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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Building permits,** March 2001 2
  The value of building permits declined for a second consecutive month in March, as construction intentions fell in both residential and non-residential sectors.

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MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

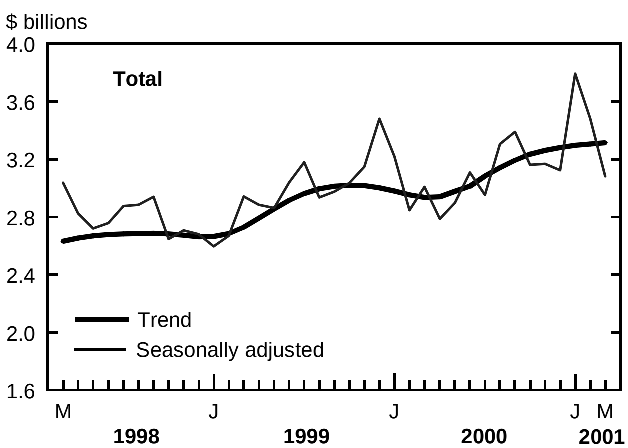
March 2001

The value of building permits declined for a second consecutive month in March, as construction intentions fell in both residential and non-residential sectors.

Builders took out $3.1 billion worth of permits, down 11.5% from February. Despite this retreat, the value of building permits issued in March surpassed the $3-billion mark for the eighth consecutive month.

Intentions in the housing sector dropped 13.5% to $1.7 billion, the result of reduced construction intentions for single-family and multi-family dwellings. The non-residential sector declined 8.8% to $1.4 billion, the result solely of a marked decline in commercial permits.

Second consecutive monthly decline in total value of permits



For the first three months of 2001, the value of building permits totalled $10.4 billion, up 14.1% over the same period in 2000. Both residential and non-residential sectors contributed to this performance, the strongest start of any year since 1990.

Regionally, the Toronto and Montreal metropolitan areas showed substantial increases on a year-to-date basis (in dollar terms), as every component in both the residential and non-residential sectors advanced. In both regions, construction intentions reached their highest level in the last 10 years for the January-to-March period.

Note to readers

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

The monthly Building and Demolitions Permits Survey covers 2,500 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, culverts) and land.

Plunge in multi-family permits

Construction intentions for multi-family dwellings were $458 million in March, a 26.6% plunge from the peak in February. The value of building permits for single-family dwellings declined 7.4% to $1.2 billion, following a 5.6% decline in January.

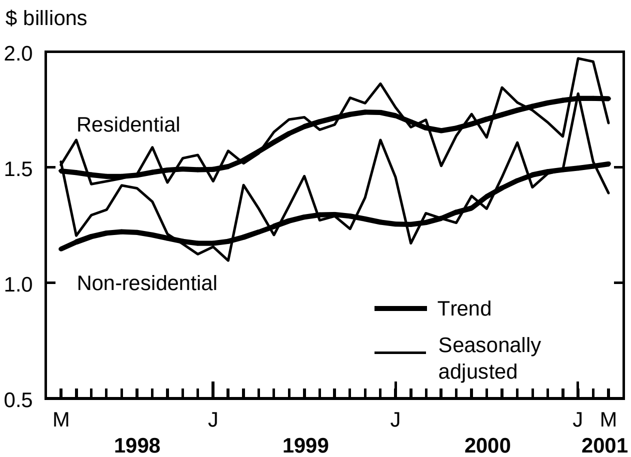
Despite two consecutive monthly declines, the outlook for the housing market is positive, as full-time employment remains high, mortgage rates are attractive and there are fewer vacant multi-family dwellings on the market. Statistics Canada's latest Survey on Private and Public Investment showed that investment in housing is expected to increase in 2001, a finding which is consistent with the higher cumulative figure for residential permits so far this year.

Provincially, the largest decline (in dollar terms) occurred in Ontario (-20.3% to $856 million), as construction intentions fell sharply for single- and multi-family dwellings. Quebec also posted declines in both single- and multi-family components (-11.6% to $256 million). On the other hand, the largest advance was in British Columbia (+4.4% to $226 million), due solely to an increase in the value of permits for multi-family dwellings.

From January to March, the value of housing permits reached $5.6 billion, up 9.4% from the same period in 2000 and the best result for the first three months of any year since 1990. This good standing has been largely the result of a robust gain in permits for multi-family dwellings (+29.9%).

Provincially, the strongest start to 2001 occurred in Ontario (+11.8% to $2.9 billion) followed by British Columbia (+27.1% to $685 million), owing in large part to significant increases in multi-family permits in the Toronto and Vancouver metropolitan areas. In contrast, Nova Scotia recorded the strongest decline (-32.8% to $91 million).

