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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Tuesday, May 6, 2003
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MAJOR RELEASES

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NEW PRODUCTS

MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits
March 2003

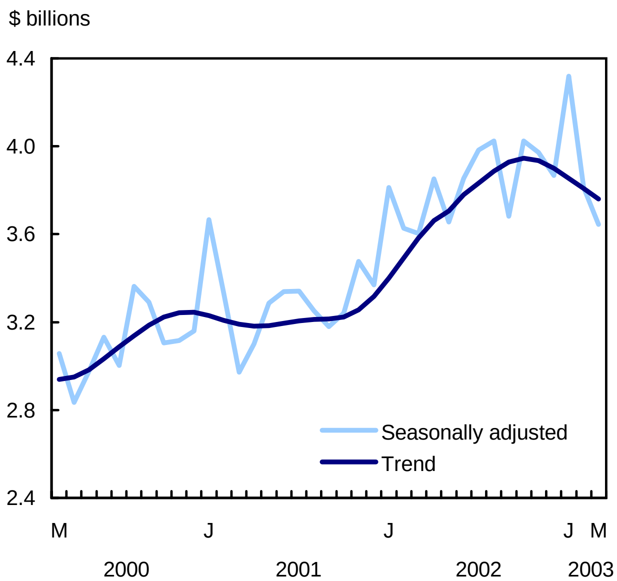
The value of building permits issued across Canada declined 4.4% in March to $3.6 billion, after falling 11.7% in February.

In spite of this, the storm of permits issued in January has left the sector buoyant and off to a record start, with first quarter construction intentions amounting to $11.8 billion.

January's record level of $4.3 billion in building permits was more than enough to push construction intentions to the first-quarter record. The level for the first three months was up 6.6% from the first quarter of 2002 and 18.1% from the first quarter of 2001.

Municipalities issued $2.4 billion in residential permits in March, up 3.1% from February. The value of non-residential permits declined 15.9% to $1.3 billion, their lowest level in 11 months, mainly the result of a drop in institutional construction intentions.

Total value of permits in decline for a second month



Nationally, construction hotspots included the census metropolitan areas of Calgary and Toronto, where a buoyant demand for commercial space was the driving factor behind the growth in permit values in the first quarter. In contrast, the biggest decline occurred in Thunder Bay, where building permits fell by $54 million as a result of declining investment in institutional structures.

Continued favourable investment intentions in the construction sector are a positive sign for the Canadian economy in the coming months. Investments in construction tend to propel purchases in many areas of the domestic economy.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.*
>
> *The Building and Demolitions Permits Monthly Survey covers 2,350 municipalities representing 95% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 5% 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 (for example, waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.*

Residential: Single-family permits slide for second straight month

Builders took out $680 million worth of permits for multi-family dwellings in March, up 26.6% from the 14-month low in February. More than $400 million, or 60.3% of that value, was attributable to permits for apartments.

In contrast, demand for single-family dwellings slipped 4.0% to $1.7 billion, the second straight monthly decline and the lowest monthly level since July 2002.

Even so, permits for single-family dwellings set a first-quarter record of nearly $5.4 billion, up 1.9% from the first quarter of 2002, in the wake of extremely strong levels in January. For multi-family permits, the first-quarter level reached $2.1 billion, up 21.4%.

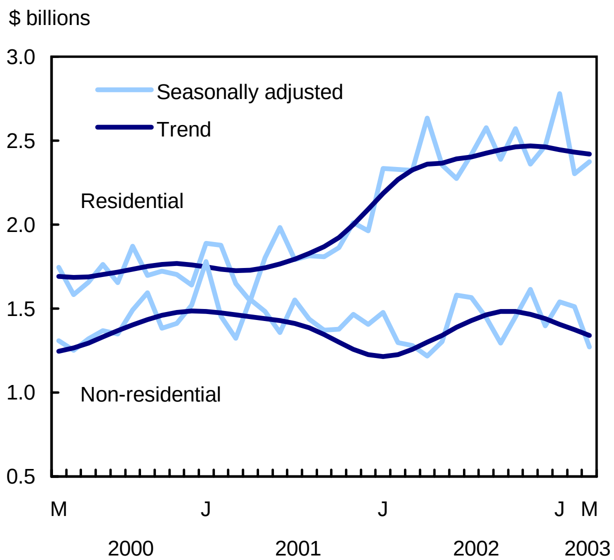
Overall, municipalities issued $7.5 billion in residential permits in the first quarter, also a record.

January's high levels were likely precipitated by a rush among potential homeowners to lock in mortgages before interest rates rose. While the torrid demand for residential dwellings has cooled somewhat from the beginning of the year, the sector remains healthy. Canadians have enjoyed sustained employment growth, particularly in full-time jobs. Demographic trends, strength in earnings, low rental vacancy levels and reasonable mortgage rates have led to a wave of Canadians opting for home ownership.

