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Releases

Releases

Retail trade

August 2005

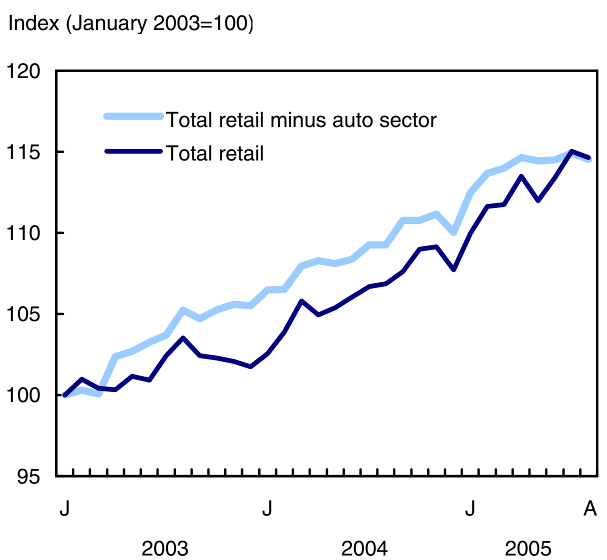
Spending in retail stores fell by 0.3% to $31.2 billion in August. This followed strong sales increases of 1.4% in July and 1.3% in June.

August's decline represented only the fourth month of falling sales for retailers since the start of 2004. Retail sales grew by an impressive 12.7% over these last 20 months. Prior to January 2004, retailers suffered four consecutive monthly sales declines at the end of 2003, after generally experiencing rising sales since the fall of 2001.

Once prices are taken into account, constant dollar retail sales dropped 1.0% in August, as consumers faced higher prices for gasoline and motor vehicles. Previously, retail sales, adjusted for price changes, rose by 1.1% in July and 1.2% in June.

Excluding sales by dealers of new, used and recreational vehicles and auto parts, retail sales advanced by a marginal 0.2% in August, after increasing by 0.7% in July and 0.3% in June.

Without higher gas prices and strong vehicle sales, retail trade flattened in recent months



Higher gasoline prices and strong vehicle sales have been the main driving force behind the recent growth in total retail trade, as many sectors saw their sales fall or slow down in the last few months.

Retailers in the general merchandise, clothing and miscellaneous sectors have generally experienced falling sales in the last four months, while spending in the furniture and electronics, building supplies and food and beverage sectors has flattened. The miscellaneous sector includes retailers such as office supply, sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores. The only two retail sectors showing strength in recent months were the automotive and pharmacy sectors.

In August, five of the eight retail sectors experienced lower sales. Shoppers reduced their spending by at least 2.0% in the miscellaneous (-2.8%) and clothing (-2.0%) sectors. Shoppers also cut down on their purchases in the general merchandise (-0.5%), food and beverage (-0.5%) and automotive (-0.4%) sectors.

On a positive note, sales advanced by at least 1.0% in the furniture and electronics (+1.4%), building supplies (+1.1%) and pharmacy (+1.0%) sectors in August.

Miscellaneous retailers and clothing stores lead the declines

For the sector as a whole, miscellaneous retailers such as office supply, sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores continued to lose sales in August (-2.8%). Sales have generally been falling since May 2005, after posting a strong 3.6% jump in the first quarter.

Similarly, sales in the clothing sector dropped 2.0% in August. Retailers in this sector have seen their sales fall since May 2005, after enjoying a 3.5% sales gain in the first quarter.

Spending in general merchandise stores fell 0.5% in August, reflecting the weak sales performance posted by these retailers since the start of 2005. Sales in August were actually 0.5% below the January level. Within the sector, both department stores and other general merchandise stores have shown essentially the same sales stagnation since the start of the year.

Shoppers reduced their spending by 0.5% in food and beverage stores in August, leaving sales at essentially the same level as in May. All categories of retailers in this sector showed sales declines in August. Sales fell the most in beer, wine and liquor stores (-1.2%), followed by convenience and specialty food stores (-1.0%) and supermarkets (-0.3%).

