



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, March 6, 2006

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Releases

Building permits, January 2006

2

The value of building permits cooled off in January from record levels set at the close of last year. Intentions rose for only one component, single-family homes. Nevertheless, January's level was equal to the average monthly value in 2005, which was a record year for permits.

Telecommunications statistics, third quarter 2005

6

Shipments of solid fuel burning heating products, fourth quarter 2005

6

New products

7



Releases

Building permits

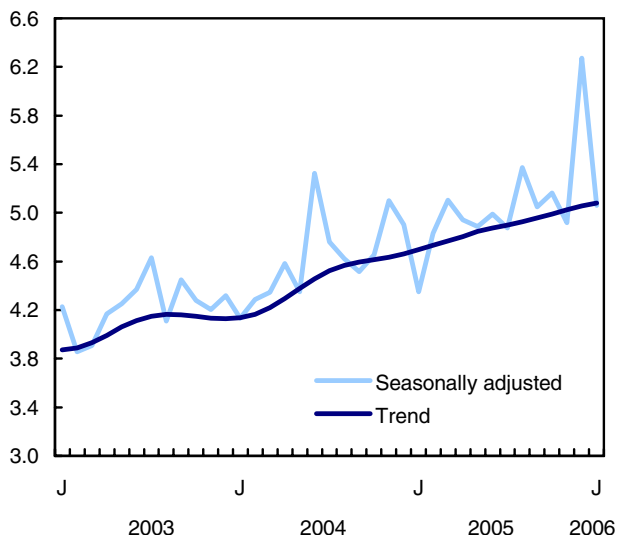
January 2006

The value of building permits cooled off in January from record levels set at the close of last year. Intentions rose for only one component, single-family homes. Nevertheless, January's level was equal to the average monthly value in 2005, which was a record year for permits.

Municipalities issued \$5.1 billion in permits in January, down 19.3% from the record high \$6.3 billion set in December. Both the residential and non-residential sectors posted declines.

Total value of permits continues on upward trend

\$ billions



In the residential sector, contractors took out \$3.5 billion in permits, down 21.4%. Despite January's decrease, the residential sector continued its upward trend.

The retreat in January was mainly the result of a marked decline in the multi-family component in the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Toronto. Multi-family intentions in Toronto soared to a record high in December, when several permits related to applications received earlier had to be issued before the end of 2005 to avoid higher development charges.

Excluding the Toronto CMA figures, the value of residential permits declined by only 5.2%.

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.

In the non-residential sector, intentions fell 14.3% to \$1.6 billion, the lowest level since January 2005. This decline was due to marked decreases in all three components (industrial, commercial and institutional) and it lengthened a downward trend that started last July.

Locally, 22 of the 28 CMAs registered a faster start compared with January 2005. Calgary and Windsor had the strongest starts, the result of strength in both the residential and non-residential sectors.

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

Fuelled by strong demand in western Canada and Ontario, the value of single-family permits rose 2.9%, compared to December, and hit a record high \$2.5 billion in January, continuing an upward trend.

In January, the value of single-family permits reached new records in the three westernmost provinces, as well as in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia.

In contrast, the value of multi-family permits fell 50.5% to \$995 millions. This decline followed a 114.3% jump in December.

The significant retreat in multi-family permits in Toronto was coupled with noticeable declines in British Columbia and Alberta.

In total, municipalities approved the construction of 19,877 new dwelling units in January, down slightly (-0.2%) from the average monthly number of units approved last year.

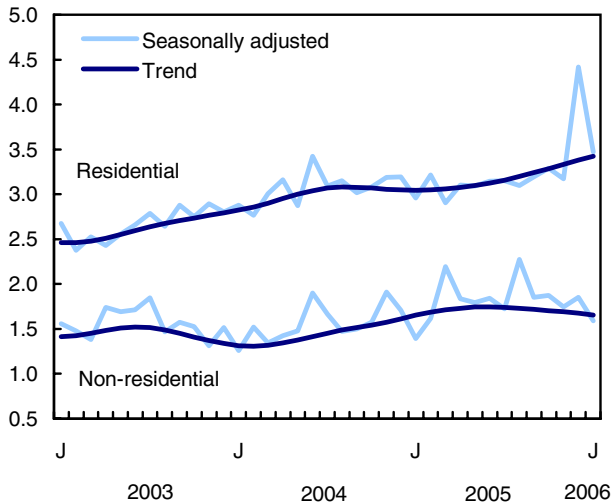
Low mortgage rates are still having a positive impact on the housing sector, as is the favourable job situation. However, according to Statistics Canada's latest release on intentions for public and private investment, spending

in the housing sector is expected to remain flat this year, after hitting a record high in 2005.

In January, at the provincial level, monthly advances in six provinces were more than offset by strong declines in the housing permits in Ontario, British Columbia and, to a lesser extent, Quebec.

Residential and non-residential sectors move in opposite directions

\$ billions



Non-residential sector: Declines in all components

All three components in the non-residential sector declined in January. The \$1.6-billion total for the month was 13.4% lower than the average monthly level recorded last year.

