



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, March 10, 2005

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Labour productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 2004 and fourth quarter 2004**

In 2004, Canadian businesses recorded their worst performance in labour productivity growth in eight years as both economic activity, hit by the rising Canadian dollar, and the number of hours worked increased in tandem for a second year in a row.

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 - **Industrial capacity utilization rates, fourth quarter 2004**

Industrial capacity utilization increased only marginally during the fourth quarter of 2004 as a result of weak exports. The drop in international demand had an especially strong impact on the manufacturing sector, where capacity utilization stalled.

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NEW PRODUCTS



MAJOR RELEASES

Labour productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost

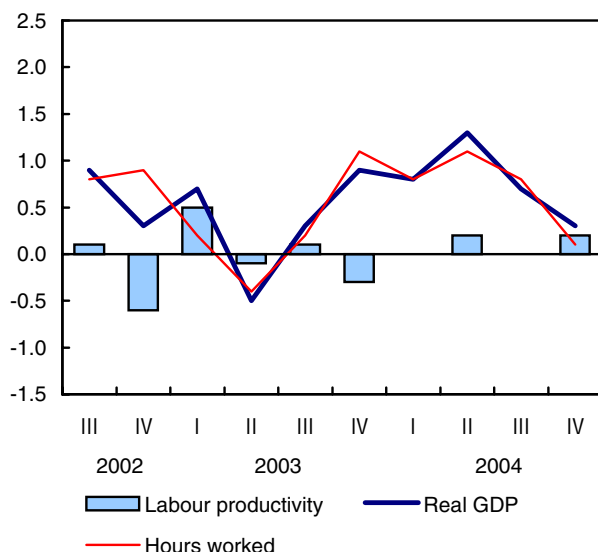
2004 and fourth quarter 2004

In 2004, Canadian businesses recorded their worst performance in labour productivity growth in eight years as both economic activity, hit by the rising Canadian dollar, and the number of hours worked increased in tandem for a second year in a row.

Productivity growth in Canadian businesses was a flat 0.0% last year. During the fourth quarter alone, productivity rose a marginal 0.2% from the third quarter. The gain was due almost entirely to growth in gross domestic product (GDP) as the number of hours worked edged up only 0.1%.

Productivity growth remained weak

Quarterly % change



Productivity is measured as the ratio of output for every hour worked. For example, it improves when GDP increases more rapidly than the number of hours worked. Productivity growth is a key factor determining the living standard of Canadians.

Labour productivity has been virtually flat for two consecutive years. Last year's growth was the smallest since 1996, while the increase in 2003 was only 0.2%. Canadian businesses had to cope with a 7.1% gain in the value of the loonie relative to the US greenback last year on the heels of a 10.8% gain the year before.

Note to readers

This release contains a brief analysis of detailed data on productivity growth and other related variables. A more detailed analysis, including additional charts and tables, is available in the Canadian Economic Accounts Quarterly Review (13-010-XIE, free).

This electronic publication presents an analysis on labour productivity for the aggregate business sector and its constituent industries (15 two-digit) and two sectors (goods and services). The statistical series for these industries start as of the first quarter of 1997.

Since the release last December, data in CANSIM table 383-0008 for the aggregate business sector have been expanded to include unit labour cost series in US dollars. Data by industry in CANSIM table 383-0012 have also been expanded to include series on total economy.

The term "productivity" refers to labour productivity. Calculations of the productivity growth rate and its related variables are based on index numbers rounded to one decimal place.

For more information about the productivity program, see the Overview and description of publications page online. You can also order a copy of a technical note about the quarterly estimates of productivity by sending an email to productivity.measures@statcan.ca.

Revisions

With this release, revisions have been made back to the first quarter of 2004. The recent Labour Force Survey estimates, which have been revised back to January 1976, are not incorporated. These results will be incorporated in our next release for the first quarter 2005.

Fourth quarter 2004: Output growth in the United States surpasses Canada's

Productivity grew faster among American businesses during the last three months of 2004 than it did among their Canadian counterparts because economic output in the United States increased at a faster rate. At the same time, the number of hours worked rose about 0.1% in both countries.

In the United States, productivity increased 1.0% in the fourth quarter compared with the previous quarter. This was an improvement over gains of 0.8% in the second quarter and 0.4% in the third.