Higher gasoline prices offset downturn in vehicle sales

In August, price-induced sales increases at gasoline stations (+3.2%) offset almost entirely the sales declines seen at new car dealers (-2.1%) and used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers (-0.8%). This left overall sales in the automotive sector down 0.4% in August from July.

August's sales decline at new car dealers occurred despite the continuation of employee pricing programs offered by some auto manufacturers to the general public. Nonetheless, new car dealers have seen their sales rise rapidly since early 2004, jumping 17.7% between January 2004 and August 2005.

A 6.6% price increase for gasoline at the pump was largely responsible for the higher sales value posted by gasoline stations in August. Prices have been pushing up the overall value of sales at gas stations since the spring of 2003.

Sales up in only three retail sectors

Sales rose 1.4% in the furniture, home furnishings and electronics sector in August, after little progress over the previous six months. Within this sector, computer and software stores (+3.3%), home furnishings stores (+2.8%) and furniture stores (+2.0%) enjoyed sizable sales gains in August, while home electronics and appliance stores (-0.1%) posted their second consecutive month of essentially flat sales.

Despite the flat sales performance of the last two months, home electronics and appliance stores have generally seen their sales rise since the summer of 2004, after about a year of little change. On the other hand, August's steep sales gains in computer and software stores and in furniture stores were merely gaining back some of the losses seen since the spring. Sales in home furnishing stores regained some strength in the last three months, after remaining essentially unchanged in the first five months of the year.

Building and outdoor home supplies stores posted their first monthly sales increase in four months in August (+1.1%). Despite this recent slowdown, sales by these retailers have skyrocketed since 2002, helped by an energized new housing market, where housing starts reached historically high levels. In the last three years, sales in building and outdoor home supplies stores have risen by at least 10% each year. So far in 2005, cumulative sales in the first eight months of the year were 9.2% above those in the same period of 2004.

Pharmacies and personal care stores continued to show steady sales growth in August (+1.0%). The overall value of purchases made in these stores has mostly been on the rise since the fall of 2002, after a short pause in the summer of that year.

Retail sales down in New Brunswick, Central Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador

Retailers in New Brunswick posted the largest sales decline in August (-2.2%), followed by their colleagues in Ontario (-1.2%), Quebec (-1.0%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (-1.0%). Falling vehicles sales were mostly responsible for the drop in retail activity in these provinces, even though several other retail sectors suffered sales losses in August.

In New Brunswick, all retail sectors, except building supplies stores, posted lower sales in August. In Ontario and Quebec, only the furniture, building supplies and pharmacy sectors managed to show higher sales. In addition to the weak results seen in the auto sector, the furniture and general merchandise sectors also posted sales declines in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Retailers in New Brunswick have generally experienced rising retail sales since the middle of 2004, posting a 7.0% gain from June 2004 to August 2005. In the case of Ontario and Quebec, the latest period of retail sales advances began about six months earlier, with increases of 11.0% and 9.6% respectively, since December 2003. In Newfoundland and Labrador, retail sales have essentially remained flat since the fall of 2004.

Spending in British Columbia retail stores advanced strongly for a second consecutive month in August. Retail sales jumped 2.3% in August on the strength of advances in the automotive and building supplies sectors. August's gain and the 1.8% increase posted in July signalled revived strength in retail trade in British Columbia after four months of essentially flat results.

Related indicators for September

Total employment remained unchanged in September, after a 0.2% rise in August. Despite the absence of growth in September, all job gains observed over the first nine months of 2005 came from full-time employment. Furthermore, the unemployment rate fell to 6.7% in September, one of the lowest rates seen in almost three decades. Housing starts bounced back 11.8% in September, regaining more than half the loss suffered in August. With September's gain, the activity on the new housing market stood at essentially the same level as seen on average in 2004, which marked the highest of the last 17 years. The number of new motor vehicles sold in September fell by about 8% compared with August, according to preliminary results from the auto industry.

Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0014 to 080-0017 and 076-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2406 and 2408.

The August issue of *Retail Trade* (63-005-XIE, $18/$166) will soon be available.

Data on retail trade for September will be released on November 21.

For more information or to order data, contact Client Services (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 Paul Gratton (613-951-3541), Distributive Trades Division.