On a provincial basis, the biggest monthly gain in terms of dollar value for residential permits occurred in British Columbia (+48.7% to $437 million), primarily the result of proposed apartment construction. It was followed by Ontario (+3.0% to $994 million), where a gain in single-family units more than offset a decline in the multi-family domain.

The biggest decline was in Quebec (-9.0% to $462 million), where a small gain in multi-family permits could not offset a slump in single-family permits.

The non-residential and residential sectors move in opposite directions



Non-residential: Only gains in commercial component

In March, the value of non-residential intentions fell 15.9% from February to $1.3 billion.

The commercial component was the only one to show an increase in the level of permits in March. Permits for commercial projects reached $685 million, up 7.8% from February, driven mainly by the hotel and restaurant and laboratory categories.

Institutional intentions plunged 43.7% to $296 million in March, the lowest level since April 2002. The medical category was the largest contributor to this decline, after a high level in February. Ontario recorded the largest decrease in dollar terms for this component (-45.2% to $185 million).

Intentions for industrial construction declined 17.4% to $289 million, with manufacturing buildings showing the biggest drop. Ontario recorded the largest decrease (-38.1% to $148 million), the result of a decline in manufacturing projects.

Regionally, 15 census metropolitan areas recorded monthly declines in the value of non-residential permits, the two largest occurring in Toronto and Hamilton.

Among the provinces, decreases in the industrial and institutional components led Ontario to the largest drop in March in the non-residential sector (-30.0% to $564 million). In contrast, a large gain in the industrial component led Nova Scotia to March's strongest increase (+130.9% to $42 million).

The non-residential sector has seen mixed signals from both businesses and consumers. Retail trade was up for a third consecutive month in February. Conversely, in the fourth quarter of 2002, industries lowered their use of production capacity. Also, increasing vacancy rates in office buildings across the main census metropolitan areas could have hurt the non-residential sector.

In addition, although opinions on production prospects improved slightly, the mood among manufacturers, as measured by Statistics Canada's Business Conditions Survey, continued to be guarded. Producers indicated some lower satisfaction with the levels of new and unfilled orders for the first quarter.

For the first quarter, municipalities issued $4.3 billion in permits for the non-residential sector, up 6.6% from the same period of 2002. Most of the gain was related to increases in the commercial (+7.9%) and industrial (+24.1%) components. The institutional component recorded a 5.8% decline.

Among the provinces, the largest quarterly decline in the non-residential sector was in Quebec (-10.2% to $804 million), mainly the result of lower commercial and institutional construction intentions.

In contrast, fuelled by a surge in the industrial component in the Oshawa area and by the industrial and commercial components in the Toronto area, the strongest gain occurred in Ontario (+11.9% to $2.1 billion).

Available on CANSIM: tables 026-0001 to 026-0008, 026-0010 and 026-0015.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2802.

The March 2003 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIE, $14/$145) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

The April 2003 building permit estimate will be released on June 5.

To order data, contact Vere Clarke (613-951-6556 or 1-800-579-8533 (*clarver@statcan.ca*). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Erik Dorff (613-951-4901; *erik.dorff@statcan.ca*), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Value of building permits

Census metropolitan area	February 2003[r]	March 2003[p]	February to March 2003	January to March 2002	January to March 2003	January–March 2002 to January–March 2003
	Seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
St. John's	19.0	13.9	-26.8	52.7	55.1	4.4
Halifax	41.9	49.3	17.7	99.5	121.2	21.8
Saint John	6.9	5.8	-16.6	19.6	21.6	10.7
Saguenay	6.8	9.0	32.4	29.5	21.1	-28.6
Québec	56.9	99.7	75.3	156.1	264.7	69.6
Sherbrooke	13.3	16.7	26.0	57.8	46.2	-20.0
Trois-Rivières	10.8	10.9	0.2	31.4	31.6	0.6
Montréal	423.9	332.5	-21.6	1,126.8	1,173.3	4.1
Gatineau	23.3	30.1	29.4	129.7	104.4	-19.5
Ottawa	132.2	153.6	16.2	323.5	397.6	22.9
Kingston	9.4	10.5	12.2	33.4	44.1	31.9
Oshawa	165.2	72.8	-55.9	159.2	283.2	77.8
Toronto	691.9	641.8	-7.2	2,113.2	2,288.1	8.3
Hamilton	173.0	52.8	-69.5	319.3	349.3	9.4
St. Catharines–Niagara	43.5	30.8	-29.1	174.5	138.4	-20.7
Kitchener	82.0	79.9	-2.6	252.6	258.6	2.4
London	55.1	71.8	30.3	159.9	174.5	9.1
Windsor	64.5	44.6	-30.8	193.9	166.9	-13.9
Sudbury	5.4	11.8	119.5	11.9	18.7	56.5
Thunder Bay	9.5	8.2	-14.3	74.2	20.1	-72.9
Winnipeg	51.0	65.4	28.3	116.0	160.3	38.1
Regina	28.2	12.5	-55.5	34.6	56.7	63.6
Saskatoon	22.3	9.6	-56.9	89.2	74.4	-16.6
Calgary	298.4	208.4	-30.2	615.8	798.2	29.6
Edmonton	124.1	141.6	14.1	424.0	445.4	5.0
Abbotsford	14.2	24.8	74.0	39.3	53.4	35.8
Vancouver	208.3	333.9	60.3	736.6	857.8	16.5
Victoria	46.6	28.4	-39.1	117.7	129.8	10.3

