Catalogue 11-001-XIE (Français 11-001-XIF) ISSN 0827-0465

The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, March 7, 2005
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time

Major releases

Other releases

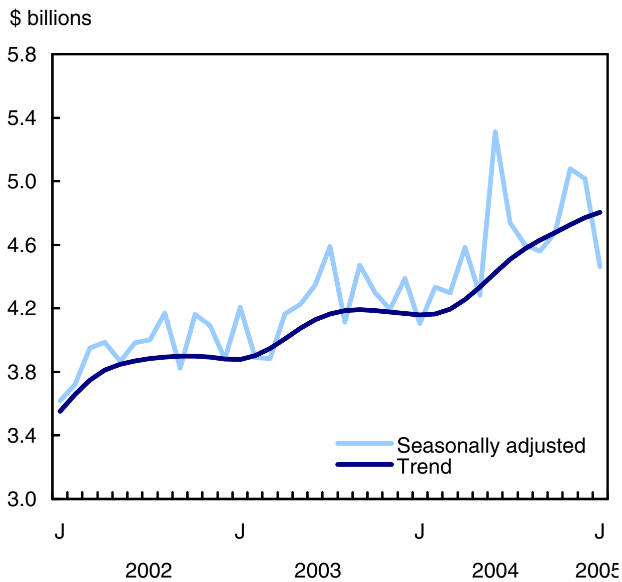
Major releases

Building permits

January 2005

Construction intentions cooled down in January as municipalities issued $4.5 billion worth of building permits, down 11.0% from December and the lowest monthly level since May 2004.

Total value of permits declined in January



The value of building permits increased for only two components — multi-family homes and commercial projects.

In total, the value of residential permits fell 6.8% to $3.0 billion in January. This was primarily the result of a marked decline in the single-family component in the Toronto metropolitan area, where the value of such permits plunged from a record high in December to nearly a six-year low.

The value of non-residential permits amounted to $1.4 billion in January, down 18.8% from December and the second decline in a row. This level, the lowest since March 2004, was due primarily to marked retreats in the industrial and in the institutional components.

Despite January's overall retreat, construction intentions remained high by historical standards. The total value of permits in January was only 3.6% lower than the average monthly level in 2004, which was a record year.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.*
>
> *The Building Permits Survey covers 2,380 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 (e.g., waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.*

Furthermore, 2005 has started on a faster pace than last year. January's total value of permits was 8.8% higher than the level recorded in January 2004.

Of the 28 census metropolitan areas, 14 showed a faster start compared with January 2004. Edmonton and Hamilton had the strongest starts.

In Edmonton, the strength came from both the residential and non-residential sectors. In Hamilton, the vigorous housing sector played a key role. The low level of construction intentions for single-family dwellings and non-residential buildings gave Toronto the slowest start.

Housing: Single- and multi-family permits move in opposite directions

The value of single-family permits totalled $1.9 billion in January, down 19.6% from December and its lowest level since February 2004.

In contrast, the value of multi-family permits jumped 29.0% to $1.1 billion. This gain followed a 27.4% drop in December.

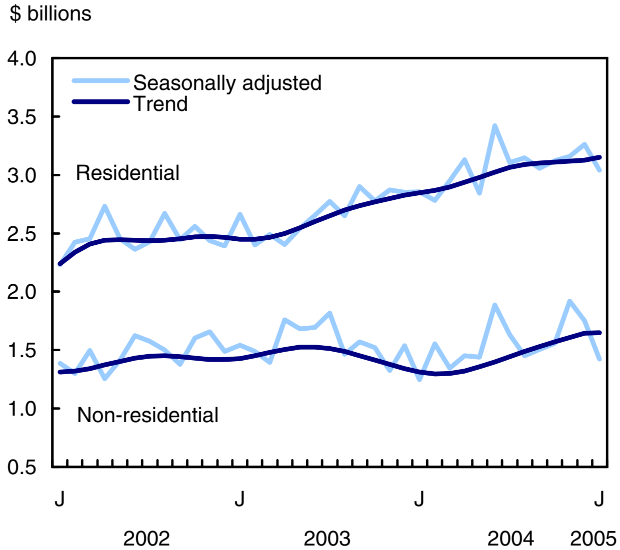
Municipalities approved 18,910 new dwelling units in January, down 6.0% from the average monthly number of units approved last year.

Year-over-year, the overall level of housing permits in January was 6.4% higher than construction intentions in the same month last year. The value of single-family permits was 1.6% higher, whereas the value of multi-family permits in January was up 16.1%.

Low mortgage rates are still having a positive impact on the housing sector, as are a favourable labour market and high consumer confidence.