□

Retail sales

	August 2004	May 2005r	June 2005r	July 2005r	August 2005p	July to August 2005	August 2004 to August 2005
	seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Automotive	**9,763**	**10,244**	**10,620**	**10,990**	**10,946**	**-0.4**	**12.1**
New car dealers	5,743	5,816	6,155	6,419	6,282	-2.1	9.4
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,215	1,335	1,321	1,335	1,324	-0.8	8.9
Gasoline stations	2,805	3,094	3,145	3,236	3,340	3.2	19.1
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	**2,009**	**2,110**	**2,129**	**2,136**	**2,166**	**1.4**	**7.8**
Furniture stores	707	727	721	728	743	2.0	5.0
Home furnishings stores	378	390	392	396	407	2.8	7.7
Computer and software stores	136	136	135	134	138	3.3	1.5
Home electronics and appliance stores	788	856	881	879	878	-0.1	11.5
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	**1,812**	**1,911**	**1,900**	**1,899**	**1,919**	**1.1**	**5.9**
Home centres and hardware stores	1,441	1,518	1,513	1,509	1,526	1.2	5.9
Specialized building materials and garden stores	371	393	386	390	393	0.8	5.9
Food and beverage stores	**6,859**	**7,253**	**7,226**	**7,275**	**7,239**	**-0.5**	**5.5**
Supermarkets	4,978	5,250	5,245	5,288	5,273	-0.3	5.9
Convenience and specialty food stores	754	774	771	773	766	-1.0	1.5
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,127	1,228	1,210	1,215	1,200	-1.2	6.5
Pharmacies and personal care stores	**1,914**	**1,993**	**1,989**	**2,000**	**2,020**	**1.0**	**5.5**
Clothing and accessories stores	**1,677**	**1,752**	**1,761**	**1,765**	**1,730**	**-2.0**	**3.2**
Clothing stores	1,279	1,343	1,358	1,359	1,324	-2.6	3.5
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	398	408	403	406	406	0.1	2.2
General merchandise stores	**3,511**	**3,601**	**3,630**	**3,628**	**3,609**	**-0.5**	**2.8**
Department stores	1,822	1,845	1,866	1,860	1,857	-0.2	2.0
Other general merchandise stores	1,689	1,756	1,765	1,767	1,752	-0.9	3.7
Miscellaneous retailers	**1,501**	**1,578**	**1,573**	**1,576**	**1,532**	**-2.8**	**2.1**
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	746	779	773	801	779	-2.7	4.5
Miscellaneous store retailers	755	799	800	775	752	-3.0	-0.3
Total retail sales	**29,046**	**30,442**	**30,828**	**31,270**	**31,161**	**-0.3**	**7.3**
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	**22,088**	**23,291**	**23,353**	**23,515**	**23,555**	**0.2**	**6.6**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	474	486	489	492	487	-1.0	2.8
Prince Edward Island	113	116	120	118	119	1.0	5.5
Nova Scotia	860	883	896	891	900	1.1	4.7
New Brunswick	661	678	699	714	698	-2.2	5.6
Quebec	6,593	6,918	7,055	7,063	6,989	-1.0	6.0
Ontario	10,808	11,075	11,292	11,472	11,337	-1.2	4.9
Manitoba	972	1,026	1,039	1,071	1,071	0.0	10.2
Saskatchewan	858	953	942	956	955	-0.1	11.4
Alberta	3,636	4,064	4,056	4,181	4,196	0.4	15.4
British Columbia	3,972	4,137	4,133	4,206	4,302	2.3	8.3
Yukon	36	39	37	37	37	-0.2	3.2
Northwest Territories	44	48	48	50	48	-2.5	9.7
Nunavut	18	20	22	20	20	-0.3	11.5