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

Value of building permits

Provinces and territories	February 2003r	March 2003p	February to March 2003	January to March 2002	January to March 2003	January–March 2002 to January–March 2003
	Seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Canada	**3,812.8**	**3,644.3**	**-4.4**	**11,042.2**	**11,775.4**	**6.6**
Residential	2,301.7	2,374.1	3.1	6,987.8	7,454.9	6.7
Non-residential	1,511.0	1,270.2	-15.9	4,054.4	4,320.5	6.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	26.2	23.4	-10.6	74.2	82.1	10.7
Residential	17.9	15.2	-15.4	55.5	54.6	-1.7
Non-residential	8.2	8.2	-0.3	18.7	27.5	47.4
Prince Edward Island	7.1	12.2	71.7	26.9	27.0	0.0
Residential	6.7	7.7	15.7	21.7	20.2	-6.7
Non-residential	0.4	4.5	925.7	5.3	6.7	27.8
Nova Scotia	70.4	82.8	17.5	192.2	214.2	11.4
Residential	52.0	40.4	-22.4	147.3	135.5	-8.0
Non-residential	18.4	42.4	130.9	44.9	78.7	75.1
New Brunswick	41.2	52.0	26.3	144.3	133.4	-7.5
Residential	25.0	37.1	48.6	111.5	94.2	-15.6
Non-residential	16.2	14.9	-7.9	32.7	39.3	19.9
Quebec	770.1	743.6	-3.4	2,167.1	2,374.6	9.6
Residential	508.5	463.0	-9.0	1,270.8	1,570.2	23.6
Non-residential	261.6	280.6	7.3	896.2	804.4	-10.2
Ontario	1,771.3	1,558.5	-12.0	5,068.1	5,298.1	4.5
Residential	965.9	995.0	3.0	3,190.9	3,197.6	0.2
Non-residential	805.4	563.5	-30.0	1,877.3	2,100.5	11.9
Manitoba	77.8	85.8	10.3	233.9	231.2	-1.1
Residential	42.2	36.8	-12.8	100.1	125.7	25.6
Non-residential	35.6	49.0	37.7	133.8	105.4	-21.2
Saskatchewan	68.7	37.9	-44.8	174.2	191.9	10.1
Residential	32.7	17.8	-45.5	62.8	84.1	33.9
Non-residential	36.0	20.1	-44.3	111.4	107.8	-3.3
Alberta	575.7	482.3	-16.2	1,660.2	1,692.3	1.9
Residential	355.5	319.1	-10.2	1,140.0	1,071.5	-6.0
Non-residential	220.2	163.1	-25.9	520.2	620.8	19.3
British Columbia	401.7	555.7	38.3	1,267.4	1,514.2	19.5
Residential	293.9	437.1	48.7	879.6	1,092.7	24.2
Non-residential	107.7	118.6	10.1	387.8	421.5	8.7
Yukon	1.2	6.5	443.6	5.1	8.9	76.5
Residential	0.6	2.0	211.1	4.4	3.3	-24.6
Non-residential	0.6	4.6	697.9	0.7	5.6	749.8
Northwest Territories	1.5	2.5	71.3	25.4	6.4	-74.9
Residential	0.7	2.1	185.8	0.9	4.4	408.5
Non-residential	0.7	0.4	-40.4	24.5	2.0	-92.0
Nunavut	0.0	1.1	...	3.3	1.1	-68.2
Residential	0.0	0.9	...	2.4	0.9	-64.0
Non-residential	0.0	0.2	...	0.9	0.2	-79.6

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

■

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index

April 2003

The Help-wanted Index remained virtually unchanged in April, decreasing only 0.1% from March. Fluctuations were small in all provinces, rising or falling by less than 1%. The Index has been in decline since June 2002.