During the past six quarters, the number of hours worked in the United States rose at an average of 0.3% per quarter. In Canada, however, the 0.1% increase in the fourth quarter halted a series of stronger increases than in the United States that started mid-way through 2003.

The different productivity performance between the two nations was in growth of real GDP. Growth in

output among American businesses surpassed that of Canadian businesses for the second consecutive quarter.

In Canada, GDP growth in the business sector slowed to 0.3%, less than half what it was in the third quarter (+0.7%). The slowdown was due to a decline in exports of goods and services, which were down for a second consecutive quarter.

On the American side, GDP growth slowed slightly from 1.1% to 1.0% between the third and the fourth quarter. Output in the United States has grown at rates higher or equal to 1.0% since the second quarter of 2003.

The slight deceleration south of the border was due partly to a slowdown in exports and in consumer expenditures (mainly from a slowdown in car purchases) and the acceleration of imports.

Annual 2004: Canadian firms had to adapt to soaring loonie

Productivity gains in Canada and the United States went in opposite directions in 2004 because of their very different economic performances and labour market situations.

Productivity in the United States in 2004 benefited from higher output and a smaller increase in hours worked than in Canada. In Canada, real GDP and hours worked grew at a similar pace, leaving Canadian productivity virtually unchanged.

In Canada, where all the growth in employment was ascribed to full-time jobs, hours worked advanced 2.8%. Canada's job market performance compares favourably to that of the United States which experienced a 1.1% increase in hours worked. This was the first time in four years that the US labour market posted positive growth in hours worked.

In addition, during the past two years, Canadian businesses were forced to adapt to a major realignment of world currencies, including the Canadian dollar. The 10.8% rise in the value of the loonie relative to the US greenback in 2003 was followed by a further 7.1% gain last year.

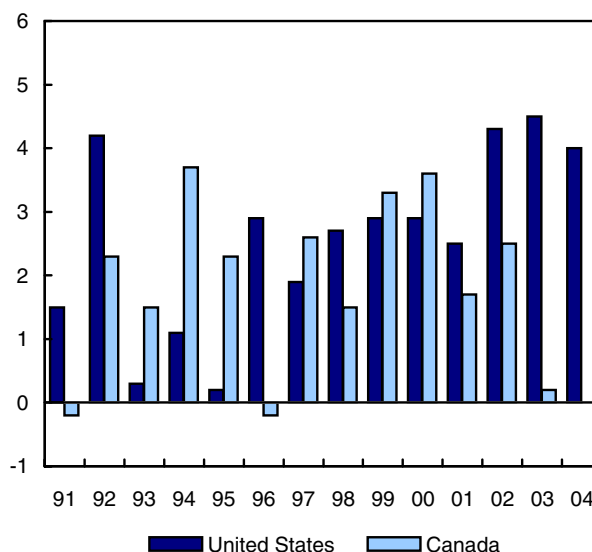
Meanwhile, the American dollar lost ground not only against the Canadian dollar, but also against most "strong" European and Asian currencies. Consequently, American businesses experienced higher economic growth than Canada. They also registered their first increase in the number of hours worked in three years.

In short, real GDP among Canadian businesses rose 2.9% last year, while the number of hours worked went up 2.8%. But in the United States, real GDP was up 5.1% while the number of hours worked rose only 1.1%.

The result was flat growth in labour productivity in Canada, and a 4.0% gain south of the border.

No productivity gains for Canada in 2004

% change from the previous year



Unit labour costs in US dollars grew slowly

The United States continued to have an advantage over Canada in unit labour costs in 2004, especially when the exchange rate was taken into account.

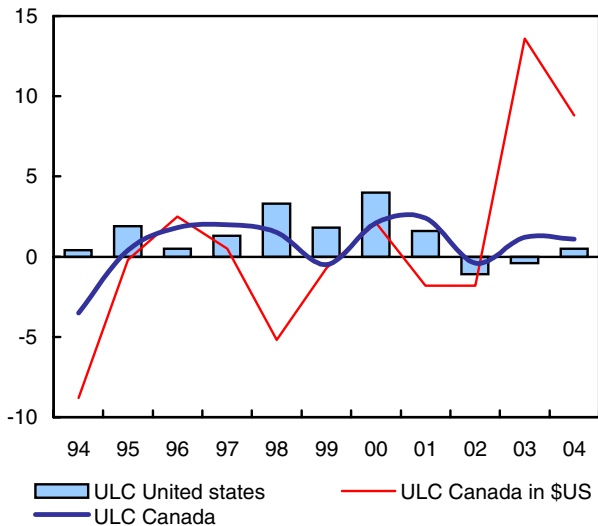
The labour cost of producing one unit of output in the Canadian business sector rose 1.1% in 2004, nearly the same pace as in 2003. In contrast, unit labour costs in the American business sector edged up only 0.5% following two consecutive annual decreases.

