 613 tonnes, up 11% from 803 159 tonnes produced a year earlier.

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

Available on CANSIM: matrix 951.

The April 2000 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 or data quality of this release, contact Huguette Montcalm (613-951-9827; *monthug@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Sawmills and planing mills

March 2000 and first quarter 2000

Sawmills and planing mills shipped 6 498.3 thousand cubic metres of lumber in March, 8.6% higher than in March 1999.

First quarter shipments were 17 495.8 thousand cubic metres, an increase of 3.7% from the fourth quarter of 1999 and 6.2% higher than in the first quarter of 1999.

Even with interest rates on the rise for several months now, residential construction remained vigorous in Canada and in the United States. In Canada, housing starts increased 3.6% during the first quarter of 2000 over the fourth quarter of 1999, at 162 700 units. This was an increase of 11.2% over the first quarter of 1999.

U.S. housing starts were 1.7% higher in the first quarter of 2000 than in the fourth quarter of 1999. It was the third consecutive quarter-to-quarter increase.

This sustained activity in the construction industry translated into higher prices for softwood lumber, following a slight weakening at the end of 1999.

In the first quarter, lumber shipments increased in almost every province compared with the first quarter of 1999. Shipments were 13.0% higher in Alberta and 7.2% higher in British Columbia. Shipments from the coastal British Columbia region rose 11.6%, reflecting improved Asian economies. Only Ontario shipments were lower, by 8.9%, than those of the first quarter of 1999. Shipments from Quebec's sawmills increased 5.8% during the same period.

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

The March 2000 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 or data quality of this release, contact Gilles Simard (613-951-3516 or *simales@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Gross domestic product by industry, March 2000
Catalogue number 15-001-XIE ($11/$110).

Sawmills and planing mills, March 2000
Catalogue number 35-003-XIB ($9/$86).

Coal and coke statistics, March 2000
Catalogue number 45-002-XIB ($9/$85).

Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins, April 2000
Catalogue number 46-002-XIB ($5/$47).

Pipeline transportation of crude oil and refined petroleum products, March 2000
Catalogue number 55-001-XIB ($9/$86).

Energy statistics handbook, April 2000
Catalogue number 57-601-UPB ($387).

Energy statistics handbook, April 2000
Catalogue number 57-601-XDE ($284).

Exports by commodity, March 2000
Catalogue number 65-004-XMB ($37/$361).

Exports by commodity, March 2000
Catalogue number 65-004-XPB ($78/$773).

Exports, merchandise trade, 1999
Catalogue number 65-202-XMB ($103).

Exports, merchandise trade, 1999
Catalogue number 65-202-XPB ($258).

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

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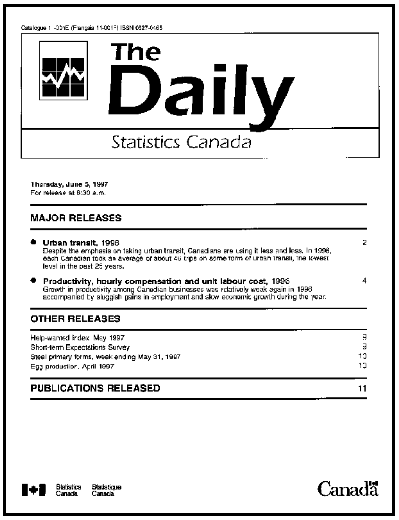

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **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.

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index, May 1997	9
Short-term Expectations Survey	9
Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997	10
Egg production, April 1997	10

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED — 11

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