Help-wanted Index
(1996=100)

	April 2003	March 2003	April 2002	March to April 2003	April 2002 to April 2003
	Seasonally adjusted and smoothed			% change	
Canada	**110.8**	**110.9**	**127.3**	**-0.1**	**-13.0**
Newfoundland and Labrador	148.3	148.2	176.1	0.1	-15.8
Prince Edward Island	168.1	168.6	194.9	-0.3	-13.8
Nova Scotia	119.8	120.3	132.2	-0.4	-9.4
New Brunswick	151.6	151.9	160.8	-0.2	-5.7
Quebec	105.6	105.7	120.5	-0.1	-12.4
Ontario	116.4	116.8	133.3	-0.3	-12.7
Manitoba	133.0	133.3	145.4	-0.2	-8.5
Saskatchewan	117.3	117.4	129.7	-0.1	-9.6
Alberta	123.0	123.0	136.8	0.0	-10.1
British Columbia	79.6	80.2	95.5	-0.7	-16.6

Note: Effective today, Statistics Canada terminates the Help-Wanted Index (HWI). Previously published data will continue to be available for historical purposes, but there will be no further updates and revisions. For this release, figures back to January 2000 have been slightly adjusted as a result of this year's annual revision.

Statistics Canada strives to maintain a relevant and cost-effective labour statistics program. In setting program priorities in a time of cost reduction, programs and outputs have been evaluated on the basis of a balanced assessment of their quality and utility in consultation with the user community.

The HWI was long viewed by users as a proxy measure for unmet labour demand and an indicator of the near-term direction of the labour market. However, many users have expressed concern over its performance in recent years, especially in light of the growing use of the Internet by employers as a means of posting job openings.

For more information, contact Jamie Brunet (613-951-6684; *jamie.brunet@statcan.ca*), Labour Statistics Division.

Available on CANSIM: table 277-0002.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2606.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-866-873-8788; 613-951-4090; *labour@statcan.ca*), Labour Statistics Division. ■

Monthly railway carloadings

February 2003

The freight loaded by railways in Canada in February totalled 17.4 million metric tonnes (excluding intermodal traffic), down 4.7% from February 2002. The intermodal tonnage, represented by containers on flat cars and trailers on flat cars, rose 12.7% from February 2002 to 1.9 million metric tonnes.

Available on CANSIM: table 404-0002.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2732.

The February 2003 issue of *Monthly railway carloadings*, Vol. 80, no. 2 (52-001-XIE, $8/$77) 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 Jean-Robert Larocque (1-866-500-8400; fax: 613-951-0009; *transportationstatistics@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

Shipments of office furniture products

December 2002

Data on shipments of office furniture products are now available for December.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2161.

The December 2002 issue of *Shipments of office furniture products*, Vol. 31, no. 2 (35-006-XIB, $11/$21) 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 the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *manufact@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Shipments of office furniture products, December 2002, Vol. 31, no. 2
Catalogue number 35-006-XIB ($11/$21).

Monthly railway carloadings, February 2003, Vol. 80, no. 2
Catalogue number 52-001-XIE ($8/$77).

Energy statistics handbook, Fourth quarter 2002
Catalogue number 57-601-XCB ($150).

Energy statistics handbook, Fourth quarter 2002
Catalogue number 57-601-XIE ($35/$100).

Restaurant, caterer and tavern statistics, February 2003, Vol. 35, no. 2
Catalogue number 63-011-XIE ($6/$55).

Canada's international transactions in securities, February 2003, Vol. 69, no. 2
Catalogue number 67-002-XIE ($14/$132).

New evidence on the determinant of training in Canadian business locations, The evolving workplace series, no. 5
Catalogue number 71-584-MIE (free).

New evidence on the determinant of training in Canadian business locations, The evolving workplace series, no. 5
Catalogue number 71-584-MPE ($15).

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

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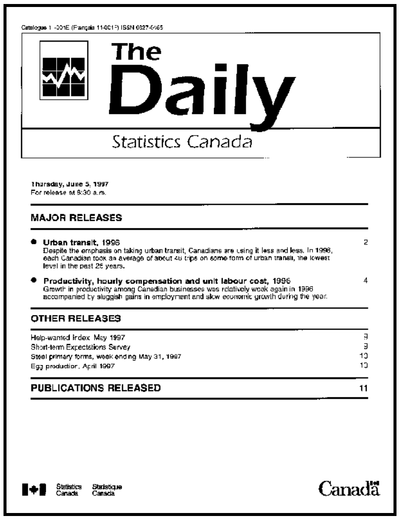

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The Daily

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 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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