When the exchange rate is taken into account, American businesses were in an even more advantageous position.

The lack of labour productivity gains in the Canadian business sector in 2004, combined with the higher Canadian dollar, resulted in an 8.8% gain in unit labour costs in Canada measured in US dollars. In contrast, unit labour costs in the United States rose just 0.5%.

After reaching a record high, Canadian unit labour costs (ULC) decelerate in US dollars

% change from the previous year



In 2003, unit labour costs in Canada, measured in US dollars, surged 13.6% to a record high, as the loonie rose 10.8% against the US dollar.

Despite this deterioration in unit labour cost, Canada's exports rebounded 4.9% in 2004 following a 2.4% decline in 2003.

Canadian businesses also took advantage of the dollar's strength to invest in machinery and equipment,

on which they spent 9.4% more in 2004 than they did the year before. This was reflected in their sharply higher imports, which rose 8.2%.

Available on CANSIM: tables 383-0008 and 383-0012.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5042.

A more comprehensive analysis, including additional charts and tables, is now available online in the *Canadian Economic Accounts Quarterly Review* (13-010-XIE, free). A new study entitled *Canada/US Labour Productivity Revisions in Business Sector* (11F0026MIE2005003, free) is also available online. From the *Our products and services* page, under *Browse our Internet publications*, choose *Free*, then *National accounts*.

The first quarter 2005 data for Labour productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost will be released on June 9.

To order data, contact Client Services (productivity.measures@statcan.ca). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean-Pierre Maynard (613-951-3654; fax: 613-951-3292; maynard@statcan.ca), Micro-economic Analysis Division.

□

Business sector: Labour productivity and related variables for Canada and the United States

	2002 Q4	2003 Q1	2003 Q2	2003 Q3	2003 Q4	2004 Q1	2004 Q2	2004 Q3	2004 Q4
% change from previous quarter, seasonally adjusted									
Canada									
Labour productivity	-0.6	0.5	-0.1	0.1	-0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Real GDP	0.3	0.7	-0.5	0.3	0.9	0.8	1.3	0.7	0.3
Hours worked	0.9	0.2	-0.4	0.2	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.1
Hourly compensation	0.0	1.1	0.3	0.5	-0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1	1.2
Unit labour cost	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.3	1.0
Exchange rate ¹	0.4	-3.9	-7.3	-1.3	-4.7	0.2	3.2	-3.9	-6.6
Unit labour cost in US dollars	0.2	4.4	8.5	1.7	4.9	0.2	-3.0	4.2	8.3
United States									
Labour productivity	0.3	1.0	1.8	1.9	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.4	1.0
Real GDP	0.3	0.6	1.4	2.2	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.0
Hours worked	0.0	-0.5	-0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.1
Hourly compensation	0.3	1.4	1.5	1.3	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.4	1.1
Unit labour cost	0.0	0.4	-0.3	-0.7	0.3	-0.3	0.6	0.9	0.3
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2004 Q1	2004 Q2	2004 Q3	2004 Q4
% change from the previous year									
Canada									
Labour productivity	3.6	1.7	2.5	0.2	0.0	-0.3	0.0	-0.1	0.4
Real GDP	6.3	1.8	3.6	1.7	2.9	1.5	3.3	3.7	3.1
Hours worked	2.5	0.1	1.1	1.5	2.8	1.7	3.2	3.8	2.8
Hourly compensation	5.9	4.0	2.2	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.6	2.0
Unit labour cost	2.1	2.4	-0.4	1.2	1.1	1.3	0.8	0.7	1.7
Exchange rate	0.0	4.3	1.3	-10.8	-7.1	-12.7	-2.8	-5.3	-7.2
Unit labour cost in US dollars	2.1	-1.8	-1.8	13.6	8.8	16.1	3.7	6.3	9.6
United States									
Labour productivity	2.9	2.5	4.3	4.5	4.0	5.4	4.3	2.8	3.2
Real GDP	3.9	0.3	1.8	3.8	5.1	6.1	5.6	4.4	4.5
Hours worked	1.0	-2.1	-2.4	-0.6	1.1	0.6	1.3	1.6	1.3
Hourly compensation	7.1	4.2	3.1	4.1	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.6
Unit labour cost	4.0	1.6	-1.1	-0.4	0.5	-0.9	0.0	1.6	1.4

1. The exchange rate corresponds to the US dollar value expressed in Canadian dollars.

Source: US data are from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Productivity and costs: Fourth quarter 2004, published in NEWS, March 3.

