



The Daily

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<p>Employment in Canada increased for a 13th consecutive year in 2005, the longest stretch of employment gains since the large-scale increases of the 1960s and 1970s. Over the last 13 years, employment growth has averaged 2.0% per year, according to a new report on Canada's labour market.</p>	
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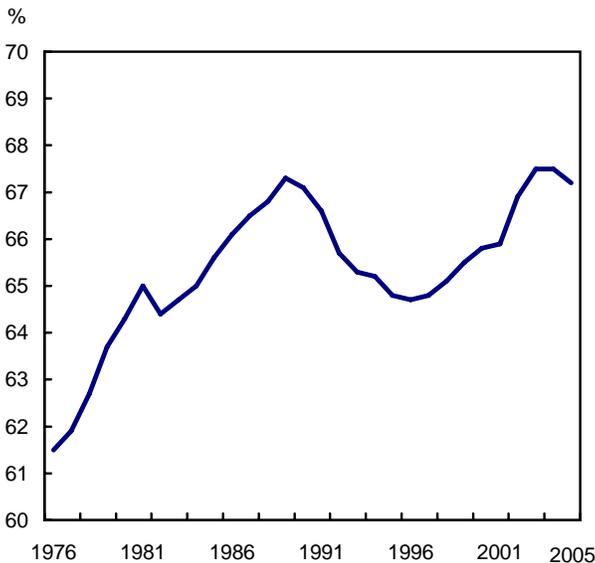
Study: Canada's labour market at a glance

2005

Employment in Canada increased for a 13th consecutive year in 2005, the longest stretch of employment gains since the large-scale increases of the 1960s and 1970s. Over the last 13 years, employment growth has averaged 2.0% per year, according to a new report on Canada's labour market.

Despite the fact that jobs were readily available last year, people took themselves out of the labour market, leading to a rapid tightening of labour market conditions.

Participation rates declined in 2005



About 17.3 million people were in the labour market last year, 67.2% of the working-age population, a decline of 0.3 percentage points from 2004. Previously, the participation rate had increased every year between 1996 and 2003, and had held steady in 2004. Much of the decline in 2005 was the result of ageing baby boomers, adult women and young people leaving the labour force.

With demand for labour strong and supply conditions tightening, the unemployment rate fell in 2005, hitting 6.8%, the lowest annual unemployment rate since 1976.

The report also pointed to other key developments in the labour market during the past few years.

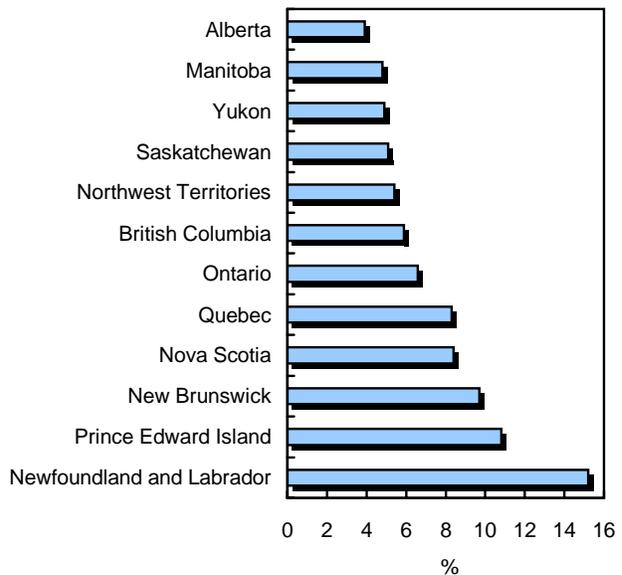
For example, the employment situation for older workers aged 55 and over has become increasingly brighter. Last year, 29.9% of this population had jobs, up from 29.0% in 2004, the ninth consecutive annual increase in their employment rate since hitting a low of 22.0% in 1996. Some of these gains have been due to the influx of baby boomers into this group.

At the same time, more workers are nearing retirement than ever before. In 2005, an estimated 3.6 million workers were within 10 years of (or older than) the median retirement age of 61. They represented 22.1% of the total, up from 10.3% in 1986.

Provinces: Albertans continue to enjoy strongest labour market

Oil-rich Alberta has consistently enjoyed the highest employment rates in Canada during the past three decades. The province's employment rate (the share of the population 15 and over who are employed) fell slightly in 2005, from the record high attained in 2004, to 69.8%, yet remained among the highest experienced by the province in nearly three decades. These high employment rates reflect the upward trend in job growth that began in the early 1990s.

