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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, March 20, 2002
Released at 8:30 am Eastern time

MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

NEW PRODUCTS

Perspectives on labour and income
March 2002 online edition

The March 2002 issue of *Perspectives on labour and income*, available today, features an article examining barriers to job-related training, the groups that experience these obstacles and whether access to training has improved over time.

For more information on "Barriers to job-related training," contact Deborah Sussman, (613-951-4226; *deborah.sussman@statcan.ca*), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.

The March 2002 online edition of *Perspectives on labour and income*, Volume 3, number 3 (75-001-XIE, $5/$48) is now available. For more information, contact Henry Pold, (613-951-4608; *henry.pold@statcan.ca*), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.

MAJOR RELEASES

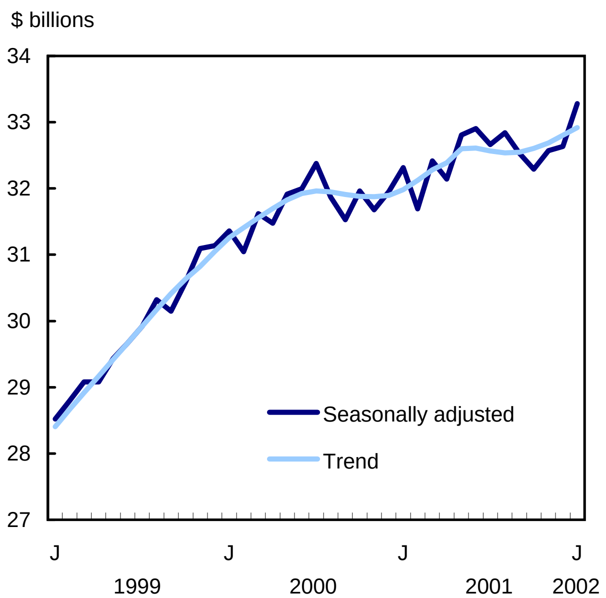
Wholesale trade

January 2002

Wholesale sales rose 2.0% to $33.3 billion in January as a result of strong sales in several sectors. Eight of the 11 sectors saw their sales advance. Particularly strong sales were reported in automotive products (+7.6%), and lumber and building materials (+5.8%), two sectors closely linked to the relatively strong housing and domestic automotive markets.

Despite the rise in January, wholesale sales have been weak since the late spring of 2001. Prior to this, sales were rising early in 2001, after levelling off in the latter half of 2000.

Wholesale sales generally weak since spring 2001



Wholesalers continued to sell some of their inventories. Inventory levels fell 0.8% to $42.3 billion, the third consecutive monthly decline, and the ninth decline since January 2001.

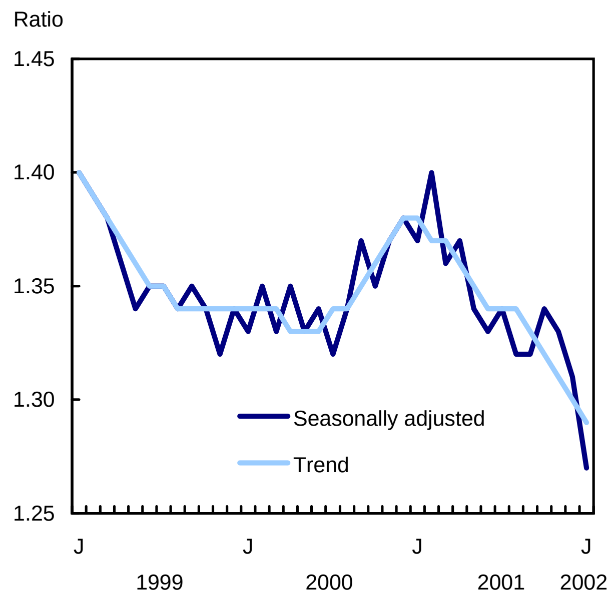
Rising sales, coupled with lower inventory levels, pushed down the wholesale inventory-to-sales ratio from 1.31 in December to 1.27 in January, its lowest since 1981, the first year for which data in this series is available. The ratio is a measure of how long it would take to deplete inventories at the current pace of sales.