Intentions in the commercial sector registered the largest decline (in dollars), falling 13.4% to \$971 million after a strong increase in December. It was the third decline over the last four months, and was largely the result of lower construction intentions for warehouses and office buildings. Provincially, Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan reported the largest declines in the commercial sector.

In the institutional sector, the value of permits fell 12.3% to \$414 million, following a 7.9% gain in December. After a strong showing in the educational

building category in Ontario in December, this category showed the largest decline in January.

In the industrial sector, intentions fell 22.0% to \$204 million, the third consecutive monthly decrease and the lowest level since January 2005. All types of industrial buildings posted declines in January 2006.

Provincially, the strongest decline in non-residential permits in January occurred in Ontario, where the value of construction intentions fell 19.4% to \$602 million. In Alberta, intentions plunged 35.4% to \$253 million.

All three components recorded decreases in Alberta, while in Ontario, a plunge in institutional permits led the value of non-residential permits to its lowest level in a year.

In contrast, New Brunswick and Quebec recorded the largest advances in the non-residential sector. These were the result of gains in the medical and hospital category in New Brunswick, and increases in the hotels and restaurant and office building categories in Quebec.

Regionally, 14 out of the 28 CMAs recorded monthly declines in the value of non-residential permits in January. Toronto and Calgary had the largest declines.

Despite weaker non-residential intentions in January, several indicators point to a healthy sector. These include record high retail sales, a high use of industrial capacity and western Canada's healthy economy.

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

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2802.

The January 2006 issue of *Building Permits* (64-001-XIE, \$15/\$156) will be available soon.

The February 2006 building permit estimate will be released on April 6.

To order data or general information, 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 area¹

	December 2005 ^r	January 2006 ^p	December 2005 to January 2006	January 2005	January 2005 to January 2006
	seasonally adjusted				
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions	% change
St. John's	23.1	29.8	29.1	25.8	15.6
Halifax	34.8	34.2	-1.9	28.9	18.1
Saint John	10.4	17.2	66.1	7.2	140.4
Saguenay	2.5	4.9	96.6	6.4	-23.8
Québec	131.1	67.5	-48.5	48.2	40.1
Sherbrooke	11.2	10.7	-4.2	13.4	-20.5
Trois-Rivières	19.6	22.9	16.6	12.0	90.3
Montréal	375.9	469.8	25.0	445.6	5.4
Ottawa-Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	129.5	162.6	25.5	113.0	43.9
Ottawa-Gatineau (Que. part)	31.2	57.0	82.9	21.7	162.4
Ottawa-Gatineau (Ont. part)	98.4	105.6	7.3	91.3	15.6
Kingston	13.5	8.0	-40.5	9.5	-14.9
Oshawa	39.2	67.5	72.0	65.9	2.4
Toronto	1,847.9	894.0	-51.6	838.1	6.7
Hamilton	81.5	100.7	23.6	93.7	7.5
St. Catharines-Niagara	33.1	32.1	-3.0	30.3	5.9
Kitchener	110.6	85.9	-22.3	68.1	26.1
London	62.3	108.0	73.3	54.7	97.3
Windsor	31.0	107.2	245.5	40.0	168.0
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	5.5	4.7	-13.2	20.2	-76.6
Thunder Bay	3.1	6.8	116.7	15.4	-55.7
Winnipeg	56.0	88.3	57.6	39.6	123.1
Regina	23.0	25.9	12.8	34.7	-25.2
Saskatoon	41.9	36.8	-12.2	18.9	94.1
Calgary	447.7	321.3	-28.2	201.5	59.5
Edmonton	301.2	273.9	-9.1	228.7	19.8
Abbotsford	13.6	27.8	104.6	13.6	104.5
Vancouver	499.0	412.6	-17.3	359.9	14.7
Victoria	41.1	53.5	30.3	31.2	71.6

^r Revised.

^p Preliminary.