r *Revised.*
p *Preliminary.*

Retail sales

	August 2004	July 2005[r]	August 2005[p]	August 2004 to August 2005
	unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Automotive	**10,182**	**11,876**	**11,750**	**15.4**
New car dealers	5,872	6,868	6,618	12.7
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,287	1,512	1,439	11.8
Gasoline stations	3,023	3,495	3,693	22.2
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	**2,012**	**2,086**	**2,188**	**8.8**
Furniture stores	746	790	785	5.2
Home furnishings stores	373	380	410	10.0
Computer and software stores	129	114	134	3.7
Home electronics and appliance stores	764	802	860	12.5
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	**1,947**	**2,174**	**2,150**	**10.4**
Home centres and hardware stores	1,538	1,745	1,708	11.0
Specialized building materials and garden stores	409	429	442	8.1
Food and beverage stores	**6,859**	**7,948**	**7,271**	**6.0**
Supermarkets	4,836	5,592	5,153	6.5
Convenience and specialty food stores	801	868	819	2.3
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,222	1,488	1,299	6.3
Pharmacies and personal care stores	**1,864**	**1,935**	**1,999**	**7.2**
Clothing and accessories stores	**1,669**	**1,653**	**1,727**	**3.5**
Clothing stores	1,270	1,261	1,309	3.1
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	399	392	419	4.9
General merchandise stores	**3,432**	**3,704**	**3,545**	**3.3**
Department stores	1,758	1,787	1,783	1.4
Other general merchandise stores	1,674	1,917	1,762	5.3
Miscellaneous retailers	**1,561**	**1,529**	**1,600**	**2.5**
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	748	754	790	5.6
Miscellaneous store retailers	813	775	809	-0.4
Total retail sales	**29,525**	**32,906**	**32,229**	**9.2**
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	**22,366**	**24,525**	**24,172**	**8.1**
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland and Labrador	514	538	532	3.6
Prince Edward Island	130	142	139	6.6
Nova Scotia	882	960	939	6.5
New Brunswick	695	763	746	7.3
Quebec	6,762	7,470	7,235	7.0
Ontario	10,897	11,925	11,656	7.0
Manitoba	983	1,128	1,101	12.0
Saskatchewan	883	1,013	1,003	13.7
Alberta	3,662	4,386	4,332	18.3
British Columbia	4,014	4,463	4,432	10.4
Yukon	40	43	42	4.6
Northwest Territories	44	54	50	13.3
Nunavut	20	21	21	9.1

r *Revised.*
p *Preliminary.*

■

Study: Who's missing out on the Guaranteed Income Supplement?

1999 to 2001

The vast majority of Canada's senior citizens who qualify for benefits under the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) program receive them, according to a new study published today in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*.

However, a significant portion of low-income seniors are missing out on benefits to which they are entitled, simply because they have not applied for them.

The study, based on a variety of sources, found that 86% of seniors who were eligible for the GIS in 2000 received it. But about 206,800 eligible individuals missed out. The theoretical annual cost of payments for these people amounted to roughly $300 million.

The GIS was established in 1967 as an additional benefit to low-income seniors receiving Old Age Security. To receive the GIS, individuals must apply annually.

A large portion of GIS recipients have their benefits renewed automatically through the income tax system. First-time applicants, those wishing to be reconsidered after losing eligibility, and GIS recipients not filing a tax return are required to submit an application directly to Social Development Canada. Overall, however, only 41% of those who needed to apply actually did so in 2000. Excluding seniors aged 65, this proportion declined to 25%.

This study examined whether GIS families are more financially vulnerable than senior non-GIS families, and looked at the group of eligible seniors who do not apply for GIS. Data from the 1999 Survey of Financial Security, the 1999 to 2001 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics and the Longitudinal Administrative Databank were used.

For various reasons, many eligible seniors end up not applying for GIS. They may not understand eligibility requirements, have language barriers, be unaware they must apply, or have diminished cognitive abilities.

The study found that age and payment amount were the two factors associated with whether an individual applied for GIS or not. The older seniors were, or the less they received in benefits, the less likely they were to apply.

The most troubling finding of the study involved the age factor. The probability of a relatively young senior, aged 66 to 69, eligible to receive a benefit of $2,000 or more actually applying was only about one-half. However, among those in the oldest age group, the probability fell to only 24%.

Of the 1.1 million families in 1999 who had at least one family member receiving GIS, 45% were seniors living alone while 24% were senior couples. Another 20% were families in which the senior was not the major income earner.