Both residential and non-residential sectors declined



Non-residential: record level on a year-to-date basis

In March, permits for non-residential projects fell 8.8% to $1.4 billion following a decline in February. However, the cumulative value for the first three months was 20.4% higher than the same period last year.

The outlook for the non-residential sector remains positive on the whole, despite a fifth consecutive quarterly decline in the Conference Board of Canada's Index of Business Confidence. Shrinking vacancy rates in many centres, record high corporate operating profits and a high industrial capacity utilization rate are factors that led the non-residential sector to a good start.

Commercial projects tumbled 17.4% to $753 million in March, the second monthly decrease in a row. Hotel construction intentions showed the most significant decline.

Industrial building intentions remain unchanged at $342 million in March. Losses in factory projects offset gains in all other industrial categories. The value of institutional permits increased 9.2% to $295 million due to plans for the construction of medical facilities.

Provincially, Ontario reported the largest decline (in dollar terms) in March (-23.5% to $505 million), due mainly to declines in all three components in the Toronto metropolitan area. The largest increase was in Alberta (+71.1%, to $268 million) where all three components showed increases.

Powered by rises in all three components, the cumulative value for the first three months of 2001 reached a record high of $4.7 billion. The largest advance was posted by the commercial component (+15.9% to $2.7 billion). Permits for industrial construction reached $1.1 billion, up 25.7%, while institutional intentions were up 28.5% to $933 million.

Among the provinces, the strong result in the Toronto metropolitan area led Ontario to the largest increase in the non-residential sector on a year-to-year basis (+34.4% to $2.0 billion). In contrast, Manitoba recorded the most significant decrease (-40.0% to $92.2 million).

Value of building permits

	Feb.[r] 2001	March[p] 2001	Feb. to Mar. 2001	Jan. to Mar. 2000	Jan. to Mar. 2001	Jan.–Mar. 2000 to Jan.–Mar. 2001
	seasonally adjusted					
Census Metropolitan Area	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
St. John's	7.7	12.2	57.9	46.4	35.1	-24.3
Halifax	25.3	15.6	-38.3	101.2	62.3	-38.5
Saint John	5.5	5.3	-3.0	15.0	15.7	4.6
Chicoutimi–Jonquière	6.7	38.8	477.6	42.5	51.7	21.8
Québec	65.8	47.6	-27.6	150.1	183.8	22.4
Sherbrooke	8.6	19.4	125.2	28.0	35.8	27.8
Trois-Rivières	9.5	5.1	-45.7	22.9	19.7	-14.1
Montréal	353.5	267.2	-24.4	780.7	1,208.7	54.8
Hull	73.5	22.8	-69.0	61.2	122.1	99.4
Ottawa	124.6	149.0	19.6	325.4	390.9	20.2
Oshawa	59.1	34.0	-42.6	143.7	122.3	-14.8
Toronto	996.5	618.8	-37.9	2,077.0	2,598.0	25.1
Hamilton	71.4	60.1	-15.9	142.5	235.6	65.3
St. Catharines–Niagara	28.6	29.7	4.0	82.0	92.3	12.5
Kitchener	67.8	39.2	-42.2	177.5	163.0	-8.1
London	29.9	58.9	97.1	109.7	148.1	35.0
Windsor	42.8	42.3	-1.1	118.4	129.3	9.2
Sudbury	4.3	4.4	2.3	7.6	12.9	69.2
Thunder Bay	1.9	14.5	651.9	19.3	25.5	32.1
Winnipeg	34.5	38.4	11.0	160.8	107.2	-33.3
Regina	10.0	10.9	9.0	54.7	52.2	-4.6
Saskatoon	14.0	30.1	114.7	99.2	71.9	-27.6
Calgary	181.8	187.7	3.2	640.5	528.7	-17.4
Edmonton	106.4	109.7	3.1	303.7	315.7	3.9
Vancouver	255.2	245.0	-4.0	743.1	736.5	-0.9
Victoria	31.3	33.0	5.4	61.2	95.2	55.5

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
Note: *Data may not add to totals due to rounding.*

Available on CANSIM: tables 260001-260008, 260010 and 260011 and matrices 80 (levels 3-7 and 33-48), 129, 137, 443, 989-995 and 4073.

With the release of CANSIM II, users can now obtain the same data as in CANSIM, but in a table format that is easier to use and more clearly presented.

The March 2001 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIE, $19/$186) will be available soon. See *How to order products.*

The April 2001 building permit estimate will be released on June 6.