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Industrial capacity utilization rates

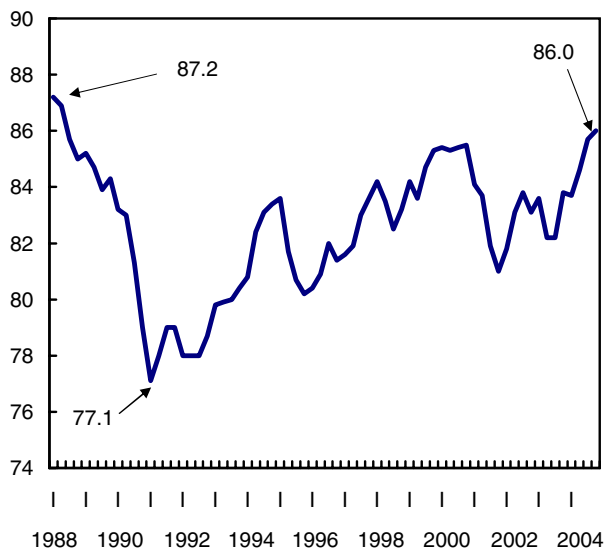
Fourth quarter 2004

Industrial capacity utilization increased only marginally during the fourth quarter of 2004 as a result of weak exports. The drop in international demand had an especially strong impact on the manufacturing sector, where capacity utilization stalled.

Industries operated at 86.0% of their capacity, compared with 85.7% in the third quarter. The fourth-quarter level was 1.2 points below the peak of 87.2% reached in the first quarter of 1988. The industrial capacity utilization rate is the ratio of an industry's actual output to its estimated potential output. Rates have been revised back to the first quarter of 2002 to reflect the revised source data.

Growth in capacity use slows

% (rate of capacity use)



The strong Canadian dollar continued to have a negative effect on exports, which posted their second straight decline in the fourth quarter. Domestic demand, supported by consumer spending, was up during the last three months of the year but manufacturers' inventories remained at high levels. According to the January 2005 Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers were anticipating lower production and employment levels in the first quarter of 2005.

Despite a slowdown in the growth of capacity utilization in the fourth quarter, the annual average rate for 2004 was 85.0%, up from 83.0% in 2003. This increase was not accompanied by inflationary

pressures. The Consumer Price Index (excluding the eight volatile components identified by the Bank of Canada) rose 1.7% between December 2003 and December 2004.

The higher rate in 2004 was largely attributable to manufacturers, who benefited from robust international demand in the first half of the year. In contrast, 2003 was a difficult year for manufacturers who were hit by the rise in the Canadian dollar in relation to the US currency, the power outage in Ontario and mad cow disease.

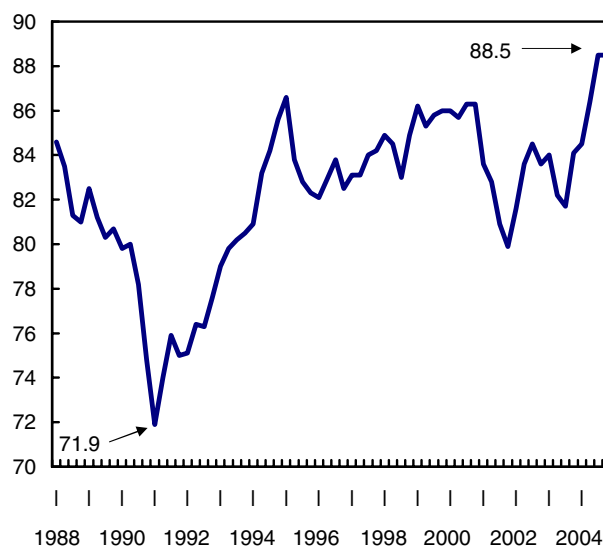
In the fourth quarter, the capacity utilization rate was up in the forestry and logging, mining and electric power sectors. The rate remained stable in the manufacturing sector and declined in the oil and gas extraction and construction sectors.

