



# The Daily

## Statistics Canada

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

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### MAJOR RELEASES

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- **Wholesale trade, April 2004** 3  
Wholesale sales posted a 1.0% gain in April, a second consecutive monthly increase. The strong performance of the past 2 months contrasts with the previous 12 months, a generally lacklustre period for wholesale trade.

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#### Education Matters

June 2004

The second issue of Statistics Canada's new online publication, *Education Matters: Insights on Education, Learning and Training in Canada*, contains two articles, one examining French immersion programs in schools and the other graduates from the class of 2000.

"French immersion 30 years later" looks at the reading achievement of 15-year-old students enrolled in immersion programs compared with those who were not. "Class of 2000: How are they faring two years later?" examines the employment, earnings and debt status in 2002 of college and university students who graduated in 2000.

In addition, this issue of *Education Matters* is the first to provide updates to education indicators contained in *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Indicators Program*.

*Education Matters* is a free online publication released every two months. It is a source of summary information on issues relating to education, training and learning, as well as a key point of access to data and analytical output relating to education. It is an invaluable research tool for policy analysts, researchers, academics and journalists and a key source of information for teachers, parents and many others.

It also links electronically to a wide variety of data, news on education, learning resources and tables, charts and analysis.

The second issue of *Education Matters: Insights on Education, learning and training in Canada* (81-004-XIE free) is now available on our website. From the *Our products and services* page, under *Browse our Internet publications*, choose *Free*, then *Education*.

For more information, contact Client Services (1 800 307-3382 or 613-951-7608; fax: 613-951-9040; TTY: 1 800 363-7629; [educationstats@statcan.ca](mailto:educationstats@statcan.ca)), Centre for Education Statistics.



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## MAJOR RELEASES

### Wholesale trade

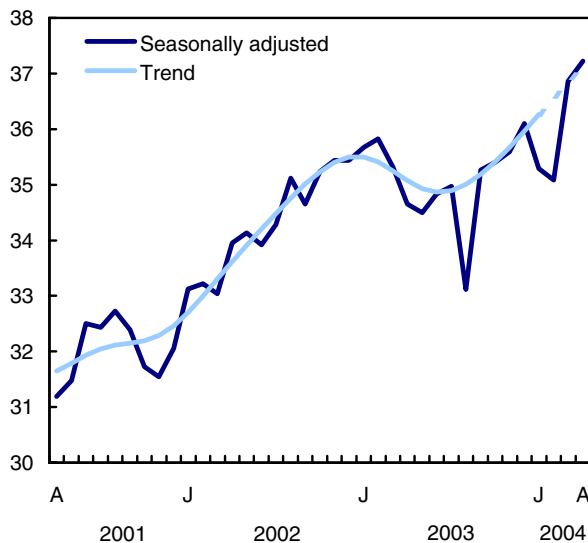
April 2004

Wholesale sales posted a 1.0% gain in April; wholesalers sold \$37.2 billion worth of goods and services. This was a second consecutive monthly increase. After a poor start in the first two months of the year, sales have made up lost ground.

The strong performance of the past 2 months contrasts with the previous 12, when wholesale trade was generally lacklustre owing to declining motor vehicle sales. Prior to this, wholesale sales went through a strong period of growth, which ran from the fall of 2001 to February 2003.

#### Wholesale sales rebound

\$ billions



As with March's rise, April's growth was largely attributable to motor vehicles (+4.0%). Increases were also registered in 8 of the other 14 trade groups, which have been newly defined in accordance to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The most notable increases were seen in the other products category, such as chemicals and other agricultural supplies, paper and disposable plastic products, (+5.1%), as well as in home and personal products (+2.0%). Food products (-1.6%) and computers and other electronic equipment (-2.2%) registered the largest decreases.

#### Note to readers

Beginning with this release, the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey will publish its estimates based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS 2002). Some examples of changes include the transfer of building supply and home centres to Retail Trade and of establishments servicing machinery and equipment to the Service Industries.

The NAICS-based estimates are not comparable with the previously published estimates based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) of 1980. Therefore, in order to facilitate this transition, NAICS-based historical series from January 1993 to March 2004 have been produced. For a description of methodology on the NAICS based Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, please follow the link to Definitions, data sources and methods at the end of this release.

For information on the wholesale trade industry classification under NAICS 2002, please go to the Definitions, data sources and methods page of our website, and select the Industry link found under the Standard classifications section.

#### Motor vehicle sales take off

Reflecting strong sales of new vehicles in dealers' showrooms since the start of the year, wholesale sales of motor vehicles advanced 4.0%, a second consecutive monthly increase. Wholesale sales of motor vehicles have seen a slight rise since September 2003. Prior to this, automotive wholesale sales contracted sharply, starting in February 2003.