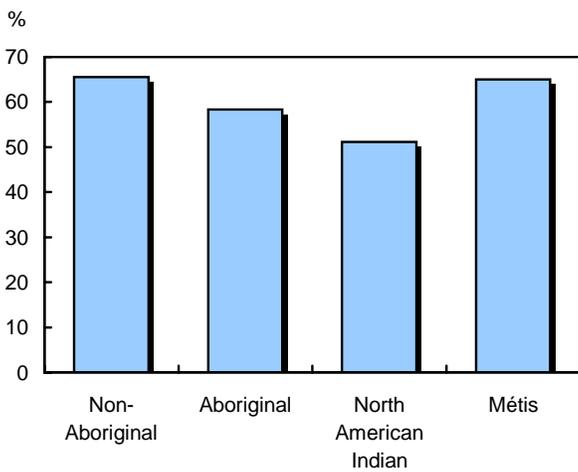
Alberta had the lowest unemployment rate in 2005



Alberta's employment growth slowed last year. However, since 1993, the province has averaged a healthy gain of 3.2% per year. Its average hourly wage grew by 6.6% in 2005, well above the 3.2% growth at the national level. However, the rapid increase in average hourly wages, the moderate employment growth and large shifts in employment among industries indicate that Alberta is starting to experience labour shortages. Another indicator of labour shortages is the extremely low unemployment rate in Alberta.

In Western Canada, the employment rate in 2005 for Aboriginal people living off-reserve was 58.3%, much lower than that for non-Aboriginal people (65.5%). Employment rates for Aboriginal people in Western Canada varied from only 52.0% in Saskatchewan to 64.2% in Alberta.

Lower employment rates for off-reserve Aboriginal people in Western Canada in 2005



In British Columbia, the employment rate has hovered around 60.0% since 1989, avoiding the drop experienced by several other provinces during the early recession of the 1990s. In 2005, British Columbia's employment rate hit a record 61.8% as a result of a 3.3% gain in employment, the fastest growth rate among the provinces.

However, people living in the Yukon and Northwest Territories were more likely to be working in 2005 than in any province. In the Yukon, 72.1% of the population aged 15 and over were employed in 2005, almost identical to the 72.3% in the Northwest Territories. Both rates were well above the national average of 62.7%.

Since 1995, Calgary has consistently posted the highest employment rate of any major census

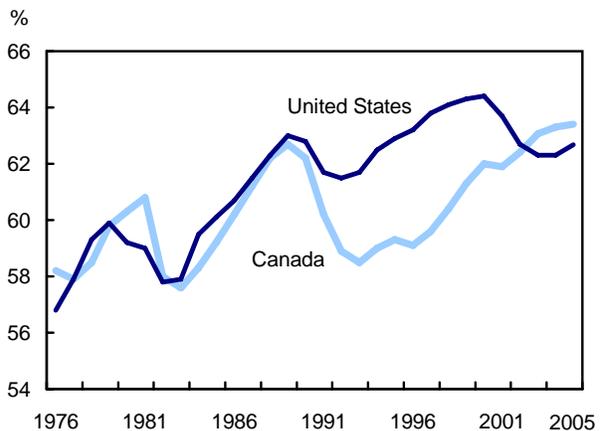
metropolitan area. In 2005, 70.8% of all Calgarians aged 15 years and over had jobs, down slightly from 71.7% the year before. The decline occurred because its population grew twice as fast as employment. The employment rate in Edmonton has also been among the highest in the country.

Employment in Canada's largest city, Toronto, grew by 2.1% last year, with the largest gains in trade, educational services and construction. The working-age population rose slightly faster than employment, so Toronto's employment rate edged down from 64.7% to 64.5%.

International comparisons: Employment trends diverge between Canada and the United States

For the last three years, Canada's employment rate has remained at record levels, surpassing employment rates in the United States.

Canada's employment rate surpasses that of the United States



Note: Canadian data have been adjusted to approximate US measurement concepts.

Last year, 63.4% of the Canadian population 16 and over was employed (adjusted to compare with US labour statistics), compared with 62.7% of the American population.

Between 2003 and 2005, employment rose 2.9% in the United States, but this was still slightly below the growth of 3.2% in Canada. Although Canada lost manufacturing jobs during this period, its employment growth was strong in many other sectors. This was the case particularly in construction, retail and wholesale trade, finance, insurance, real estate and leasing and educational services.