Note to readers

Estimates from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey are classified according to the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

Wholesale trade estimates for February will be released April 19.

Inventory-to-sales ratio continues to decline



Automotive products and lumber and building materials lead the way

Wholesalers of automotive products reported strong January sales (+7.6%) of vehicles and automotive parts. Consumer demand for new cars has been healthy over the past few months. Wholesale sales in this sector had been weak since the summer of 2001, following rising sales earlier in that year. However, January's rally has returned wholesale sales to August levels, slightly down from the June record high reached just prior to the slowdown.

Wholesalers of lumber and building materials also benefited from continued strong demand in January (+5.8%); it was their third monthly increase in four months. During that period, sales rose 11.3%. The run-up at the end of 2001 and beginning of 2002 continued a period of generally rising sales that was sustained throughout 2001. Sales have surpassed the peak attained at the end of 1999. Throughout 2000, sales mainly fell. A healthy construction industry, aided by a strong housing market, record low interest rates, and a mild winter in eastern Canada, contributed to this increase.

Other wholesale sectors report healthy gains

In addition to the strong wholesale sales in automotive products and lumber and building materials, healthy sales were reported in computers and electronics (+2.1%), the other products category (+1.9%), and beverages, drugs and tobacco (+1.8%). The other products category includes wholesalers of seeds and seed processing, industrial and household chemicals, and stationery and office supplies.

Farm machinery (-9.4%), apparel and dry goods (-7.7%), and industrial machinery (-1.2%) all fell in January, after healthy December sales.

Four provinces decline — farm machinery and supplies bring down Alberta and Saskatchewan sales

Wholesalers in four provinces observed lower sales: Saskatchewan (-6.1%), Nova Scotia (-1.2%), Alberta (-1.1%), and Quebec (-0.4%).

Wholesalers in Saskatchewan were affected mainly by lower sales in both the farm machinery sector and the other products category, which contains a large percentage of agricultural and farm-related supplies. Wholesale sales in Saskatchewan have been generally falling since the spring of 2001, when hot and dry conditions plagued farmers on the Prairies.

Alberta wholesalers were also hurt by lower sales in the farm machinery sector and the other products category. In addition, the lower sales reported in industrial machinery, a sector that accounts for approximately 20% of wholesale trade in Alberta, also affected wholesalers. In Alberta, wholesale sales have been generally climbing for several years, despite January's drop and the slight weakening in overall sales in the fall of 2001.

Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0001 and 081-0002.

The January 2002 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008-XIB, $14/$140) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

For data or general information, contact the Client Services Unit (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Alexander Hays (613-951-3552; *haysale@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. □