#### Sales in the other products category post robust growth for a second consecutive month

Wholesalers of "other products" saw a second month of robust growth; sales gained 5.1%. As in March, this sector benefited from rising sales of chemicals and other agricultural supplies.

#### Sales of food products decline

Sales of food products declined 1.6% in April, in contrast with March. After a period of growth extending over several years, this sector has recorded generally declining sales since the start of 2003.

#### Only three provinces post gains above the average

Among the provinces, only Manitoba (+3.1%), British Columbia (+2.4%) and Ontario (+2.0%) posted gains greater than the average. The growth registered in Manitoba and British Columbia was largely attributable to the other products category (including chemicals and other agricultural supplies, paper and disposable plastic products), as well as machinery and equipment.

Ontario mainly benefited from increased sales in the other products category and motor vehicles.

The province registering the sharpest contraction was New Brunswick, where sales fell 2.7%. This decline was largely attributable to food products and to computers and other electronic equipment. Together, these two groups account for approximately one-third of wholesale trade in the province. Wholesale sales in New Brunswick have generally been stable for the past 12 months, after declining sharply at the start of 2003.

#### **Inventory-to-sales ratio at new historic low**

The total value of wholesalers' inventories declined 0.2% in April to \$44.0 billion. This decrease was mainly attributable to food products and to computers and other electronic equipment.

The growth of sales in April, accompanied by a decrease in inventories, brought the inventory-to-sales ratio down from 1.20 in March to 1.18 in April. The

previous record of 1.19 dated from November 2002. This ratio is a key measure of the time it would take to exhaust inventories at the current pace of sales.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0007, 081-0008 and 081-0010.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2401.**

The April 2004 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008-XIB, \$15/\$150) will be available soon.

Wholesale trade estimates for May 2004 will be released on July 20.

For data or general information, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; [wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca)). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean Lebreux (613-951-4907; [jean.lebreux@statcan.ca](mailto:jean.lebreux@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades Division. □

