



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, March 22, 2007

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Current economic conditions

The economy grew at a steady pace in the fourth quarter, including a 0.4% burst in December in real GDP, its best month of the year. Business investment remained the fastest growing sector, notably engineering projects.

Firms intend to boost business investment by nearly 5% in 2007, after three straight increases averaging 9% (in each year, firms spent slightly more than they forecast). The buoyant outlook was evident in almost all industries, with only oil and gas and forestry projecting declines (3% each).

The largest increases in investment were planned by electric and natural gas utilities, continuing last year's rapid growth as the nation boosted generating capacity, especially wind-generated power. Transportation also plans more double-digit growth, much in infrastructure such as urban transit, airports and harbors. British Columbia, host to the 2010 Olympics, led growth in arts and recreation.

Manufacturers intend to invest more this year, reversing a drop in 2006. Primary metals, chemicals (including four new ethanol plants) and food led the increase, more than offsetting cutbacks by the auto industry. Metal mining also forecast gains, although the 8% increase only partly offsets a drop in 2006 and appears cautious in light of record prices and profits.

The oil and gas sector posted the largest changes from 2006. Conventional oil and gas firms slashed 15% (or \$5.2 billion) from investment budgets, mostly due to the impact of lower natural gas prices. Oil and gas drilling companies themselves plan to cut investment an additional 22% (\$0.8 billion). Pipeline construction is also scheduled to fall slightly, after more than doubling in 2006.

However, these cuts were largely offset by sharply higher investment in the oil sands, up 35% (or \$4 billion) to \$15.5 billion. Investment in the oil sands accounts for one-third of all spending by the oil and gas sector in 2007, up from one-quarter just two years ago. Together with the gain in utilities, overall energy investment is projected to rise to nearly \$70 billion, double its level in 2002. However, its 4% increase in 2007 follows four straight double-digit gains.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 1301, 1901, 2152, 2306, 2406 and 3701.

The print version of the March 2007 issue of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Vol. 20, no. 3 (11-010-XPB, \$25/\$243) is now available. This issue summarizes the major economic events that

occurred in February and presents an article entitled "Recent trends in output and employment." See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Philip Cross (613-951-9162; ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group. ■

Natural gas sales

January 2007 (preliminary)

With colder than normal temperatures in all provinces, natural gas sales showed large increases in all sectors in January.

Natural gas sales totalled 8 495 million cubic metres, up 10.2% from January 2006.

Sales volume to industrial and direct sales rose 12.2% while the commercial sector saw an increase of 10.7% in volume. The residential sector showed a lesser increase in sales of 6.9%.

Natural gas sales

	January 2007 ^P	January 2006	January 2006 to January 2007 % change
	thousands of cubic metres		
Total sales	8 494 932	7 711 903	10.2
Residential	2 661 936	2 489 657	6.9
Commercial	1 890 223	1 706 831	10.7
Industrial and direct	3 942 773	3 515 415	12.2

^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 (toll-free 1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; energ@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Cereals and oilseeds review

January 2007

Data from the January 2007 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review*, Vol. 30, no. 1 (22-007-XIB, free) are now available from the *Publications* module of our website. This issue contains an overview of February's market conditions.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3401, 3403, 3404, 3443, 3464 and 3476.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-465-1991; agriculture@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division. ■

Crushing statistics

February 2007

Oilseed processors crushed 257,997 metric tonnes of canola in February. Oil production totalled 112,411 tonnes while meal production amounted to 152,275 tonnes.

Crush levels have been very high in the 2006/2007 crop year and, although the crush declined in February, August to February crushings at 2,110,520 tonnes are still well above levels from the same period a year earlier.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3404.

The February 2007 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, free) will be available in April.

For general information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-465-1991; agriculture@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division. ■

Deliveries of major grains

February 2007

Data on February 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 February 2007 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, free) will be available in April.

For general information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-465-1991; agriculture@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division. ■

New products

Canadian Economic Observer, March 2007, Vol. 20, no. 3
Catalogue number 11-010-XPB (\$25/\$243).

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

Cereals and Oilseeds Review, January 2007, Vol. 30, no. 1
Catalogue number 22-007-XIB
 (free).

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; -XCB or -XCE are electronic versions on compact disc; -XVB or -XVE are electronic versions on DVD and -XBB or -XBE a database.

Retail Trade, January 2007, Vol. 79, no. 1
Catalogue number 63-005-XWE
 (free).

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Thursday, June 3, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Discusses the conditions 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

- **Help-wanted index, May 1997** 3
- **Short-term Expectations Survey** 2
- **Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997** 12
- **Egg production, Apr 1997** 12

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

Statistics Canada / Statistique Canada

Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

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