Canada's unemployment rate, adjusted to the US definition of unemployment, has dropped in the last 12 years, from a high of 10.8% in 1993 to an all-time low of 6.0% last year. Meanwhile, the US unemployment rate fell from a high of 7.5% in 1992 to a low of 4.0% in 2000. Then it climbed to 6.0% in 2003, and by 2005, it was down to 5.1%.

These recent changes in unemployment rates have narrowed the gap between the two countries. During the last four years, Canada's rate has been within one percentage point of the US rate. The last time the gap was so small was in 1982.

Other areas: Self-employment, moonlighting, wages

This report also examined other facets of employment in Canada, such as self-employment, moonlighting and wages.

An estimated 2.5 million people were self-employed in Canada last year, representing 15.5% of all workers. Mostly because of a drop in main-job farm employment, self-employment levels fell in 2000 and 2001.

However, growth in this area has rebounded since 2001, largely because of recent strength in construction and in real estate, sectors where self-employment is more common. In 2005, the number of self-employed rose 2.4%.

Moonlighting — working at two or more jobs — is now more common among women than men. Last year,

an estimated 848,000 Canadians were moonlighting, accounting for 5.2% of all workers. Since 1976, the number of women working at two or more jobs increased at a faster pace, and by 2005, 6.1% of employed women were moonlighting, compared with 4.5% of men.

In terms of wages, Canadian employees last year earned on average \$19.09 an hour before taxes and other deductions, 3.2% higher than the year before. This was slightly faster than the rate of inflation of 2.2% as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The average growth in hourly wages (current dollars) has exceeded the increase in the CPI for the past two years. As a result, real hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, rose 0.6% in 2004 and 1.0% in 2005.

Available on CANSIM: (613-951-4243),

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3701.

The study *The Canadian Labour Market at a Glance, 2005* (71-222-XIE, free) is now available online from the *Our products and services* page of our website.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-866-873-8788; 613-951-4090; labour@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Danielle Zietsma (613-951-4243), Labour Statistics Division. ■

Residential construction investment

First quarter 2006

Residential construction investment totalled \$16.9 billion in the first quarter of 2006, up 10.3% from the first quarter of 2005, a record year in residential construction. This growth stemmed from high gains from new housing and renovations.

The housing sector continued to feel the positive effect of the strong economy in Western Canada. Other favorable factors were advantageous mortgage rates, the continued strength of full-time employment and personal disposable income, as well as high immigration levels.

Spending on new housing construction reached \$8.6 billion in the first quarter of 2006, up 10.8% compared with the \$7.7 billion invested in the first quarter of 2005. Among all types of new dwellings behind this increase, the main contribution (in dollars) came from investment in new single-family homes (+11.2% to \$5.3 billion). Investment in new apartment/condominium construction also contributed largely to the increase (+14.6% to \$2.0 billion).

More than \$6.7 billion was spent on renovations in the first quarter of 2006, up 9.1% compared to the first quarter of 2005. This spending on renovations represented close to 40% of all residential construction investment.

Acquisition costs came to \$1.6 billion in the first quarter of 2006, up 12.6% compared to the first quarter of 2005.

The strongest increase (in dollars) among the provinces came in Alberta, where investments rose 29.3%, from \$2.1 billion to \$2.7 billion, driven by the strong demand for new single-family housing (+51.4% to \$1.3 billion). An important increase was also recorded in British Columbia (+22.9%) thanks to investment in new single-family and apartment/condominium units.

Note: Residential construction investment is divided into three main components. The first is new housing construction, which includes single dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, row housing and apartments, cottages, mobile homes and additional housing units created from non-residential buildings or other types of residential structures (conversions). The second component of residential construction investment (renovations) includes alterations and improvements in existing dwellings. The third component is acquisition costs, which refers to the value of services relating to the sale of new dwellings. These costs include sales tax, land development and service charges, as well as record-processing fees for mortgage insurance and the associated premiums.

Residential construction investment

	First quarter 2005	First quarter 2006	First quarter 2005 to first quarter 2006
	\$ millions		% change
Canada	15,326.6	16,902.1	10.3
Newfoundland and Labrador	148.3	150.7	1.7
Prince Edward Island	44.6	36.0	-19.4
Nova Scotia	315.3	370.5	17.5
New Brunswick	220.7	206.5	-6.4
Quebec	3,359.4	3,306.1	-1.6
Ontario	5,989.1	6,188.2	3.3
Manitoba	303.9	439.0	44.4
Saskatchewan	253.9	326.1	28.4
Alberta	2,058.1	2,661.1	29.3
British Columbia	2,595.1	3,190.4	22.9
Yukon	13.9	16.9	21.2
Northwest Territories	20.3	7.1	-65.3
Nunavut	3.9	3.6	-6.4

Note: Data may not add to totals due to rounding.

