



The Daily

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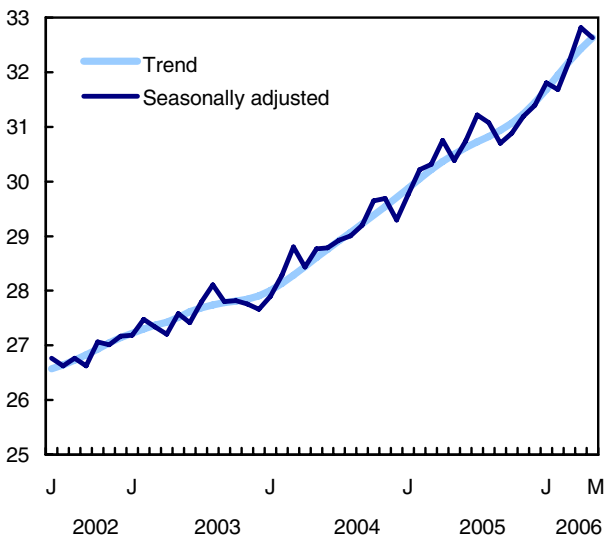
Retail trade

May 2006

Retail sales fell in May after two months of strong gains, pulled down by lower sales in the automotive and food and beverage stores sectors. Total retail sales declined by 0.6% from April to \$32.6 billion. Retail sales have generally been rising at a rapid clip following a slowdown in 2003, and May's decline was only the second in eight months.

Retail sales falls after two months of strong gains

\$ billions



Keeping prices constant, retail sales still fell by 0.6%, as price changes did not have a significant effect on overall retail sales in May. In contrast to previous months, the Consumer Price Index indicated that gasoline prices were little changed in May (-0.8%).

Excluding new car dealers and used and recreational motor vehicles and parts dealers, total retail sales edged down 0.2% in May.

Sales in the automotive sector, which make up over one-third of total retail sales in Canada, fell by 2.1%. This retail sector, however, has generally been experiencing steady growth since 2004, partly due to the rising price of gasoline.

Food and beverage store (-0.6%) sales declined for the second time in six months. In general, retail sales in this sector have been growing slowly after recovering

from January's drop earlier this year. The clothing and accessories stores sector also saw its sales edge down 0.3% in May. However, its sales were up 7.4% compared to the same month last year — the highest year-over-year increase since April 2005.

Increases in the other five retail sectors partially offset these declines. Sales in the furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores sector rose by 1.2% in May after falling by a similar amount in April. There were also strong increases in pharmacies and personal care stores (+1.3%) and general merchandise stores (+1.0%).

Sales were also higher in the building and outdoor home supplies stores sector (+0.5%) and the miscellaneous retailers sector (+0.2%).

Automotive sector sales decline after strong gains in the previous two months

All three sub-components of the automotive sector registered declines in sales in May. Gasoline sales fell by 2.7% after rising by 11.0% in April. Though the price of gasoline edged down in May, it has generally been rising since 2002, according to the Consumer Price Index. The year-over-year sales increase for gasoline was strong at 18.2%.

Sales by new car dealers fell by 1.7%. Despite recent fluctuations, new car sales have remained relatively flat since the incentive-induced peaks of the previous summer. Demand for new cars may have been dampened by rising interest rates and gasoline prices.

Sales at used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers fell by 2.0%. This was only the second sales decline in eight months for this sector and followed two months of strong sales growth. Sales were up 15.9% in May from the same month last year. This sector has been experiencing rapid sales growth since November of last year on the strength of recreational motor vehicle sales.

In the food and beverages sector, supermarket sales weakened by 0.8% in May. Sales in supermarkets have been relatively flat with low year-over-year gains since the fall of 2005, as restructuring of supply chains in some stores continued to have an effect on overall supermarket sales.

May's increase in sales at furniture stores (+0.8%) was the first since the peak in January. Though not at record levels, sales were still 9.4% higher than the same month last year — the highest year-over-year increase in two years with the exception of the gains in January.

