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Releases

Wholesale trade, July 2005 — 2
Wholesale sales declined for the first time in six months, falling 0.5% in July. The weakness in sales was attributable to lower demand for building materials, and machinery and electronic equipment.

Leading indicators, August 2005 — 6
Led by strong domestic demand, the leading indicator posted a 0.3% gain in August, the same as July.

Travel between Canada and other countries, July 2005 — 8

Deliveries of major grains, August 2005 — 9

Cereals and oilseeds review, July 2005 — 10

Crushing statistics, August 2005 — 10

Construction Union Wage Rate Index, August 2005 — 10

New products — 11

Releases

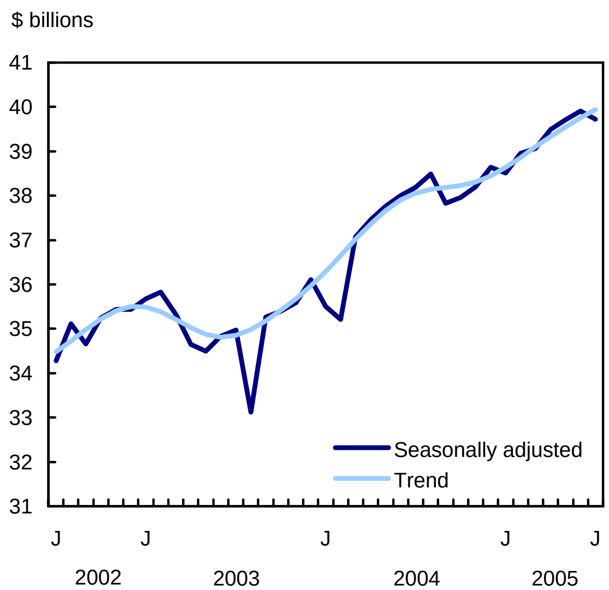
Wholesale trade

July 2005

Wholesale sales fell for the first time in six months in July when $39.7 billion worth of goods and services were sold, down 0.5% compared with June.

In July, four of the seven sectors, whose sales accounted for 67% of total sales, posted declines. Most of the drop in total sales was attributable to declines in the building materials (-2.8%) and machinery and electronic equipment (-1.8%) sectors. July's drop was partly offset by increased sales of "other products" (mainly chemicals and other farm supplies).

First sales decline in six months



Even though the overall sales trend has remained positive, it has moderated since July 2004, slowed primarily by weaker motor vehicles sales. Previously, total wholesale sales went through a period of strong growth that began in September 2003.

In constant dollars, wholesale sales slipped 0.1% in July.

Wholesale sales of building materials tumble

After advancing 0.7% in June, wholesale sales in the building materials sector fell 2.8% in July to $5.4 billion. All groups in this sector contributed to the decrease.

Lumber and millwork sales fell 9.3%, their fifth decline in six months. A sizable share of these five decreases was attributable to the export market, which has shown rather lacklustre results since March 2005. Despite the strength of the construction market in the United States since the start of the year, Canadian exports of lumber and sawmill products have plummeted owing to a steep drop in prices. These exports have fallen 8.2% since February 2005. Wholesalers were responsible for approximately 25% of lumber exports. The large sales decline in July contributed to a steep increase in the inventory-to-sales ratio (up from 1.06 in June to 1.17).

Metal products wholesalers also saw sales slump in July (-1.4%), the ninth decrease in a row. This poor performance is partly due to the weakening of steel prices since the start of the year as a result of sharply increased production in China.

In turn, wholesalers in the building supplies group posted a 1.1% decline in July. Unlike the other two groups in the sector, the building supplies group has experienced a period of almost uninterrupted growth since the fall of 2003, owing to the strong performance of the renovation and construction market in Canada. The building supplies group has been less affected by price fluctuations on international markets, since most of the sales of this group are to the Canadian market.

Lower sales of machinery and electronic equipment

After two consecutive months of increases, sales in the machinery and electronic equipment sector fell 1.8% in July. This was only the second decline in seven months. Despite the decline, the value of machinery and electronic equipment sales remains high ($8.4 billion).