Wholesale merchants' sales and inventories

	January 2001	October 2001r	November 2001r	December 2001r	January 2002p	December 2001 to January 2002	January 2001 to January 2002
	Seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Sales, all trade groups	**32,315**	**32,293**	**32,570**	**32,635**	**33,281**	**2.0**	**3.0**
Food products	5,140	5,481	5,417	5,476	5,507	0.6	7.1
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,141	2,388	2,434	2,507	2,551	1.8	19.2
Apparel and dry goods	572	598	581	627	578	-7.7	1.1
Household goods	887	857	858	884	887	0.4	0.0
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	5,913	5,986	6,078	5,842	6,284	7.6	6.3
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	2,021	1,952	1,925	1,890	1,908	0.9	-5.6
Lumber and building materials	2,316	2,461	2,507	2,487	2,630	5.8	13.6
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	596	670	671	740	671	-9.4	12.6
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	5,028	4,960	4,899	4,970	4,908	-1.2	-2.4
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	3,054	2,489	2,564	2,585	2,640	2.1	-13.5
Other products	4,647	4,452	4,636	4,627	4,717	1.9	1.5
Sales by province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	230	217	217	206	209	1.1	-9.1
Prince Edward Island	51	54	56	55	57	3.8	10.5
Nova Scotia	571	589	599	598	590	-1.2	3.4
New Brunswick	379	434	408	402	405	0.8	6.9
Quebec	6,744	6,759	6,737	6,772	6,748	-0.4	0.1
Ontario	16,002	15,668	15,961	15,824	16,475	4.1	3.0
Manitoba	962	976	1,033	1,052	1,067	1.4	10.9
Saskatchewan	976	978	991	1,103	1,036	-6.1	6.2
Alberta	3,188	3,396	3,378	3,451	3,414	-1.1	7.1
British Columbia	3,181	3,197	3,162	3,143	3,251	3.4	2.2
Yukon	11	11	10	9	10	2.9	-8.1
Northwest Territories	17	14	17	18	18	0.5	8.9
Nunavut	3	1	2	2	2	-0.6	-40.7
Inventories, all trade groups	**44,167**	**43,313**	**43,275**	**42,687**	**42,333**	**-0.8**	**-4.2**
Food products	3,044	3,190	3,196	3,251	3,256	0.1	7.0
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,680	2,817	2,918	2,920	2,902	-0.6	8.3
Apparel and dry goods	1,130	1,253	1,231	1,210	1,222	1.0	8.1
Household goods	1,666	1,524	1,492	1,445	1,403	-2.9	-15.8
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,827	6,533	6,481	6,214	6,172	-0.7	-9.6
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	3,993	3,585	3,592	3,552	3,491	-1.7	-12.6
Lumber and building materials	4,061	4,092	4,070	3,987	3,934	-1.3	-3.1
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	1,883	1,827	1,810	1,785	1,780	-0.3	-5.5
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	11,074	10,914	10,934	10,799	10,675	-1.1	-3.6
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,245	1,924	1,906	1,868	1,843	-1.4	-17.9
Other products	5,564	5,653	5,646	5,656	5,657	0.0	1.7

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

■

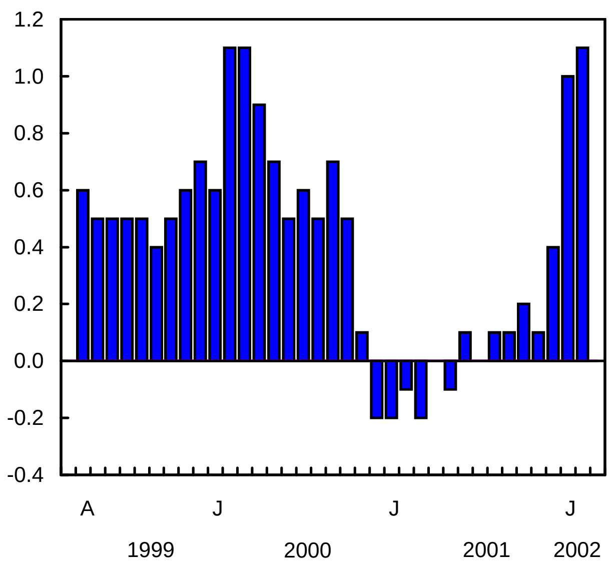
Composite Index

February 2002

The growth of the leading indicator remained brisk at 1.1% in February, after a revised 1.0% gain in January. These were the largest gains since early in 2000. Seven of the 10 components rose and 2 fell, the same as in January, representing the same sources of strength and weakness. Household demand in Canada and the US leading indicator continued to accelerate, but manufacturing lagged behind.

Composite index

Smoothed % change



Household spending advanced further at the turn of the year, taking advantage of low interest rates and prices. Personal services continued to propel employment up strongly, as travellers from abroad returned. Spending on household and other durable goods such as autos posted the best gains in a year and a half. The growth of the housing index slowed slightly, largely due to a drop in the multiple units component, which is volatile on a month-to-month basis. Sales of existing homes changed little from January's record level, but still remained about one-quarter above where they stood in August.

Manufacturing continued to be the source of all the components that fell. Notably, the ratio of shipments to stocks dropped for a fifteenth consecutive month. New orders for durable goods also continued to drop, but the average work week was unchanged.

The US leading indicator improved again, with a pattern of strengths and weaknesses similar to Canada's. Six of the 10 components were up; those related to household demand reinforced the gains that began earlier in financial markets.

Available on CANSIM: table 377-0003.