**Wholesale merchants' sales and inventories**

	April 2003	January 2004 <sup>r</sup>	February 2004 <sup>r</sup>	March 2004 <sup>r</sup>	April 2004 <sup>p</sup>	March to April 2004	April 2003 to April 2004
seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
<b>Sales, all trade groups</b>	<b>34,650</b>	<b>35,288</b>	<b>35,082</b>	<b>36,862</b>	<b>37,219</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b>Farm products</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.6</b>
<b>Food, beverages and tobacco products</b>	<b>7,151</b>	<b>7,028</b>	<b>6,953</b>	<b>7,073</b>	<b>7,008</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>-2.0</b>
Food products	6,542	6,398	6,370	6,449	6,345	-1.6	-3.0
Alcohol and tobacco	609	629	583	624	662	6.1	8.8
<b>Personal and household goods</b>	<b>4,642</b>	<b>5,056</b>	<b>5,007</b>	<b>5,163</b>	<b>5,219</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Apparel	757	704	698	721	722	0.1	-4.6
Household and personal products	2,106	2,217	2,238	2,231	2,276	2.0	8.1
Pharmaceuticals	1,779	2,136	2,071	2,211	2,221	0.5	24.8
<b>Automotive products</b>	<b>7,208</b>	<b>7,079</b>	<b>6,701</b>	<b>7,508</b>	<b>7,750</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>
Motor vehicles	5,776	5,666	5,285	6,041	6,286	4.0	8.8
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	1,432	1,412	1,416	1,466	1,464	-0.2	2.2
<b>Building materials</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>4,487</b>	<b>4,735</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>5,057</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Building supplies	2,517	2,644	2,787	2,947	2,971	0.8	18.0
Metal products	789	861	953	1,048	1,015	-3.2	28.6
Lumber and millwork	848	983	996	1,060	1,071	1.0	26.3
<b>Machinery and electronic equipment</b>	<b>7,126</b>	<b>7,107</b>	<b>7,240</b>	<b>7,459</b>	<b>7,352</b>	<b>-1.4</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Machinery and equipment	2,936	2,868	3,036	3,188	3,160	-0.9	7.6
Computer and other electronic equipment	2,496	2,663	2,579	2,603	2,545	-2.2	2.0
Office and professional equipment	1,695	1,576	1,625	1,668	1,647	-1.3	-2.8
<b>Other products</b>	<b>3,948</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>4,020</b>	<b>4,171</b>	<b>4,382</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>11.0</b>
<b>Sales by province and territory</b>							
<b>Atlantic region</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>1,202</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	206	209	202	215	213	-0.8	3.6
Prince Edward Island	49	47	49	51	51	-0.1	3.8
Nova Scotia	517	500	515	529	533	0.7	3.2
New Brunswick	444	447	444	465	452	-2.7	1.9
<b>Quebec</b>	<b>6,706</b>	<b>6,732</b>	<b>6,901</b>	<b>7,210</b>	<b>7,080</b>	<b>-1.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>18,239</b>	<b>18,582</b>	<b>18,132</b>	<b>19,252</b>	<b>19,638</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>The Prairies</b>	<b>5,194</b>	<b>5,396</b>	<b>5,455</b>	<b>5,656</b>	<b>5,685</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Manitoba	903	876	915	916	945	3.1	4.6
Saskatchewan	978	904	856	950	951	0.2	-2.7
Alberta	3,313	3,616	3,684	3,790	3,789	0.0	14.4
<b>British Columbia</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>3,356</b>	<b>3,362</b>	<b>3,462</b>	<b>3,546</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>The Territories</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>-7.2</b>	<b>-28.3</b>
Yukon	10	6	7	7	7	2.4	-32.5
Northwest Territories	17	12	13	16	13	-14.3	-22.5
Nunavut	3	1	1	1	1	39.1	-49.6
<b>Inventories, all trade groups</b>	<b>43,683</b>	<b>43,511</b>	<b>43,729</b>	<b>44,055</b>	<b>43,969</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Farm products</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>27.2</b>
<b>Food, beverages and tobacco products</b>	<b>4,903</b>	<b>5,058</b>	<b>5,033</b>	<b>4,990</b>	<b>4,779</b>	<b>-4.2</b>	<b>-2.5</b>
Food products	4,599	4,769	4,748	4,708	4,484	-4.8	-2.5
Alcohol and tobacco	304	289	286	283	295	4.4	-3.0
<b>Personal and household goods</b>	<b>6,810</b>	<b>7,092</b>	<b>7,014</b>	<b>7,011</b>	<b>7,276</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>6.8</b>
Apparel	1,467	1,423	1,413	1,425	1,440	1.0	-1.9
Household and personal products	3,145	3,325	3,310	3,277	3,442	5.1	9.5
Pharmaceuticals	2,197	2,344	2,290	2,310	2,394	3.6	9.0
<b>Automotive products</b>	<b>7,320</b>	<b>6,996</b>	<b>7,069</b>	<b>7,185</b>	<b>7,215</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>-1.4</b>
Motor vehicles	4,080	4,110	4,142	4,341	4,293	-1.1	5.2
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	3,240	2,886	2,927	2,845	2,922	2.7	-9.8
<b>Building materials</b>	<b>6,697</b>	<b>6,898</b>	<b>6,979</b>	<b>7,126</b>	<b>7,284</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>8.8</b>
Building supplies	4,415	4,430	4,431	4,476	4,505	0.6	2.0
Metal products	1,498	1,569	1,641	1,708	1,758	2.9	17.3
Lumber and millwork	784	900	907	941	1,021	8.5	30.3
<b>Machinery and electronic equipment</b>	<b>12,421</b>	<b>12,165</b>	<b>12,343</b>	<b>12,419</b>	<b>12,203</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>-1.8</b>
Machinery and equipment	8,235	8,156	8,329	8,556	8,265	-3.4	0.4
Computer and other electronic equipment	1,701	1,612	1,587	1,620	1,541	-4.9	-9.4
Office and professional equipment	2,485	2,397	2,427	2,242	2,397	6.9	-3.5
<b>Other products</b>	<b>5,424</b>	<b>5,197</b>	<b>5,186</b>	<b>5,192</b>	<b>5,073</b>	<b>-2.3</b>	<b>-6.5</b>

<sup>r</sup> Revised figures.

<sup>p</sup> Preliminary figures.

## OTHER RELEASES

### Demographic statistics

April 1, 2004 (preliminary estimates)

Preliminary postcensal population estimates as of April 1, 2004 are now available for Canada, the provinces and the territories.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 051-0005, 051-0006, 051-0008, 051-0009, 051-0017, 051-0020 and 053-0001.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3231, 3232, 3233, 3601 and 3605.**