The strength in this sector is largely attributable to sales of machinery. Substantial investment in the petroleum and gas, mining and transportation industries, concentrated in the western provinces, may have contributed to this strong showing. Since January 2004, the machinery and equipment group has seen a sharp increase in sales, which largely depend on business investment. The rise in the Canadian dollar, combined with low interest rates, has greatly favoured business investment.

Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador post the steepest declines

Wholesalers in Prince Edward Island registered a second consecutive drop in sales (-8.6%) in July. Contractions were reported in numerous trade groups, including food products (mainly fish products) and machinery and electronic equipment. Since July 2003, this province's wholesale sales have been relatively stable.

Wholesale sales fell 3.6% in Newfoundland and Labrador in July, as a result of lower sales in the food products and lumber group. More than one-third of the province's sales were attributable to these two groups. Despite this drop, wholesale sales in the province have generally been rising since December 2004 following a period of contraction that began in January 2004.

Ontario posted large decreases in sales of machinery and equipment and motor vehicles. Together, these two groups represent approximately one-quarter of the province's total sales. Ontario wholesalers have generally recorded rising sales since the start of the year.

Inventory ratio up slightly

A moderate 0.2% increase in inventories, combined with the 0.5% decline in sales, caused the inventory-to-sales ratio to rise to 1.20 in July from 1.19 in June. Since October 2004, this ratio has generally remained stable after a downward period that began in October 2003.

Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0007 to 081-0010.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2401.

The July issue of *Wholesale Trade* (63-008-XIE, $15/$150) will be available soon.

Wholesale trade estimates for August will be released October 19.

For data or general information, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean Lebreux (613-951-4907; 613-293-3368 or *jean.lebreux@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division.

□

Wholesale merchants' sales

	July 2004	April 2005[r]	May 2005[r]	June 2005[r]	July 2005[p]	June to July 2005	July 2004 to July 2005
	seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Total, wholesale sales	**38,191**	**39,496**	**39,716**	**39,905**	**39,725**	**-0.5**	**4.0**
Farm products	**402**	**430**	**414**	**416**	**418**	**0.5**	**4.1**
Food, beverages and tobacco products	**7,394**	**7,230**	**7,183**	**7,289**	**7,283**	**-0.1**	**-1.5**
Food products	6,707	6,581	6,577	6,670	6,673	0.1	-0.5
Alcohol and tobacco	687	649	606	619	610	-1.5	-11.3
Personal and household goods	**5,218**	**5,592**	**5,576**	**5,688**	**5,650**	**-0.7**	**8.3**
Apparel	692	795	843	858	798	-7.1	15.3
Household and personal products	2,370	2,477	2,441	2,553	2,536	-0.7	7.0
Pharmaceuticals	2,156	2,319	2,291	2,276	2,317	1.8	7.5
Automotive products	**7,668**	**7,603**	**7,734**	**7,685**	**7,740**	**0.7**	**0.9**
Motor vehicles	6,142	6,059	6,214	6,089	6,150	1.0	0.1
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	1,526	1,544	1,520	1,595	1,590	-0.3	4.1
Building materials	**5,266**	**5,665**	**5,482**	**5,523**	**5,366**	**-2.8**	**1.9**
Building supplies	2,943	3,316	3,200	3,291	3,256	-1.1	10.6
Metal products	1,131	1,135	1,127	1,101	1,086	-1.4	-4.0
Lumber and millwork	1,193	1,214	1,154	1,130	1,025	-9.3	-14.1
Machinery and electronic equipment	**7,753**	**8,041**	**8,292**	**8,588**	**8,437**	**-1.8**	**8.8**
Machinery and equipment	3,366	3,697	3,854	3,886	3,844	-1.1	14.2
Computer and other electronic equipment	2,696	2,565	2,654	2,895	2,783	-3.9	3.2
Office and professional equipment	1,691	1,780	1,785	1,807	1,810	0.2	7.0
Other products	**4,491**	**4,934**	**5,035**	**4,717**	**4,830**	**2.4**	**7.6**
Total: Excluding automobiles	**30,523**	**31,893**	**31,983**	**32,220**	**31,985**	**-0.7**	**4.8**
Sales, province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	210	218	225	226	218	-3.6	3.9
Prince Edward Island	50	49	50	50	46	-8.6	-9.3
Nova Scotia	503	523	510	509	516	1.4	2.6
New Brunswick	434	414	418	424	413	-2.6	-5.0
Quebec	7,515	7,474	7,506	7,638	7,615	-0.3	1.3
Ontario	19,869	20,095	20,170	20,383	20,216	-0.8	1.7
Manitoba	944	1,111	1,069	1,066	1,049	-1.6	11.2
Saskatchewan	989	1,144	1,180	1,094	1,121	2.5	13.3
Alberta	3,863	4,545	4,579	4,521	4,587	1.5	18.7
British Columbia	3,795	3,899	3,980	3,964	3,916	-1.2	3.2
Yukon	7	7	7	8	9	13.8	26.5
Northwest Territories	13	15	20	19	18	-5.2	44.4
Nunavut	1	1	2	4	2	-36.7	89.9