Reduced export demand curtails manufacturing

After four consecutive quarterly increases, the capacity utilization rate for the manufacturing sector remained unchanged at 88.5%, the same level as in the third quarter. The results for the 21 industry groups that make up this sector were almost uniformly shared between industries that increased their rate and those whose rate declined.

Manufacturing stalls

% (rate of capacity use)



In the transportation equipment manufacturing sector, industrial capacity utilization was 91.9%, down 0.1 from the previous quarter. The decrease in production for this group could largely be attributed to

a 1.7% drop in the production of motor vehicles in the fourth quarter.

Despite a slight increase in production in the fourth quarter, the chemical manufacturing group halted four straight quarterly increases in capacity utilization. Its rate slipped marginally from 92.7% to 92.6% as a gain in production was insufficient to offset an increase in production capacity.

Capacity utilization was down 3.5 points for primary metals manufacturers to a rate of 92.5%. This marked the most substantial decrease in this industry since the fourth quarter of 2000, when the rate also posted a decrease of 3.5 points. Lower production levels for the majority of components of this group accounted for the 2.5% decrease in production for this industry.

On the other hand, the furniture manufacturing industry benefited from the ongoing surge in residential construction. A strong increase in the production of household and institutional furniture and kitchen cabinets was a significant factor in the 3.4% rise in production for this industry. As a result, the rate for this industry climbed from 81.7% in the third quarter to 84.7% during the last three months of the year.

Among manufacturers of non-metallic mineral products, capacity utilization rose 2.5 points to a high of 93.0%. All of the main components of this group, particularly manufacturers of cement and concrete products, contributed to the 3.0% increase in production for this industry.

Manufacturers of metal products operated at 91.0% of their capacity in the fourth quarter, up 1.5 points from the previous quarter. This marked the first time that the rate for this industry exceeded 90%. The increase in production among manufacturers of metal architectural products and structural members was a strong factor in the positive results posted by this industry.

In the wood products manufacturing industry, capacity utilization continued to rise in the fourth quarter but at a slower pace than during the previous quarter. The rate for this industry was up from 96.7% to 97.4%.

The 1.8% increase in production among manufacturers of wood products was largely attributable to the increase in sawmill production.

Strong increase in the mining sector

In the mining sector, the rate shot up 3.5 points to 95.9% in the fourth quarter. This was the highest rate since the second quarter of 2001 when it hit 98.1%. Higher crude oil prices on international markets boosted drilling and rigging activities. As a result, production in the mining sector recorded a 4.0% gain.

In the electric power sector, a 3.0% increase in production was reflected in the rate, which climbed from 85.3% in the third quarter to 87.5% in the fourth.

The forestry sector increased its capacity use for the fifth quarter in a row. The rate rose by 0.9 points to a record high of 97.4%. However, this rate of growth was much slower than the rise of 5.9 points in the previous quarter. Production in this sector edged up 0.6% in the fourth quarter.

In the oil and gas extraction sector, the rate slid 0.5 points to 65.3% and production in the sector also declined by 0.5%.

In the construction sector, the growth in production capacity remained higher than the growth in production. This meant that the rate for construction fell from 84.9% in the third quarter to 84.5%.

Available on CANSIM: table 028-0002.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2821.

Data on industrial capacity utilization rates for the first quarter of 2005 will be released on June 9.

For more information or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality, contact Richard Landry (613-951-2579) or Mychèle Gagnon (613-951-0994), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