However, according to the latest intentions for public and private investment for 2005, spending in the housing sector is expected to remain flat in 2005, after hitting a record high last year.

Both residential and non-residential sectors declined



Provincially, strong advances from December in British Columbia, Alberta, and to a lesser extent Quebec, were offset by a strong decline in the housing permits in Ontario.

Steep declines in industrial and institutional permits

Builders took out fewer institutional and industrial permits in January, while the value of commercial permits showed a small gain.

Industrial permits fell 51.7% to $155 million, their lowest level since December 1995. This was largely the result of a decline in demand for plants buildings in Ontario.

Industrial permits in Ontario plunged 61.2% to $77 million, the largest drop among the provinces. Except for Saskatchewan, all provinces posted declines.

Permits in the institutional component fell 40.2% to $295 million, the second consecutive monthly decline, after the highest level recorded in November for the year 2004. This was mainly the result of lower demand for permits for educational buildings in Ontario.

Construction intentions in the commercial sector showed continuing strength, increasing 3.8% to $973 million. This was the third highest level since the record set in August 1989. Higher value of building permits for hotels and restaurants in Alberta and strong construction intentions for office buildings and warehouses in Quebec were behind the gain.

A level of uncertainty exists in economic indicators, mainly with respect to manufacturing and commercial sectors.

According to the latest Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers have begun to retrench following the rapid run-up in the value of the Canadian dollar and substantial increases in the price of crude oil and other raw material inputs in 2004. This has dampened the outlook for the first quarter of 2005.

Manufacturers are now anticipating lower production and employment levels in the coming months, resulting from dissatisfaction with the current levels of orders and inventories. On the other hand, in 2004, retailers experienced their fifth best annual sales gain of the last 10 years.

Among the provinces, the strongest decline in non-residential permits in January occurred in Ontario where they fell 37.0% to $551 million. It was the province's lowest monthly value for non-residential intentions since April 2002. All three components recorded strong declines. In contrast, the strongest increase occurred in Quebec, where intentions were up 25.9% to $273 million.

Of the 28 census metropolitan areas, 14 recorded monthly declines in the value of non-residential permits. Toronto experienced the largest monthly decline, the result of a retreat in all three components. Montreal recorded the strongest increase, the result of high construction intentions for office buildings and warehouses.

On a year-over-year basis, non-residential intentions in January were up 14.1% from January last year. This increase was driven solely by the commercial component (+29.5%). Intentions in the institutional component were down 3.7%, while those in the industrial component were 17.9% lower than a year ago.

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

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2802.

The January 2005 issue of *Building Permits* (64-001-XIE, $15/$156) will soon be available.

The February 2005 building permit estimate will be released on April 6.

To order data, contact Brad Sernoskie (613-951-4646 or 1-800-579-8533; *bdp_information@statcan.ca*). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

□

Value of building permits, by census metropolitan area[1]

	December 2004[r]	January 2005[p]	December 2004 to January 2005	January 2004	January 2004 to January 2005
	seasonally adjusted				
	$ millions		% change	$ millions	% change
St. John's	26.7	25.4	-4.6	28.3	-10.1
Halifax	36.6	29.4	-19.7	33.2	-11.4
Saint John	7.4	7.3	-1.0	8.7	-15.6
Saguenay	4.5	6.5	44.8	4.4	48.2
Québec	44.1	50.1	13.6	79.8	-37.3
Sherbrooke	8.4	14.5	72.1	13.9	4.7
Trois-Rivières	9.5	13.3	40.8	7.9	69.3
Montréal	420.7	473.8	12.6	568.1	-16.6
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	154.9	112.6	-27.3	112.1	0.5
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. Part)	61.3	21.4	-65.1	31.9	-33.1
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	93.7	91.3	-2.6	80.2	13.8
Kingston	7.5	9.4	25.0	13.2	-28.5
Oshawa	24.6	63.9	160.1	40.8	56.9
Toronto	1,584.4	849.9	-46.4	1,003.6	-15.3
Hamilton	61.4	93.6	52.5	51.0	83.6
St. Catharines–Niagara	68.4	33.8	-50.6	46.5	-27.4
Kitchener	133.9	68.0	-49.2	70.4	-3.4
London	65.2	54.3	-16.8	87.0	-37.6
Windsor	57.3	40.0	-30.2	36.3	10.2
Greater Sudbury	7.8	13.0	65.5	1.3	924.8
Thunder Bay	6.7	16.6	149.0	4.4	275.6
Winnipeg	76.2	39.0	-48.8	50.4	-22.5
Regina	11.5	35.7	209.3	20.1	77.2
Saskatoon	27.2	18.7	-31.3	14.4	29.6
Calgary	259.8	198.4	-23.6	159.5	24.4
Edmonton	149.2	245.2	64.4	169.3	44.8
Abbotsford	7.4	13.2	76.8	8.7	50.7
Vancouver	403.8	321.2	-20.5	417.4	-23.1
Victoria	56.6	29.8	-47.3	30.8	-3.1