r *Revised.*
p *Preliminary.*

Wholesale merchants' inventories and inventory-to-sales ratio

	July 2004	April 2005r	May 2005r	June 2005r	July 2005p	June to July 2005	July 2004 to July 2005	June 2005r	July 2005p
	Wholesale inventories							Inventory-to-sales ratio	
	seasonally adjusted								
	$ millions					% change			
Inventories	**44,590**	**47,199**	**47,399**	**47,519**	**47,613**	**0.2**	**6.8**	**1.19**	**1.20**
Farm products	150	153	172	179	183	1.9	21.7	0.43	0.44
Food products	4,372	4,531	4,503	4,512	4,552	0.9	4.1	0.68	0.68
Alcohol and tobacco	287	294	280	272	269	-1.1	-6.4	0.44	0.44
Apparel	1,430	1,628	1,605	1,600	1,562	-2.4	9.2	1.86	1.96
Household and personal products	3,438	3,465	3,658	3,770	3,586	-4.9	4.3	1.48	1.41
Pharmaceuticals	2,582	2,762	2,825	2,802	2,875	2.6	11.4	1.23	1.24
Motor vehicles	4,002	4,127	4,076	4,178	4,183	0.1	4.5	0.69	0.68
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	3,301	3,082	3,144	3,103	3,334	7.4	1.0	1.95	2.10
Building supplies	4,356	4,858	4,837	4,904	4,945	0.9	13.5	1.49	1.52
Metal products	2,100	2,368	2,418	2,404	2,363	-1.7	12.5	2.18	2.18
Lumber and millwork	1,117	1,195	1,175	1,195	1,194	-0.1	6.9	1.06	1.17
Machinery and equipment	8,315	8,926	8,913	8,878	8,789	-1.0	5.7	2.28	2.29
Computer and other electronic equipment	1,425	1,391	1,383	1,455	1,509	3.7	5.9	0.50	0.54
Office and professional equipment	2,550	2,485	2,537	2,443	2,503	2.5	-1.9	1.35	1.38
Other products	5,165	5,934	5,871	5,824	5,766	-1.0	11.6	1.23	1.19

r *Revised.*
p *Preliminary.*

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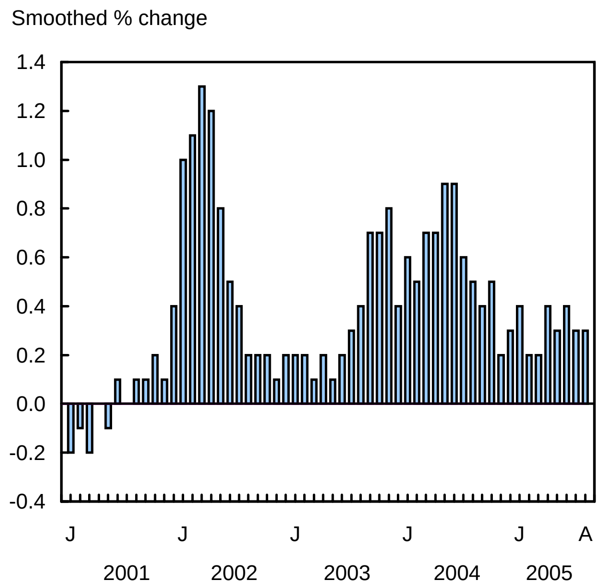
Leading indicators

August 2005

Led by strong domestic demand, the leading indicator posted a 0.3% gain in August, the same as July. Six of the ten components rose, while one was unchanged. Manufacturing continued to weaken.