□

Industrial capacity utilization rates

	Third quarter 2004 ^r	Fourth quarter 2004	Third to fourth quarter 2004	2003 ^r	2004	2003 to 2004
	Annual average					
			percentage point change			percentage point change
Total industrial	85.7	86.0	0.3	83.0	85.0	2.0
Forestry and logging	96.5	97.4	0.9	86.7	93.5	6.8
Mining and oil and gas extraction	74.6	75.4	0.8	74.2	75.1	0.9
Oil and gas extraction	65.8	65.3	-0.5	66.5	66.4	-0.1
Mining	92.4	95.9	3.5	89.2	92.8	3.6
Electric power generation, transmission and distribution	85.3	87.5	2.2	85.6	85.3	-0.3
Construction	84.9	84.5	-0.4	88.4	85.7	-2.7
Manufacturing	88.5	88.5	0.0	83.0	87.0	4.0
Food	84.8	85.6	0.8	79.9	83.9	4.0
Beverage and tobacco products	75.4	75.7	0.3	75.7	75.4	-0.3
Beverage	78.4	79.2	0.8	78.3	78.6	0.3
Tobacco	65.8	64.4	-1.4	67.2	65.3	-1.9
Textile mills	79.1	77.6	-1.5	74.7	76.5	1.8
Textile product mills	79.8	81.4	1.6	78.0	77.8	-0.2
Clothing	69.8	67.7	-2.1	78.1	70.6	-7.5
Leather and allied products	65.0	69.1	4.1	67.4	65.5	-1.9
Wood products	96.7	97.4	0.7	92.0	95.6	3.6
Paper	92.6	92.8	0.2	91.1	91.3	0.2
Printing and related support activities	77.4	75.8	-1.6	75.3	75.7	0.4
Petroleum and coal products	93.0	91.2	-1.8	95.4	93.1	-2.3
Chemical	92.7	92.6	-0.1	84.3	90.3	6.0
Plastics and rubber products	90.8	90.3	-0.5	88.5	90.3	1.8
Plastic products	91.6	90.4	-1.2	88.9	90.7	1.8
Rubber products	87.6	89.7	2.1	86.8	88.3	1.5
Non-metallic mineral products	90.5	93.0	2.5	88.3	91.7	3.4
Primary metal	96.0	92.5	-3.5	92.4	94.8	2.4
Fabricated metal products	89.5	91.0	1.5	81.6	86.6	5.0
Machinery	89.6	90.6	1.0	78.1	86.1	8.0
Computer and electronic products	84.0	85.0	1.0	69.6	82.2	12.6
Electrical equipment, appliance and component	77.9	77.2	-0.7	71.2	76.9	5.7
Transportation equipment	92.0	91.9	-0.1	85.1	90.2	5.1
Furniture and related products	81.7	84.7	3.0	79.8	81.3	1.5
Miscellaneous manufacturing	83.3	79.5	-3.8	82.7	82.9	0.2

^r Revised figures.

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OTHER RELEASES

Aircraft movement statistics: Small airports

October 2004

The *October 2004 monthly report*, Vol. 2 (TP141, free) is available on Transport Canada's Web site at the following URL (<http://www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/Report/tp141e/tp141.htm>).

Note: The TP 141 monthly report is issued in two volumes. Volume 1 presents statistics for the major Canadian airports (i.e., those with NAV CANADA air traffic control towers or flight service stations). Volume 2 presents statistics for the smaller airports (i.e., those without air traffic control towers). Both volumes are available free upon release at Transport Canada's Web site.

For more information about this Web site, contact Michel Villeneuve (613-990-3825; villenm@tc.gc.ca), Transport Canada.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2715.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Kathie Davidson (613-951-0141; fax: 613-951-0010; aviationstatistics@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Cement

January 2005

Data on cement are now available for January.

Available on CANSIM: tables 303-0060 and 303-0061.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2140.

The publication *Cement* (44-001-XIB) has been discontinued.

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. ■

Construction type plywood

December 2004

Data on construction type plywood are now available for December.

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

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2138.

The December 2004 issue of *Construction Type Plywood*, Vol. 52, no. 12 (35-001-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), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Sawmills and planing mills

December 2004

Data on sawmills and planing mills are now available for December.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0009.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2134 and 2135.

The December 2004 issue of *Sawmills and Planing Mills*, Vol. 58, no. 12 (35-003-XIB, \$10/\$93) 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

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no. 12
Catalogue number 35-003-XIB (\$10/\$93).

Industry Price Indexes, January 2005, Vol. 31, no. 1
Catalogue number 62-011-XIE (\$19/\$175).

Industry Price Indexes, January 2005, Vol. 31, no. 1
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Catalogue 11-001-XIE (F) English 11-001-XIE04-0007-0-005	
 The Daily	
Statistics Canada	
Thursday, June 5, 1997 For release at 9:30 a.m.	
MAJOR RELEASES	
● Urban transit, 1995 Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about six trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.	2
● Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995 Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses also noticeably weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.	4
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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001-XIE.

Published each working day by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-H, R.H. Coats Bldg., Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

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