GIS recipients were more vulnerable financially than their non-GIS counterparts. Unattached GIS recipients had median financial wealth that was only one-sixth that of their counterparts who did not receive GIS. Median after-tax income was almost twice as high for non-GIS families.

Virtually all senior GIS family types, including unattached individuals and senior couples, were found in the bottom two-thirds of the after-tax income distribution for families with seniors, with the largest portion in the lowest third.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2620, 3889 and 4107.

The article "Who's missing out on the GIS?" is available in the October online edition of *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Vol. 6, no. 10 (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 Preston Poon (613-951-4245; *preston.poon@statcan.ca*), Income Statistics Division. ■

Railway carloadings

August 2005

The strong world demand for primary goods appears to have profited the Canadian rail industry in August as overall loadings increased 8.5% from an already strong July.

Intermodal loadings, that is, containers and trailers hauled on flat cars, rose 7.2% to cross the 2.4 million tonnes mark, their highest monthly volume this year.

The demand for moving containers filled with finished goods coming from nations in Asia was higher than normal because of a labour dispute that hit the trucking sector at the port of Vancouver.

The non-intermodal portion of freight totalled 22.6 million metric tonnes, up 8.6% from July. About 285,000 railcars were required to load all of August's non-intermodal freight.

Freight coming from the United States, either destined for or passing through Canada, reached 2.3 million tonnes, up 14.6% from July.

On a year-over-year basis, non-intermodal tonnage was up 15.8% from August 2004. Intermodal traffic was up 9.5% while traffic received from the United States was up 10.0%.

Available on CANSIM: table 404-0002.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2732.

The August 2005 issue of *Monthly Railway Carloadings*, Vol. 82, no. 8 (52-001-XIE, $9/$83) 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 Unit (1-866-500-8400; fax: 1-613-951-0009; *TransportationStatistics@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

The supply and disposition of refined petroleum products

June 2005

Data on the supply, disposition and domestic sales of refined petroleum products are now available for June.

Available on CANSIM: tables 134-0001 to 134-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2150.

The June issue of *The Supply and Disposition of Refined Petroleum Products in Canada*, Vol. 60 no. 6 (45-004-XIE, $18/$166) 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 Marketing and Dissemination Section (613-951-9497; 1-866-873-8789; *energ@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Construction type plywood

August 2005

Data on construction type plywood for August are now available.

Available on CANSIM: tables 303-0056 and 303-0057.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2138.

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. ■

Crude oil and natural gas: Production

August 2005 (preliminary)

Provincial crude oil and marketable natural gas production data are now available for August.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2198.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Marketing and Dissemination Section (613-951-9497; 1-866-873-8789; *energ@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

New products

The Supply and Disposition of Refined Petroleum Products in Canada, June 2005, Vol. 60, no. 6
Catalogue number 45-004-XIE ($18/$166).

Monthly Railway Carloadings, August 2005, Vol. 82, no. 8
Catalogue number 52-001-XIE ($9/$83).

Perspectives on Labour and Income, October 2005, Vol. 6, no. 10
Catalogue number 75-001-XIE ($6/$52).

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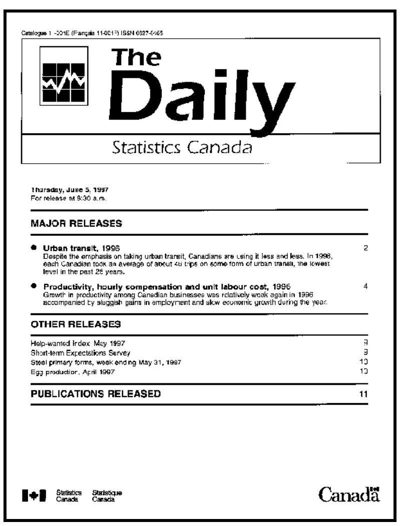
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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.

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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Release dates: October 24 to 28, 2005

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
25	**Consumer Price Index**	September 2005
25	**Study: The socio-economic progress of children of immigrants**	2001
25	**Employment Insurance**	August 2005
26	**Sound recording**	2003
27	**Business Conditions Survey: Canadian manufacturing industries**	October 2005
27	**Employment, earnings and hours**	August 2005
28	**Industrial product and raw materials price indexes**	September 2005