Composite leading indicator



Consumer spending remained a well-spring of growth. Sales of durable goods rose briskly (+1.1%) for the third consecutive month, as auto sales were spurred by discount programs. These three straight gains were the largest in more than two years.

The growth of housing demand continued for the fourth month in a row. House sales hit another record high in August, led by Western Canada. Housing starts fell 20%, their largest monthly drop since March 1995. Central Canada led the retreat after a sharp increase in vacancy rates. In Montréal alone, vacant multiple units jumped 24% in July and August. Conversely, housing starts continued to rise in Alberta. Western Canada led the nation in the growth of construction jobs in August.

Business and personal services were another source of strong growth, with jobs up 0.7% in August, the largest gain since December 2002. Support services for business, such as credit bureaus, call centres and document management have led this increase, rising by one-quarter in the past year. Western Canada led these gains, fuelled by the booming resource sector. Energy and utility stocks also drove another gain in the stock market. Energy stocks have nearly doubled in value since August 2004.

Manufacturing continued to lag due to widespread weakness, especially forestry products. The drop in new orders worsened. Inventories stopped rising, but the ratio of shipments to stocks resumed its slide. Shipments have fallen for four straight months, their longest slide since late in 2001. The average workweek stayed unchanged.

The US leading index eked out a second straight 0.2% gain. As in Canada, the US leading indicator was restrained by weakness in manufacturing. In particular, new orders for consumer goods fell as sales slowed over the summer.

Available on CANSIM: table 377-0003.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1601.

For more information on the economy, consult the September issue of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Vol. 18, no. 9 (11-010-XIB, $19/$182), now available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627; *ceo@statcan.ca*) Current Economic Analysis Group. □

Leading indicators

	March 2005	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	Last month of data available
							% change
Composite leading indicator (1992=100)	202.4	203.3	204.0	204.9	205.6	206.3	0.3
Housing index (1992=100)[1]	138.1	138.2	138.9	143.0	145.8	146.2	0.3
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,612	2,619	2,620	2,625	2,631	2,649	0.7
S&P/TSX stock price index (1975=1,000)	9,352	9,420	9,492	9,632	9,783	9,994	2.2
Money supply, M1 ($ millions, 1992)[2]	134,113	136,047	137,410	138,407	138,000	137,866	-0.1
U.S. Conference Board leading indicator (1992=100)[3]	124.4	124.6	124.7	124.6	124.9	125.1	0.2
Manufacturing							
Average workweek (hours)	38.2	38.2	38.2	38.3	38.3	38.3	0.0
New orders, durables ($ millions, 1992)[4]	24,675	24,821	24,961	24,963	24,843	24,282	-2.3
Shipments/inventories of finished goods[4]	1.88	1.87	1.86	1.84	1.84	1.82	-0.02[5]
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales ($ millions, 1992)[4]	2,148	2,166	2,185	2,215	2,237	2,249	0.6
Other durable goods sales ($ millions, 1992)[4]	7,771	7,821	7,831	7,924	7,996	8,082	1.1
Unsmoothed composite leading indicator	204.3	205.0	204.9	207.1	206.6	207.8	0.6

1. *Composite index of housing starts (units) and house sales (multiple listing service).*
2. *Deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items.*
3. *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the month immediately preceding.*
4. *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the second preceding month.*
5. *Difference from previous month.*

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Travel between Canada and other countries
July 2005

Travel to Canada fell to its lowest level in nearly two years in July, pulled down by the lowest number of same-day car travellers from the United States on record.

An estimated 3.0 million people travelled to Canada in July, down 2.7% from June and the lowest figure since August 2003. Contributing to this decline was the 7.0% drop in same-day car trips from the United States. In July, only 1.2 million Americans headed north on same-day car trips, the lowest month on record. (Unless otherwise specified, data are seasonally adjusted.)