May was also a good month for home furnishing stores (+1.8%) and home electronics and appliance stores (+1.3%). Sales at home furnishing stores have been see-sawing since the gift-card induced peak at the start of the year. In contrast, sales at home electronic stores and appliance stores have been relatively flat since January. In general, however, sales in these types of stores have been on the rise.

Pharmacies and personal care stores posted their seventh consecutive monthly sales increase in May. Sales in these types of stores picked up at a quicker pace since the start of 2006, reflecting increased demand for prescription drugs. According to the Retail Commodity Survey, sales of prescription drugs were 7.8% higher in the first quarter of 2006 than in the same quarter last year.

General merchandise stores, which include department stores and other general merchandise stores, also enjoyed sales gains in May, increasing for the ninth consecutive month. Sales have picked up the pace since the fall of 2005.

Ontarians put the breaks on shopping in May

Sales in Ontario declined by 1.9% in May after two consecutive monthly gains. The automotive sector was the main cause of the decrease in this province. The number of new cars sold in Ontario in May declined by 2.1% according to the New Motor Vehicle Sales Survey. Quebec retailers also experienced lower sales in May (-0.6%), the first decline in five months. Sales in Quebec have been rising after being relatively flat in 2005.

Consumers in Alberta took a shopping break in May as retail sales remained unchanged from April (+0.1%). Still, sales in Alberta's red-hot economy were 16.4% higher than in the same month last year as a result of a burst of retailing activity in the previous eight months.

Retail sales in British Columbia rose by 1.3% in May. Retailers in this province have been enjoying strong sales growth since 2003.

Consumer spending in retail stores in the Atlantic provinces edged up 0.2% in May, mainly due to increases in Nova Scotia (+0.7%) and Prince Edward Island (+1.3%).

Related indicators for June

Following large gains in the previous month, employment was little changed in June, leaving the unemployment rate at a 32-year low of 6.1%.

Housing starts were up 4.5% in June. Despite this increase, however, housing starts ended the second quarter more than 9% below their first quarter level.

Based on preliminary sales figures from the auto industry, the number of new motor vehicles sold declined slightly for a third consecutive month in June. Though there was a turn-around in car sales, this was offset by a sizable decrease in the sale of trucks, minivans, sport-utility vehicles and buses.

Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0014 to 080-0017 and 076-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2406 and 2408.

The June 2006 issue of *Retail Trade* (63-005-XIE, free) will soon be available.

Data on retail trade for June will be released on August 21.

For more information or to order data, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Lucy Chung (613-951-1903), Distributive Trades Division.