Because ownership transfer costs are not included in the investment totals presented in this release and in CANSIM table 026-0013, the figures here do not match the figures published in the National economic accounts (CANSIM table 380-0010).

Available on CANSIM: table 026-0013.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5016.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025; bdp_information@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division. ■

Food consumption

2005

Although Canadians continue to eat grain-based products such as pasta, bakery products and cereal-based snacks, total cereal consumption eased in 2005. At 66.0 kilograms per person per year, the allure of cereals dropped marginally last year from the record established in 2004. Cereal popularity rose rapidly during the 1990s, gaining over 20% during that time. It has since stabilised.

Products made with wheat flour accounted for the majority of cereal products consumed as each individual ate 51.9 kilograms in 2005. Canadians continue to incorporate rice into their diet, eating 7.2 kilograms in 2005, double that of 1990.

Canadians ate less sugar in 2005 and considerably less than past decades. Early indications are that refined sugar consumption fell to 24.4 kilograms per person in 2005, down 4.1% from the previous year. Compared to the peak back in 1987, consumers have cut back on sugar by about 24%.

Canadians consumed 3.6% more beef in 2005 as each person ate 14.6 kilograms (including veal). Although there has been some fluctuation, beef consumption has been more stable after trending down from the mid-1970s to the early-1990s. Beef consumption peaked in 1976 at 24.4 kilograms per person. Some cuts of beef are associated with a high quality product sought by numerous consumers while others seek the convenience of ground beef.

Pork consumption declined to 10.0 kilograms per person in 2005, down from 11.6 kilograms per person in 2004 and 10.9 kilograms per person in 2003. Although the consumption of pork had been fairly stable until recent years, it is challenged by both the beef and poultry sectors. Prices for retail pork have risen 19.9% since 1999, which is just above the general Consumer Price Index.

Canadians are exporting more pork than they are consuming. Pork exports in 2005 jumped to record levels, up 12% from 2004 to \$2.3 billion. Sales of pork to Japan escalated dramatically last year, rising 30% to \$950 million, surpassing sales to the United States.

Poultry consumption, which has been climbing over time, advanced modestly in 2005 to 13.7 kilograms per person. Canadians ate 66% more poultry in 2005 compared to 1976.

Chicken is by far the poultry of choice with each Canadian eating 11.4 kilograms in 2005. The ongoing popularity of easy to prepare and ready to eat chicken products with time conscious consumers, along with the publicised health benefits of poultry has contributed to the increased use of chicken.

Available on CANSIM: tables 002-0010, 002-0011, 002-0019, 003-0035 to 003-0037 and 003-0080.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3403, 3404, 3407, 3423, 3430, 3460 and 3475.

The 2005 issue of *Food Statistics*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (21-020-XIE, free) is now available online from the *Our products and services* page of our website.

The *Canada Food Stats CD-ROM* (23F0001XCB, \$81/\$129) is released twice a year, in June and November. This is an easy-to-use system that provides access to a broad spectrum of data,

preformatted reports and articles on food and the food industry.

Canada Food Stats (23F0001XBB) can be downloaded directly from our website to your desktop for the same price as the CD-ROM.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean-Pierre Pelchat (613-951-2860; 1-800-465-1991; jean-pierre.pelchat@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division. ■

Investment in non-residential building construction

First quarter 2006 (revised)

Following the release of the national economic and financial accounts for the first quarter of 2006, revised estimates of the investment in non-residential building for the first quarter of 2006 are now available.

Estimates have also been revised from 2002 to 2005.

For more information, consult *The Canadian Economic Accounts Quarterly Review* (13-010-XIE, free) online from the *Our products and services* page of our website.

Available on CANSIM: table 026-0016.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5014.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bechir Oueriemmi, (613-951-1165; bdp_information@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division. ■

Mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation

April 2006

Data on mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation are now available for April.

Data are available upon request only.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2110.

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. ■

Coal and coke statistics

March 2006

Data on coal and coke are now available for March.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0016.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2003 and 2147.

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; *energ@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 100 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 relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

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