Overall, travel to Canada from the United States fell 2.9% compared to June and overnight travel declined 1.2%. Overnight plane travel registered the largest drop at 2.9%, as only 325,000 US residents took the plane north, the lowest figure in over a year.

Travel from overseas countries dropped 1.0% to 393,000 travellers, with 8 of our 12 largest markets recording declines in July. Hong Kong and China recorded declines of 8.6% and 7.6% respectively. Taiwan, however, registered an 8.0% increase and there were 5.0% more visitors from the United Kingdom, our largest market.

Canadians continued to travel abroad in large numbers as 3.6 million Canadian residents travelled outside the country, up 0.5% from June.

An estimated 3.1 million Canadians headed to the United States in July, up 1.5% from the previous month. This includes over 1.2 million making overnight trips to the United States.

The number of both overnight and same-day trips by Canadian residents south of the border rose in July. Canadian residents also made 432,000 overnight plane trips to the United States, up 2.1% from June and the highest figure for plane travel since March 2001. Overnight car travel to the United States increased 2.5% to more than 700,000 visitors while overnight travel by other modes declined.

Over 1.8 million Canadians made same-day car trips south in July, up 1.0% from the previous month and the first increase in four months.

Canadian travel to overseas countries fell for the second consecutive month, dropping to its lowest level since November of last year as 5.8% fewer Canadians went to overseas countries in July compared to June. However, the 500,000 trips taken to overseas countries in July was a record high for the month.

Between June and July, the Canadian dollar gained in value against most major international currencies including the US dollar (+1.4%), the euro (+2.5%), the British pound (+5.3%) and Japanese yen (+4.6%).

Available on CANSIM: tables 427-0001 to 427-0006.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5005.

Note: Same day and overnight data for United States residents entering by commercial plane, train, commercial boat or other methods (for example, by foot or motorcycle) and any summation of these not seasonally adjusted series have been revised for each month of the fourth quarter of 2004.

Same day and overnight data for Canadian residents returning from the United States by commercial plane, private plane, train, commercial boat or other methods (for example, by foot or motorcycle) and any summation of these not seasonally adjusted series have been revised for each month of the fourth quarter of 2004.

The July issue of *International Travel, Advance Information*, Vol. 21, no. 7 (66-001-PIE, $7/$59) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-307-3382; 613-951-7608; fax: 613-951-9040; *cult.tourstats@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Frances Kremarik (613-951-4240; *frances.kremarik@statcan.ca*), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. □

Travel between Canada and other countries

	June 2005[r]	July 2005[p]	June to July 2005	July 2005	July 2004 to July 2005
	seasonally adjusted			unadjusted	
	'000		% change	'000	% change
Canadian trips abroad[1]	**3,592**	**3,608**	**0.5**	**4,424**	**8.3**
to the United States	3,062	3,109	1.5	3,975	8.5
to Other Countries	530	500	-5.8	449	6.5
Same-day car trips to the United States	1,797	1,814	1.0	2,198	6.5
Total trips, one or more nights	1,756	1,750	-0.4	2,183	10.7
United States[2]	1,226	1,251	2.0	1,734	11.8
Car	705	723	2.5	1,226	13.4
Plane	423	432	2.1	344	12.6
Other modes of transportation	98	96	-2.2	164	-0.4
Other countries[3]	530	500	-5.8	449	6.5
Travel to Canada[1]	**3,090**	**3,007**	**-2.7**	**5,345**	**-4.8**
from the United States	2,693	2,614	-2.9	4,653	-6.5
from Other Countries	397	393	-1.0	691	8.1
Same-day car trips from the United States	1,287	1,197	-7.0	1,906	-9.5
Total trips, one or more nights	1,622	1,605	-1.1	3,197	-1.5
United States[2]	1,239	1,224	-1.2	2,527	-3.8
Car	760	748	-1.5	1,640	-5.2
Plane	335	325	-2.9	522	-3.0
Other modes of transportation	144	151	4.5	365	1.9
Other countries[3]	383	380	-0.9	670	8.0
Most important overseas markets[4]					
United Kingdom	81	85	5.0	134	4.2
Japan	40	38	-4.3	46	-7.6
France	32	32	-1.2	58	7.9
Germany	30	29	-3.1	54	-0.5
Australia	19	19	0.1	25	20.8
Mexico	18	17	-5.9	43	6.8
South Korea	17	16	-4.3	30	10.8
China	11	10	-7.6	15	22.5
Netherlands	10	10	1.5	25	-0.5
Hong Kong	11	10	-8.6	18	4.1
Taiwan	8	9	8.0	15	6.8
Italy	9	9	-4.4	15	8.6