### Canada's population<sup>1</sup>

	January 1, 2003 <sup>pr</sup>	April 1, 2003 <sup>pr</sup>	January 1, 2004 <sup>pp</sup>	April 1, 2004 <sup>pp</sup>	January to March 2003	January to March 2004
					% change	
<b>Canada</b>	<b>31,475,999</b>	<b>31,543,355</b>	<b>31,752,842</b>	<b>31,825,416</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	519,560	519,420	519,897	518,955	0.0	-0.2
Prince Edward Island	137,334	137,526	138,102	138,365	0.1	0.2
Nova Scotia	935,180	935,387	936,892	936,510	0.0	0.0
New Brunswick	750,439	750,502	750,096	750,540	0.0	0.1
Quebec	7,462,432	7,472,899	7,509,928	7,520,938	0.1	0.1
Ontario	12,156,595	12,193,256	12,293,669	12,332,593	0.3	0.3
Manitoba	1,158,360	1,159,917	1,165,944	1,168,349	0.1	0.2
Saskatchewan	994,905	994,777	994,845	995,058	0.0	0.0
Alberta	3,132,484	3,142,136	3,172,121	3,183,312	0.3	0.4
British Columbia	4,127,454	4,135,769	4,168,123	4,177,443	0.2	0.2
Yukon	30,569	30,809	31,408	31,512	0.8	0.3
Northwest Territories	41,630	41,719	42,321	42,274	0.2	-0.1
Nunavut	29,057	29,238	29,496	29,567	0.6	0.2

<sup>pr</sup> Updated postcensal estimates.

<sup>pp</sup> Preliminary postcensal estimates.

1. These estimates are based on the 2001 census counts adjusted for net undercoverage.

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## Study: Immigrants settling for less?

1991 to 2001

University-educated immigrants were twice as likely as their Canadian-born counterparts during the 1990s to hold jobs that fell well short of their level of education, according to a new study.

At least one in four recent immigrants with a university degree who were employed between 1991 and 2001 had a job requiring no more than a high school education. This was twice the proportion of only 12% among native-born Canadians.

This gap might be explained by several factors. These include lack of professional and social networks, difficulty expressing oneself in one of the official languages, employers not recognizing foreign credentials and experience, discrimination and institutional barriers.

For example, institutional requirements regulating access to some occupations such as health may affect chances of finding a job that matches education level.

From 1991 to 2001, the mismatch rate for recent male immigrants with a degree in the health field jumped from 16% to 26%. Among women it rose from 28% to 36%. This occurred despite current pressure on the health professions and the anticipation of more pressure because of an aging population.

Recent immigrants most likely to have low-education jobs in 2001 came from South or Southeast Asia, had a mother tongue other than English or French, were members of a visible minority and were women.

About 37% of men from South Asia and 48% of men from Southeast Asia held at least a university degree in 2001 but worked in an occupation requiring at most a high school education. The corresponding proportions for women were 55% and 61%.

Higher education appears to protect a sizeable proportion of job-seekers against falling into low-education jobs. Recent immigrants with a master's or doctorate were much less likely to hold jobs requiring no more than a high school education. Those from North America, Northern or Western Europe and Oceania were also less likely to hold a low-education job.

Recent immigrant men employed full time in jobs requiring no more than high school education earned 42% less per week in 2000 compared with their counterparts in jobs requiring a university degree. For women, the gap was 39%.

What's more, recent immigrants who were university graduates and who held full-time, low-education jobs earned even less than native-born Canadians in the same situation. In 2000, recent immigrants employed full time in low-education jobs had weekly earnings at least 20% lower than their Canadian-born counterparts. The gap even reached 30% among those aged 35 to 54.

The difficulty in obtaining university-level jobs is not necessarily a short-term phenomenon. Even after more than 10 years in Canada, at least 21% of employed, university-educated immigrants who arrived between 1985 and 1989 had a low-education job in 2001. This is important because advanced skills could erode over the long run.

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3901.

The article "Immigrants: Settling for less?" is available in the June 2004 online edition of *Perspectives on labour and income*, Vol. 5, no. 6 (75-001-XIE, \$6/\$52). See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Diane Galarneau (613-951-4626; [diane.galarneau@statcan.ca](mailto:diane.galarneau@statcan.ca)), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division, or René Morissette (613-951-3608; [rene.morissette@statcan.ca](mailto:rene.morissette@statcan.ca)), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division. ■

## Shifts in consumer spending

1981 to 2003

The tastes, incomes and lifestyles of Canadian consumers have undergone a profound change in during the past 20 years, and as a result spending patterns and household assets have shifted dramatically, a new study shows.

These developments are the result of factors that include demographic change, technological and financial innovation, globalization of financial markets, rising housing wealth and the increased participation of women in the labour force.

Between 1981 and 2000, the last year before the economy slowed down, real consumer spending grew at an annual average rate of 2.6%, slightly less than the growth in gross domestic product (GDP).