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
1. *Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the census metropolitan areas.*
Note: *Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.*

Value of building permits, by province and territory

	December 2004[r]	January 2005[p]	December 2004 to January 2005	January 2004	January 2004 to January 2005
	seasonally adjusted				
	$ millions		% change	$ millions	% change
Canada	**5,014.3**	**4,462.6**	**-11.0**	**4,103.0**	**8.8**
Residential	3,262.4	3,039.4	-6.8	2,856.0	6.4
Non-residential	1,751.9	1,423.2	-18.8	1,246.9	14.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	37.4	38.2	2.1	34.4	11.3
Residential	28.9	30.9	7.2	26.2	18.1
Non-residential	8.6	7.3	-15.3	8.2	-10.8
Prince Edward Island	18.1	12.9	-28.7	13.0	-0.5
Residential	10.5	11.6	10.2	7.9	47.6
Non-residential	7.5	1.3	-83.1	5.1	-75.0
Nova Scotia	79.5	61.9	-22.2	64.2	-3.6
Residential	57.2	45.0	-21.4	43.3	3.9
Non-residential	22.3	16.9	-24.2	20.9	-19.4
New Brunswick	45.5	43.1	-5.2	50.6	-14.8
Residential	32.2	31.0	-3.7	44.6	-30.5
Non-residential	13.3	12.1	-9.0	6.0	102.7
Quebec	824.8	908.7	10.2	957.9	-5.1
Residential	607.8	635.4	4.6	690.4	-8.0
Non-residential	217.1	273.3	25.9	267.5	2.2
Ontario	2,538.0	1,864.6	-26.5	1,742.8	7.0
Residential	1,663.1	1,313.4	-21.0	1,154.8	13.7
Non-residential	874.9	551.2	-37.0	587.9	-6.2
Manitoba	96.7	71.5	-26.1	71.9	-0.6
Residential	54.3	45.4	-16.4	47.7	-4.8
Non-residential	42.4	26.1	-38.5	24.2	7.7
Saskatchewan	53.0	68.3	28.8	44.7	52.7
Residential	27.7	30.7	10.8	25.1	22.3
Non-residential	25.3	37.5	48.5	19.6	91.9
Alberta	661.8	742.6	12.2	475.1	56.3
Residential	377.9	426.3	12.8	339.0	25.8
Non-residential	283.9	316.3	11.4	136.0	132.5
British Columbia	648.0	647.0	-0.2	640.3	1.0
Residential	397.0	466.3	17.5	473.3	-1.5
Non-residential	251.0	180.7	-28.0	167.1	8.1
Yukon	3.1	2.7	-12.6	2.5	6.8
Residential	3.1	2.5	-20.0	2.1	19.0
Non-residential	0.0	0.2	1,115.0	0.5	-47.6
Northwest Territories	8.3	0.6	-93.2	5.6	-90.0
Residential	2.6	0.3	-90.4	1.6	-84.4
Non-residential	5.7	0.3	-94.5	4.0	-92.2
Nunavut	0.0	0.6	2,396.0	0.0	1,980.0
Residential	0.0	0.6	2,252.0	0.0	...
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	...	0.0	20.0

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
... *Data not applicable.*
Note: *Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.*

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Other releases

Farm Product Price Index

December 2004

Prices farmers received for their commodities fell 4.2% in December compared with the same month in 2003 in the wake of a sharp decline in crop prices, which offset a gain in prices for livestock.

Overall, producers received prices for crops that were 17.4% below levels in December 2003, continuing a downward trend in year-over-year price changes that began in July 2003, according to the Farm Product Price Index (FPPI). Farmers received lower prices for grains, oilseeds and specialty crops.

On the other hand, prices for livestock and animal products were 7.7% higher in December 2004 than they were a year earlier. This was the seventh consecutive year-over-year increase in the overall livestock and animal products index. Prior to this series of gains, prices for livestock and animal products had been falling for 12 consecutive months.

Prices rose in December for all livestock and animal product indexes. Gains ranged from 2.3% for cattle and calves to 28.8% for hogs.

On a monthly basis, prices farmers received for their commodities edged up 0.9% in December from November, the first overall increase since May. Again, this gain occurred on the strength of rising prices for livestock and animal products.