□

Retail sales

	May 2005	February 2006 ^r	March 2006 ^r	April 2006 ^r	May 2006 ^p	April to May 2006	May 2005 to May 2006
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Automotive	10,237	10,623	10,999	11,478	11,239	-2.1	9.8
New car dealers	5,833	5,936	6,179	6,169	6,061	-1.7	3.9
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,307	1,365	1,430	1,546	1,515	-2.0	15.9
Gasoline stations	3,097	3,323	3,390	3,763	3,662	-2.7	18.2
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	2,098	2,293	2,299	2,272	2,300	1.2	9.6
Furniture stores	729	807	800	791	797	0.8	9.4
Home furnishings stores	390	440	456	446	454	1.8	16.5
Computer and software stores	129	133	129	125	126	1.1	-2.3
Home electronics and appliance stores	850	912	914	910	922	1.3	8.5
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	1,906	2,049	2,080	2,058	2,069	0.5	8.5
Home centres and hardware stores	1,519	1,650	1,686	1,685	1,689	0.2	11.2
Specialized building materials and garden stores	387	399	394	373	380	1.8	-1.9
Food and beverage stores	7,245	7,288	7,301	7,366	7,323	-0.6	1.1
Supermarkets	5,251	5,260	5,261	5,294	5,251	-0.8	0.0
Convenience and specialty food stores	774	775	781	790	796	0.7	2.8
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,220	1,254	1,259	1,281	1,276	-0.4	4.6
Pharmacies and personal care stores	1,978	2,107	2,140	2,166	2,193	1.3	10.9
Clothing and accessories stores	1,747	1,831	1,866	1,881	1,876	-0.3	7.4
Clothing stores	1,338	1,394	1,426	1,432	1,444	0.8	7.9
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	409	437	440	449	432	-3.7	5.7
General merchandise stores	3,599	3,850	3,882	3,909	3,947	1.0	9.7
Miscellaneous retailers	1,574	1,643	1,644	1,682	1,685	0.2	7.0
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	782	820	827	840	838	-0.3	7.1
Miscellaneous store retailers	792	823	818	842	847	0.6	7.0
Total retail sales	30,384	31,685	32,212	32,812	32,631	-0.6	7.4
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	23,244	24,384	24,603	25,097	25,054	-0.2	7.8
By province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	488	491	484	505	502	-0.7	2.8
Prince Edward Island	116	127	125	124	126	1.3	8.4
Nova Scotia	881	936	937	948	955	0.7	8.3
New Brunswick	680	730	743	743	743	-0.1	9.2
Quebec	6,908	7,112	7,175	7,296	7,255	-0.6	5.0
Ontario	11,045	11,353	11,704	11,859	11,639	-1.9	5.4
Manitoba	1,026	1,063	1,089	1,102	1,111	0.8	8.3
Saskatchewan	949	950	956	987	992	0.5	4.5
Alberta	4,046	4,488	4,526	4,705	4,708	0.1	16.4
British Columbia	4,138	4,327	4,366	4,433	4,491	1.3	8.5
Yukon	39	37	36	38	38	0.1	-1.9
Northwest Territories	48	50	49	50	51	2.3	7.3
Nunavut	20	21	21	21	21	0.7	2.9

^r revised

^p preliminary

Retail sales

	May 2005	April 2006 ^r	May 2006 ^p	May 2005 to May 2006
Unadjusted				
	\$ millions			% change
Automotive	11,708	12,088	13,143	12.3
New car dealers	6,868	6,697	7,227	5.2
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,703	1,822	2,057	20.7
Gasoline stations	3,136	3,570	3,860	23.1
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	1,934	2,003	2,143	10.8
Furniture stores	721	744	784	8.6
Home furnishings stores	372	400	442	18.8
Computer and software stores	119	110	117	-2.0
Home electronics and appliance stores	722	748	800	10.9
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	2,456	2,026	2,739	11.5
Home centres and hardware stores	1,919	1,661	2,206	15.0
Specialized building materials and garden stores	538	365	534	-0.7
Food and beverage stores	7,185	7,163	7,368	2.5
Supermarkets	5,232	5,223	5,302	1.3
Convenience and specialty food stores	792	790	834	5.3
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,161	1,149	1,231	6.0
Pharmacies and personal care stores	1,967	2,084	2,228	13.3
Clothing and accessories stores	1,721	1,788	1,882	9.4
Clothing stores	1,307	1,384	1,438	10.1
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	414	403	444	7.2
General merchandise stores	3,634	3,713	4,056	11.6
Miscellaneous retailers	1,524	1,529	1,668	9.4
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	711	763	774	8.9
Miscellaneous store retailers	813	766	894	9.9
Total retail sales	32,130	32,393	35,228	9.6
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	23,558	23,875	25,945	10.1
By provinces and territory				
Newfoundland and Labrador	518	478	544	4.9
Prince Edward Island	123	115	137	11.0
Nova Scotia	910	910	1,012	11.3
New Brunswick	719	730	805	12.0
Quebec	7,610	7,505	8,158	7.2
Ontario	11,664	11,475	12,492	7.1
Manitoba	1,071	1,092	1,189	11.0
Saskatchewan	999	973	1,083	8.4
Alberta	4,201	4,703	5,026	19.6
British Columbia	4,208	4,308	4,667	10.9
Yukon	41	36	41	1.2
Northwest Territories	45	48	50	12.2
Nunavut	21	21	22	2.0

^r revised

^p preliminary



Natural gas sales

May 2006 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 4 529 million cubic metres in May, down 6.9% from May 2005. Warmer weather conditions throughout most regions of Canada resulted in reduced sales to the residential sector (-11.2%) and the commercial sector (-11.7%). The industrial sector (including direct sales) showed a lesser decrease in sales of 4.9%.