However, between 2000 and 2003, the situation reversed. GDP grew at an annual average rate of 2.3%, and consumer spending increased 3.1% a year on average.

During this time, consumer spending contributed three-quarters of the growth in economic output, despite several events that adversely affected air transport, high-tech equipment and new trucks and vans.

From 1981 to 2000, consumers have spent more money on discretionary items relative to basic necessities, thanks to rising real incomes, accumulation of household assets and willingness to take on more debt.

One of the biggest factors has been technological innovation, which has resulted in a proliferation of

new goods and services, including cable television, computers, electronic toys and games and cellular telephones. Over time, innovations lowered the prices of these items.

In 1981, these items accounted for only 1.5% of overall consumer spending. Twenty years later, this proportion had more than doubled to 3.6%.

Another important feature of consumer spending has been the rapid increase in health care, roughly 5% a year. This was primarily a result of increased third-party payments from private health insurance and public programs, reflecting both an aging population and the increased number of elderly.

In 2000, the average Canadian household reported spending nearly \$1,400 on health care, with the largest shares going to insurance premiums and dental care. Two decades earlier, this figure was only \$900.

Similarly, household spending on transportation in 2000 hit an estimated \$7,000, up 7% from 1981. This was largely due to a huge increase in the purchase of cars and trucks as well as air transportation.

However, the surge in consumer spending is occurring at the same time that the personal saving rate has fallen to historic lows, consumer debt levels have risen and the household home equity ratio has dropped to an all-time low.

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3508, 2620 and 1901.**

The article "Shifts in consumer spending" is available in the June 2004 online edition of *Perspectives on labour and income*, Vol. 5, no. 6 (75-001-XIE, \$6/\$52). See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Tarek Harchaoui (613-951-9856; [tarek.harchaoui@statcan.ca](mailto:tarek.harchaoui@statcan.ca)), or Faouzi Tarkhani (613 951-5314; [faouzi.tarkhani@statcan.ca](mailto:faouzi.tarkhani@statcan.ca)), Micro-Economic Analysis Division. ■

**Natural gas sales**

April 2004 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 5 838 million cubic metres in April, down 8.7% from April 2003. Warmer weather throughout Canada resulted in a 14.7% drop in sales to the residential sector and an 18.0% decline in sales

to the commercial sector. Sales in the industrial sector (including direct sales) fell back 2.2%.

Year-to-date sales at the end of April were down 2.9% from the same period of 2003. Both the residential sector (-3.6%) and the commercial sector (-8.1%) posted declines. Use of natural gas by the industrial sector (including direct sales) has edged up 0.1% so far this year.

**Natural gas sales**

	April 2004 <sup>P</sup>	April 2003	April 2003 to April 2004
'000 cubic metres			
<b>Natural gas sales</b>	<b>5 837 835</b>	<b>6 394 019</b>	<b>-8.7</b>
Residential	1 443 551	1 691 723	-14.7
Commercial	1 058 771	1 290 568	-18.0
Industrial	1 569 753	1 593 169	-2.2
Direct	1 765 760	1 818 559	-2.2
year-to-date			
	2004 <sup>P</sup>	2003	2003 to 2004
'000 cubic metres			
<b>Natural gas sales</b>	<b>31 330 134</b>	<b>32 255 639</b>	<b>-2.9</b>
Residential	9 308 967	9 657 413	-3.6
Commercial	6 753 554	7 346 330	-8.1
Industrial	7 014 759	6 942 863	0.1
Direct	8 252 854	8 309 033	0.1

<sup>P</sup> Preliminary figures.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 129-0001 to 129-0004.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2149.**

For general information or to order data, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; [energ@statcan.ca](mailto:energ@statcan.ca)). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Pierre Després (613-951-3579; [pierre.despres@statcan.ca](mailto:pierre.despres@statcan.ca)) or Lloyd Cundell (613-951-7346; [lloyd.cundell@statcan.ca](mailto:lloyd.cundell@statcan.ca)), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

**Asphalt roofing**

May 2004

Data on asphalt roofing are now available.



**Available on CANSIM: table 303-0006.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2123.**

The May 2004 issue of *Asphalt roofing*, Vol. 56, no. 5 (45-001-XIB, \$6/\$51) 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](mailto:manufact@statcan.ca)), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division ■

## NEW PRODUCTS

**Asphalt roofing**, May 2004, Vol. 56, no. 5  
Catalogue number 45-001-XIB (\$6/\$51).

**Perspectives on labour and income**, June 2004,  
Vol. 5, no. 6  
Catalogue number 75-001-XIE (\$6/\$52).

**Education matters: insights on education, learning  
and training in Canada**,  
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