The FPPI (1997=100) stood at 93.0 in December, up from a revised November index of 92.2. It was the first increase since May when the index stood at 104.8.

Prices farmers received for crops fell 4.0% from November, as all crop indexes except potatoes and fruit declined.

The grains index continued its monthly slide which began last June, dropping 7.5% from November. Poor growing and harvest conditions played havoc on the quality of this crop, with estimates that less than half will grade number 1 and 2. Combined with a record US corn crop and a rising Canadian dollar, this has put pressure on grain prices.

Prices for oilseeds fell 1.9% in December to the lowest index level since October 2001. Oilseed prices have been plagued by a record US soybean crop, expectations of a bumper South American soybean crop and a rising Canadian dollar. It was the seventh consecutive monthly decrease, as Canadian farmers harvested the second largest canola crop on record and a record soybean crop.

Prices for livestock and animal products were up 3.4% in December from the revised November index, as cattle and calf prices rose 6.8%. The price index for cattle and calves has rebounded since September 2003 when the border with the United States re-opened to exports of select cuts of beef. However, prolonged closure to live cattle exports, a record number of cattle on Canadian farms and a backlog of slaughter animals continue to depress cattle prices from their pre-BSE levels.

Hog prices fell for the seventh consecutive month, the downward pressure coming from large North American supplies and a stronger Canadian dollar. Also in October, the US Department of Commerce issued a temporary duty on imports of live Canadian hogs.

Available on CANSIM: tables 002-0021 and 002-0022.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5040.

The December 2004 issue of *Farm Product Price Index*, Vol. 4, no. 12 (21-007-XIB, free) is now available online. From the *Our products and services* page, under *Browse our Internet publications*, choose *Free*, then *Agriculture*.

For general information or to order data, call 1-800-465-1991. To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gail-Ann Breese (204-983-3445; fax: 204-983-7543; *gail-ann.breese@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. □

Farm Product Price Index (1997=100)

	December 2003[r]	November 2004[r]	December 2004[p]	December 2003 to December 2004	November 2004 to December 2004
				% change	
Farm Product Price Index	**97.1**	**92.2**	**93.0**	**-4.2**	**0.9**
Crops	**99.4**	**85.5**	**82.1**	**-17.4**	**-4.0**
Grains	95.6	63.6	58.8	-38.5	-7.5
Oilseeds	94.0	83.0	81.4	-13.4	-1.9
Specialty crops	111.2	94.2	93.0	-16.4	-1.3
Fruit	99.5	98.1	100.0	0.5	1.9
Vegetables	111.5	113.5	112.9	1.3	-0.5
Potatoes	111.8	124.2	129.1	15.5	3.9
Livestock and animal products	**95.2**	**99.1**	**102.5**	**7.7**	**3.4**
Cattle and calves	95.4	91.4	97.6	2.3	6.8
Hogs	64.2	85.1	82.7	28.8	-2.8
Poultry	96.4	99.4	101.7	5.5	2.3
Eggs	102.0	106.1	106.0	3.9	-0.1
Dairy	120.5	125.0	124.8	3.6	-0.2

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*

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New products

Farm Product Price Index, December 2004, Vol. 4, no. 12
Catalogue number 21-007-XIB
(free).

Exports by Country, January to December 2004, Vol. 61, no. 4
Catalogue number 65-003-XMB ($67/$221).

Exports by Country, January to December 2004, Vol. 61, no. 4
Catalogue number 65-003-XPB ($133/$441).

Canada's Balance of International Payments, Fourth quarter 2004, Vol. 52, no. 4
Catalogue number 67-001-XIE ($32/$100).

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

Catalogue numbers with an -XWE, -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB or –XDE are electronic versions on diskette and -XCB or –XCE are electronic versions on compact disc.

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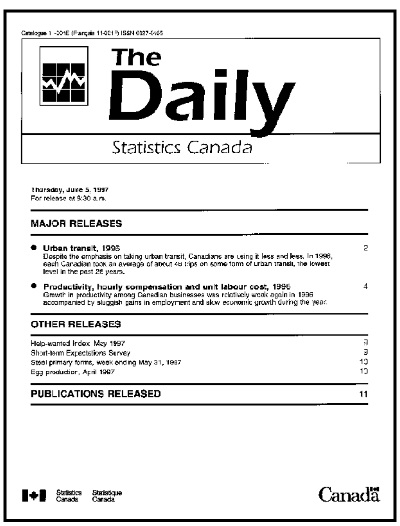
Catalogue 11-001E (Français 11-001F) ISSN 0827-0465

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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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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