Year-to-date sales at the end of May were down 7.4% from the same period of 2005. The residential (-6.9%) and the commercial (-9.8%) sectors posted declines as well as use of natural gas by the industrial (including direct sales) sector, down 6.8% so far this year

Natural gas sales

	May 2006 ^P	May 2005	May 2005 to May 2006 % change
	thousands of cubic metres		
Total sales	4 529 494	4 867 411	-6.9
Residential	775 372	873 431	-11.2
Commercial	592 712	671 249	-11.7
Industrial	1 583 542	1 588 664	-4.9
Direct	1 577 868	1 734 067	
	year-to-date		
	2006 ^P	2005	2005 to 2006 % change
	thousands of cubic metres		
Total sales	33 498 818	36 182 032	-7.4
Residential	9 388 354	10 088 933	-6.9
Commercial	6 591 470	7 305 103	-9.8
Industrial	8 545 574	8 732 605	-6.8
Direct	8 973 420	10 055 391	

^P preliminary

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2149.

For more information, to order data, 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. ■

Aircraft movement statistics

June 2006 (preliminary)

Aircraft take-offs and landings increased in June, surpassing the level recorded the same month a year earlier by 4.1%. The 42 Canadian airports with NAV CANADA air traffic control towers reported 406,811 aircraft take-offs and landings in June, up from 390,620 movements in June 2005. Year-over-year increases in aircraft movements were reported by 26 of these airports in June. The variations ranged from an increase of 126.2% at Winnipeg/St. Andrews to a decline of 39.9% at Chicoutimi/St-Honoré.

Itinerant movements (flights from one airport to another) increased by 3.4% (+9,622 movements) in June compared with the same month a year earlier. Local movements (flights that remain in the vicinity of the airport) increased by 6.2% (+6,569 movements) in June compared with June 2005.

The June 2006 issue of *Aircraft Movement Statistics*, Vol. 5, no. 6 (51F0001PIE, TP1496, free) is now available from the *Our Products and Services* page of our website.

Preliminary statistics for the 56 Canadian airports with NAV CANADA flight service stations are also available for June.

Available on CANSIM: table 401-0005.

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. ■

Supply and disposition of refined petroleum products

March 2006

Data on the supply, disposition and domestic sales of refined petroleum products are now available for March.

Available on CANSIM: tables 134-0001 to 134-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2150.

The March 2006 issue of *The Supply and Disposition of Refined Petroleum Products in Canada*, Vol. 61,

no. 3 (45-004-XIE, free) is now available from the *Our Products and Services* page of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Marketing and Dissemination Section (613-951-9497; toll-free 1-866-873-8789; energ@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Sawmills and planing mills

May 2006

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

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0009.

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

The May 2006 issue of *Sawmills and Planing Mills*, Vol. 60, no. 5 (35-003-XIB, free) is now available from the *Our Products and Services* page of our website.

For more information, to order data, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (toll-free 1-866-873 8789; 613-951-9497; manufact@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

New products

Sawmills and Planing Mills, May 2006, Vol. 60, no. 5
Catalogue number 35-003-XIB
(free).

The Supply and Disposition of Refined Petroleum Products in Canada, March 2006, Vol. 61, no. 3
Catalogue number 45-004-XIE
(free).

Aircraft Movement Statistics, June 2006, Vol. 5, no. 6
Catalogue number 51F0001PIE
(free).

Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division Working Papers: "Conceptualizing and measuring business incubation", no. 6
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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 six 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 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- Map-wanted index, May 1997 3
- Short-term Expectations Survey 8
- Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997 12
- Egg production, Apr. 8, 1997 13

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

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