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 2005 ^r	January 2006 ^p	December 2005 to January 2006	January 2005	January 2005 to January 2006
	seasonally adjusted				
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions	% change
Canada	6,272.0	5,061.8	-19.3	4,350.6	16.3
Residential	4,417.6	3,472.6	-21.4	2,956.5	17.5
Non-residential	1,854.5	1,589.2	-14.3	1,394.1	14.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	32.9	39.0	18.5	37.4	4.2
Residential	25.4	32.3	27.1	30.3	6.5
Non-residential	7.5	6.7	-10.5	7.1	-5.7
Prince Edward Island	17.2	14.1	-18.2	11.5	22.9
Residential	14.5	9.6	-34.1	10.2	-5.8
Non-residential	2.7	4.5	68.9	1.3	252.4
Nova Scotia	97.7	94.2	-3.7	59.4	58.5
Residential	69.2	75.1	8.6	42.6	76.6
Non-residential	28.6	19.0	-33.4	16.9	13.0
New Brunswick	56.9	96.0	68.8	42.8	124.1
Residential	41.5	42.8	3.0	30.7	39.2
Non-residential	15.3	53.2	247.0	12.1	339.3
Quebec	902.4	885.2	-1.9	828.3	6.9
Residential	602.4	549.4	-8.8	589.9	-6.9
Non-residential	300.1	335.8	11.9	238.4	40.9
Ontario	2,866.3	2,050.3	-28.5	1,851.3	10.7
Residential	2,119.2	1,448.4	-31.7	1,281.9	13.0
Non-residential	747.1	601.9	-19.4	569.4	5.7
Manitoba	93.3	114.2	22.4	70.7	61.5
Residential	60.8	78.1	28.5	44.2	76.5
Non-residential	32.6	36.2	11.1	26.5	36.5
Saskatchewan	97.9	86.2	-11.9	65.9	30.8
Residential	36.9	44.5	20.8	30.2	47.6
Non-residential	61.0	41.7	-31.7	35.7	16.6
Alberta	1,049.5	916.8	-12.6	712.1	28.7
Residential	657.6	663.8	0.9	423.1	56.9
Non-residential	391.9	253.0	-35.4	289.0	-12.5
British Columbia	1,050.1	762.0	-27.4	667.4	14.2
Residential	785.2	525.5	-33.1	470.6	11.7
Non-residential	264.9	236.6	-10.7	196.7	20.2
Yukon	7.1	3.3	-53.2	3.3	1.4
Residential	4.5	3.2	-28.7	2.7	18.1
Non-residential	2.7	0.2	-93.7	0.6	-72.1
Northwest Territories	0.2	0.5	132.6	0.6	-8.9
Residential	0.0	0.1	635.7	0.3	-59.3
Non-residential	0.2	0.4	98.6	0.3	32.2
Nunavut	0.6	0.0	-98.0	0.0	266.7
Residential	0.6	0.0	-99.8	0.0	-66.7
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	...	0.0	...

^r Revised.

^p Preliminary.

... Figures not applicable.

Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

Telecommunications statistics

Third quarter 2005

New technology, competition and changing consumer habits are contributing to the gradual transformation of telecommunication services industries and markets, and this transformation is becoming increasingly evident in the local residential telephony market.

There were 12.2 million traditional residential telephone lines at the end of the third quarter of 2005, down 3.0% from the same period in 2004. This was the largest year-over-year drop since the end of 2001 when the erosion of this market began. The entry of a few cable television companies into the local telephony market largely explains the acceleration of the downward movement in 2005.

The market for business lines has remained stable compared to the previous year, with just over 7.0 million lines at the end of the third quarter of 2005. This confirms the very marked slowdown observed over the past year in the erosion of this market.

The loss of residential customers continued to pull down the operating revenues of traditional wireline networks operators. Those revenues fell to \$5.6 billion in the third quarter, down 2.2% from the third quarter of 2004. Operating profits plunged 31.4% to \$0.9 billion, compared to \$1.3 billion in the previous quarter. This drop was, at least, partly due to non-recurring expenses, including those generated by labour disputes and reorganizations.

During this time, wireless telecommunications continued to gain steadily in popularity, to the benefit of the industry serving this market.

That industry attracted more than 500,000 new customers between June and September of last year, bringing up the total number of wireless subscribers to more than 16 million at the end of the quarter, up 12.4% from the third quarter of 2004. This growth rate is comparable to those observed in the past three years.

These new customers enabled the wireless industry to achieve record revenues and operating profits in the third quarter. Operating revenues climbed to \$2.9 billion, up 16.0% from the third quarter of 2004. Operating profits rose 15.7% to \$868.9 million, compared to the

same period in 2004. Wireless operators generated almost as much profit during the first nine months of 2005 as they did in the entire previous year. The 30.0% profit margin posted in the third quarter equalled the highest margin in the industry's recent history, observed in the same period in 2004.

The main operators of traditional wireline systems invested just over \$3.0 billion in updating their networks over the first nine months of 2005, up 6.0% compared to the first nine months of 2004. Investment in wireless networks fell nearly 7.0% during the same period, going from \$999.0 million in 2004 to \$930.0 million in 2005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2721.

The third quarter 2005 issue of *Quarterly Telecommunications Statistics* (56-002-XIE, \$23/\$43) will be available soon.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Cimeron McDonald (613-951-2741) or Daniel April (613-951-3177), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division. ■

Shipments of solid fuel burning heating products

Fourth quarter 2005

Data on shipments of solid fuel burning heating products are now available for the fourth quarter, including a revision for the third quarter 2005.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0063.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2189.

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

Harvesting and Community Well-being Among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: Preliminary Findings from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey - Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic
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Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 3, 1997
For release at 9:30 a.m.



MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Change in the number of people taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1995, each Canadian took an average of about 40 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was noticeably weak again in 1995, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow moderate growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- **Help-wanted index, May 1997** 3
- **Short-term Expenditure Survey** 3
- **Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997** 12
- **Egg production, April 1997** 12

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

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