To obtain data, contact Vere Clarke (613-951-6556; *clarver@statcan.ca*). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025; *saineti@statcan.ca*), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Value of building permits

	February[r] 2001	March[p] 2001	February to March 2001	January to March 2000	January to March 2001	January–March 2000 to January–March 2001
	seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Canada	**3,480.8**	**3,081.4**	**-11.5**	**9,069.3**	**10,352.5**	**14.1**
Residential	1,956.9	1,692.0	-13.5	5,138.7	5,619.9	9.4
Non-residential	1,523.8	1,389.4	-8.8	3,930.6	4,732.6	20.4
Newfoundland	12.7	18.8	47.2	65.3	55.8	-14.6
Residential	9.3	9.4	1.1	49.9	38.9	-22.1
Non-residential	3.5	9.4	171.1	15.4	16.9	9.5
Prince Edward Island	4.5	7.1	57.1	23.6	22.9	-2.7
Residential	4.3	4.1	-5.4	14.1	13.6	-3.8
Non-residential	0.2	3.0	1,213.4	9.5	9.4	-1.0
Nova Scotia	47.4	40.9	-13.7	193.4	144.0	-25.6
Residential	27.0	30.2	11.6	135.2	90.9	-32.8
Non-residential	20.3	10.7	-47.4	58.2	53.1	-8.9
New Brunswick	52.6	32.0	-39.2	110.7	121.0	9.3
Residential	21.5	20.6	-4.4	73.1	65.2	-10.9
Non-residential	31.1	11.4	-63.4	37.6	55.8	48.5
Quebec	652.6	570.8	-12.5	1,534.5	2,099.0	36.8
Residential	289.5	255.9	-11.6	814.4	931.3	14.4
Non-residential	363.1	314.9	-13.3	720.1	1,167.7	62.1
Ontario	1,734.6	1,361.3	-21.5	4,095.8	4,920.0	20.1
Residential	1,074.8	856.3	-20.3	2,583.2	2,887.3	11.8
Non-residential	659.7	505.0	-23.5	1,512.6	2,032.8	34.4
Manitoba	51.7	68.1	31.8	246.8	175.6	-28.9
Residential	24.5	28.8	17.4	93.2	83.3	-10.5
Non-residential	27.2	39.3	44.8	153.6	92.2	-40.0
Saskatchewan	51.8	59.2	14.3	215.4	189.5	-12.0
Residential	18.6	17.5	-6.3	68.9	54.2	-21.3
Non-residential	33.2	41.8	25.8	146.5	135.4	-7.6
Alberta	424.1	507.7	19.7	1,402.6	1,351.5	-3.6
Residential	267.7	240.2	-10.3	752.1	760.5	1.1
Non-residential	156.4	267.5	71.1	650.5	590.9	-9.2
British Columbia	442.9	411.1	-7.2	1,160.9	1,257.8	8.3
Residential	217.0	226.4	4.4	539.1	685.3	27.1
Non-residential	225.9	184.7	-18.2	621.8	572.4	-7.9
Yukon	4.2	2.1	-50.7	5.8	10.3	75.9
Residential	1.9	1.6	-16.3	4.2	7.0	66.9
Non-residential	2.3	0.5	-79.6	1.6	3.2	99.4
Northwest Territories	1.0	1.7	61.2	2.0	3.8	92.0
Residential	0.1	0.4	384.6	0.8	0.9	20.4
Non-residential	0.9	1.3	34.6	1.2	2.9	138.3
Nunavut	0.7	0.7	0.0	12.5	1.4	-88.6
Residential	0.7	0.7	0.0	10.7	1.4	-86.6
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	...	1.8	0.0	-100.0

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
... *Data not applicable.*
Note: *Data may not add to totals due to rounding.*

NEW PRODUCTS

Gross domestic product by industry, February 2001
Catalogue number 15-001-XIE ($11/$110).

Exports by commodity, February 2001
Catalogue number 65-004-XMB ($37/$361).

Exports by commodity, February 2001
Catalogue number 65-004-XPB ($78/$773).

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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To order a product by mail write: Statistics Canada, Circulation Management, Dissemination Division, Ottawa, K1A 0T6. Include a cheque or money order payable to **Receiver General of Canada/Publications**. Canadian customers add 7% GST and applicable PST.

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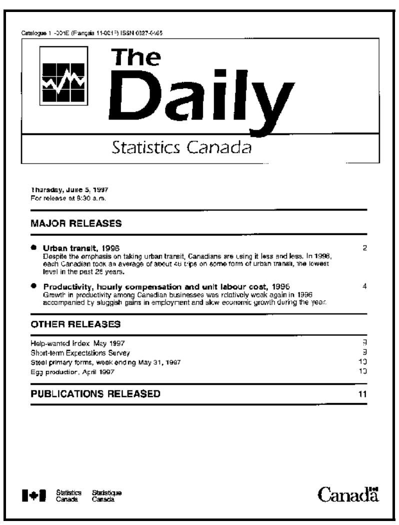

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Thursday, June 5, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **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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