For more information on the economy, the March 2002 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, $23/$227) will be available March 21. 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

	September 2001	October 2001	November 2001	December 2001	January 2002	February 2002	Last month of data available
							% change
Composite leading indicator (1992=100)	**166.4**	**166.7**	**166.8**	**167.4**	**169.0**	**170.9**	**1.1**
Housing index (1992=100)[1]	109.5	111.6	112.6	116.2	122.0	127.5	4.5
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,477	2,476	2,482	2,489	2,503	2,518	0.6
TSE 300 stock price index (1975=1,000)	7,565	7,310	7,248	7,248	7,297	7,457	2.2
Money supply, M1 ($ millions, 1992)[2]	97,310	98,836	100,701	102,893	105,213	107,313	2.0
US Composite Leading Indicator (1992=100)[3]	107.6	107.7	107.7	107.8	108.1	108.6	0.5
Manufacturing							
Average work week (hours)	39.1	39.1	39.0	38.9	38.9	38.9	0.0
New orders, durables ($ millions, 1992)[4]	21,576	21,444	21,071	20,445	20,170	19,874	-1.5
Shipments/inventories of finished goods[4]	1.70	1.69	1.68	1.66	1.65	1.64	-0.01[5]
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales ($ millions, 1992)[4]	1,627	1,628	1,628	1,640	1,653	1,674	1.3
Other durable goods sales ($ millions, 1992)[4]	7,207	7,224	7,155	7,161	7,233	7,353	1.7
Unsmoothed composite	166.2	166.4	167.4	170.1	174.7	176.0	0.7

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

Monthly Survey of Large Retailers
January 2002

The group of large retailers started the year off well; their January sales totalled $5.9 billion, up 10.0% from $5.3 billion in January 2001.

The gain in January's sales was broadly based; all major commodity groups were up strongly for the group of large retailers compared with January 2001. Sporting and leisure goods posted the largest year-over-year increase. (Data in this release have not been seasonally adjusted. All percentages represent year-over-year changes.)

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	Dec. 2001[r]	Jan. 2001	Jan. 2002[p]	Jan. 2001 to Jan. 2002
	Unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Commodities				
Food and beverages	2,625	1,989	2,151	8.2
Clothing, footwear and accessories	2,300	821	891	8.5
Home furnishings and electronics	1,889	820	936	14.1
Health and personal care products	785	476	538	13.1
Housewares	450	282	306	8.6
Sporting and leisure goods	731	212	249	17.6
Hardware and lawn and garden products	276	142	155	9.0
All other goods and services	949	599	649	8.3
Total	**10,005**	**5,341**	**5,875**	**10.0**

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

In January, sales of sporting and leisure goods rose an exceptional 17.6% from January 2001. Sales of exercise and fitness equipment, pre-recorded audio and video tapes and discs, and ski equipment all increased by more than 20%. Toy sales, which were basically flat in 2001, were up a strong 16.0% in January from January 2001.

Home furnishings and electronics sales posted another strong month in January. This was the first time since this survey started in 1997 that consumer purchases of home furnishings and electronics from the group of large retailers exceeded purchases of clothing, footwear and accessories. Some of the strongest commodities included major appliances, bedding and linens, computer hardware and software, and televisions and audio-video equipment. More modest gains were seen for telephones and home office equipment (+4.0%), and small electrical appliance sales (+7.0%).

Clothing, footwear and accessories for the group were up 8.5% in January — the largest year-over-year gain since April 2001. Footwear sales (+13.6%) were particularly strong. Only sales of boy's clothing and women's dresses declined.

Within the hardware, lawn and garden category, sales of home renovation products such as paint, wallpaper, and tools were up strongly in January compared with January 2001.

Note: The Monthly Survey of Large Retailers covers some of Canada's largest clothing, home furnishings, electronics, sporting goods, food, and general merchandise retailers.

Available on CANSIM: table 080-0009.

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 Elton Cryderman (613-951-0669; *elton.cryderman@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. ■

Pulpwood and wood residue statistics
January 2002

Pulpwood receipts in January totalled 3 779 395 cubic metres, down 16.1% from 4 505 257 cubic metres in January 2001. Wood residue receipts fell 6.8%, from 7 497 645 cubic metres in January 2001 to 6 987 268 cubic metres in January 2002. Consumption of pulpwood and wood residue totalled 10 194 694 cubic metres, down 4.7% from 10 702 256 cubic metres in January 2001.