p *Preliminary figures.*
r *Revised figures.*
1. *Totals exceed the sum of "same-day car trips" and "total trips, one or more nights" because they include all of the same-day trips.*
2. *Estimates for the United States include counts of cars and buses, and estimated numbers for planes, trains, boats and other methods.*
3. *Figures for other countries exclude same-day entries by land only, via the United States.*
4. *Includes same-day and one or more night trips.*

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Deliveries of major grains
August 2005

Data on August grain deliveries are now available.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0001.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3403, 3404 and 3443.

The August issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120) will be available in October.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Karen Gray (204-983-2856; *karen.gray@statcan.ca*), or Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Cereals and oilseeds review

July 2005

In August, the weather premium in Chicago soybean futures' prices, based on drought during July and early August, disappeared with improved growing conditions, with the official production forecast exceeding market expectations and on subdued commercial and export demand. Corn prices declined on higher than expected estimates of US corn production and concerns that, even if later reports from the United States Department of Agriculture further reduce yields, carryout stocks plus new crop supplies would be burdensome.

Winnipeg canola futures' prices lost about $25 a tonne due to the favourable crop outlook, routine export demand and brisk farm deliveries. Feed barley futures' prices declined marginally despite spillover pressure from Chicago corn, slow end-user demand and expectations of a sizeable Canadian barley crop.

The data from the July issue of the *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* are now available. The information includes data on production, stocks, prices, domestic processing, exports, farmers' deliveries and supply-disposition analyses.

The August situation report, an overview of current market conditions, both domestic and international, is also included in the July issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120), which will be available in September.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Les Macartney (613-951-8714; *les.macartney@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Crushing statistics

August 2005

Oilseed processors crushed 239,125 metric tonnes of canola in August. Oil production last month totalled 97,845 tonnes while meal production amounted to 152,287 tonnes.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3404.

The August issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120) will be available in October.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Karen Gray (204-983-2856; *karen.gray@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Construction Union Wage Rate Index

August 2005

The Construction Union Wage Rate Index (including supplements) for Canada remained unchanged in August compared to the July level of 131.9 (1992=100). The Composite Index increased 1.4% compared with the August 2004 Index (130.1).

Union wage rates are published for 16 trades in 20 metropolitan areas for both the basic rates and rates including selected supplementary payments. Indexes on a 1992=100 time base are calculated for the same metropolitan areas and are published for those where a majority of trades are covered by current collective agreements.

Available on CANSIM: tables 327-0003 and 327-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2307.

The third quarter issue of *Capital Expenditure Price Statistics* (62-007-XPB, $26/$85) will be available in December.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, and data quality for this release, contact Client Services Unit (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; *infounit@statcan.ca*), or Louise Chaîné (613-951-3393), Prices Division. ■

New products

International Travel, Advance Information, July 2005, Vol. 21, no. 7
Catalogue number 66-001-PIE ($7/$59).

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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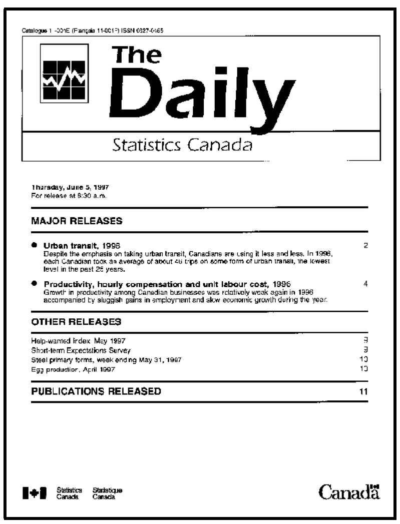

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **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.

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index, May 1997	9
Short-term Expectations Survey	9
Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997	10
Egg production, April 1997	10

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

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