The closing inventory of pulpwood and wood residue totalled 12 274 491 cubic metres in January, down 14.5% from 14 357 345 cubic metres in January 2001.

Figures for 2001 have been revised.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0008.

The January 2002 issue of *Pulpwood and wood residue statistics*, Vol. 45, no. 1 (25-001-XIB, $6/$55) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For general information or to order data, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *manufact@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Sara Breen (613-951-3521; *sara.breen@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

For-hire motor carriers of freight, top carriers

Fourth quarter 2001

The top 82 for-hire motor carriers of freight (Canada-based trucking companies earning $25 million or more annually) generated operating revenues of $1.76 billion and expenses of $1.66 billion in the fourth quarter. Average per-carrier revenue slipped 0.5% to $21.5 million compared with the fourth quarter of 2000, and average expenses were down 1.0% to $20.2 million. This financial situation of the top for-hire carriers is similar to that in the fourth quarter of 2000.

The top for-hire carriers' operating ratio (operating expenses divided by operating revenues) was 0.942, compared with 0.947 in the fourth quarter of 2000. A ratio of greater than 1.00 represents an operating loss.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gilles Paré (613-951-2517; fax: 613-951-0579; (*paregil@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

Coal mining

2000

The economic downturn in Asian markets led to lower activity by the coal mining industry in 2000 for the third consecutive year. Coal production for the year totalled 69 163 kilotonnes, down 4.6% from 1999, and the value of coal production dropped 3.4% from 1999 to $1.5 billion.

Exports of coal fell 4.3% from 1999 to 32 082 kilotonnes. Japan was the destination for 42.6% of Canada's coal exports. The rest of Asia made up 23.8% of the foreign market for Canadian coal, and Europe, 18.0%. Most of the exports are from British Columbia and are shipped from Vancouver.

Employment in coal mines decreased 17.1% to 5 850 employees, and wages and salaries decreased 11.5% to $376 million in 2000. Employment in mines decreased in all producing provinces except New Brunswick. In the Atlantic provinces, employment declined 37.7% as electric power generators replaced domestic coal with imports from the United States.

The 2000 issue of *Coal mining* (26-206-XIB, $19) will be available shortly. See *How to order products*.

To order data, or for general information, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *energ@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Melanie Murray (613-951-3560; *melanie.murray@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Rural and small town Canada analysis bulletin, Vol. 3, no. 7, 1980–2000
Catalogue number 21-006-XIE (free).

Pulpwood and wood residue statistics, Vol. 45, no. 1, January 2002
Catalogue number 25-001-XIB ($6/$55).

Private and public investment in Canada, Intentions 2002
Catalogue number 61-205-XIB ($35).

Consumer Price Index, Vol. 81, no. 2, February 2002
Catalogue number 62-001-XIB ($8/$77).
Available at 7 am Thursday, March 21

Consumer Price Index, Vol. 81, no. 2, February 2002
Catalogue number 62-001-XPB ($11/$103).
Available at 7 am Thursday, March 21

Imports by commodity, Vol. 59, no. 1, January 2002
Catalogue number 65-007-XMB ($37/$361).

Imports by commodity, Vol. 59, no. 1, January 2002
Catalogue number 65-007-XPB ($78/$773).

Perspectives on labour and income, Vol. 3, no. 3, March 2002
Catalogue number 75-001-XIE ($5/$48).

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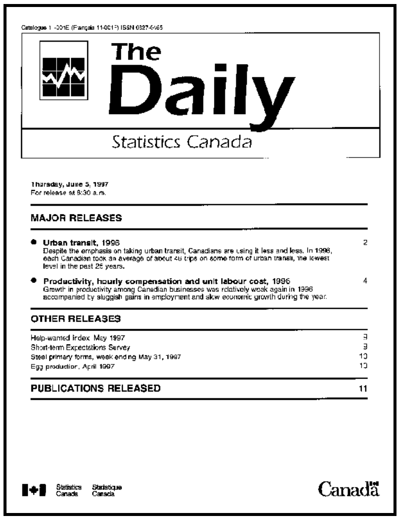

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The Daily

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 45 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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