



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, April 4, 2007

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time

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Canada's record-setting pace of construction intentions came to an abrupt halt in February, as the value of building permits plunged to its lowest level in a year. Municipalities issued \$4.9 billion in building permits in February, down 22.4% from the second highest level on record in January.	
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Releases

Building permits

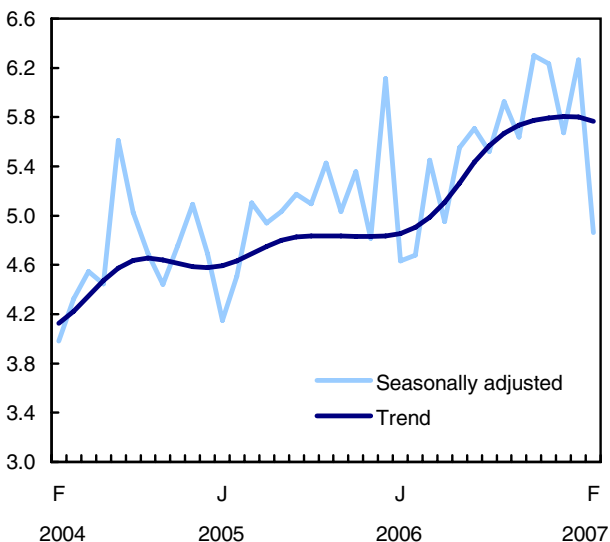
February 2007

Canada's record-setting pace of construction intentions came to an abrupt halt in February, as the value of building permits plunged to its lowest level in a year.

Municipalities issued \$4.9 billion in building permits in February, down 22.4% from the second highest level on record in January. The level was 12.0% below last year's monthly average, and the lowest since February 2006.

The total value of permits down sharply

\$ billions



February's decline, the fastest in 13 months, occurred due to across-the-board decreases in both residential and non-residential sectors. Intentions fell in all provinces except Manitoba; six registered double-digit percentage declines.

Prior to February, intentions have been strong in recent months, thanks mainly to soaring demand for residential and non-residential space in Western Canada.

In the non-residential sector, the value of permits fell 28.7% to \$1.9 billion after a 19.9% gain in January that sent non-residential intentions to a record high. February's level was the lowest since April 2006, and 10.6% below the average for 2006. The industrial sector incurred the biggest decline.

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.

For the purpose of this release, the census metropolitan area of Ottawa-Gatineau is divided into two areas: Ottawa-Gatineau (Quebec part) and Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part).

In the residential sector, permit values declined 17.8% to \$3.0 billion, the lowest since March 2005.

Housing sector: Sharp decline in multi-family units

Intentions in the housing sector cooled off in February due to a sharp decline in permits for multi-family dwellings.

The value of multi-family permits plunged 34.4% to \$824 million. This was the lowest value in 13 months and the second lowest since December 2004. Municipalities approved only 7,120 multi-family units, down 27.4%, the lowest level in just over a year.

The value of single-family permits fell 9.0% to \$2.2 billion, following a record high in January. This was the lowest level in eight months.

Municipalities approved 9,160 single-family units, down 7.3% from January, and 7.7% below the average for 2006.

The number of approved units in the residential sector has been on a slightly downward trend since August 2006. Prior to that, the trend had experienced almost uninterrupted growth since the beginning of 2005.

However, several factors could still prop up the demand for housing, including strong employment growth, increasing disposable income, high consumer confidence, immigration and inter-provincial migration, favourable mortgage rates and low apartment vacancy rates in various centres.

On the other hand, the price of new homes continued to increase strongly in Western Canada, and

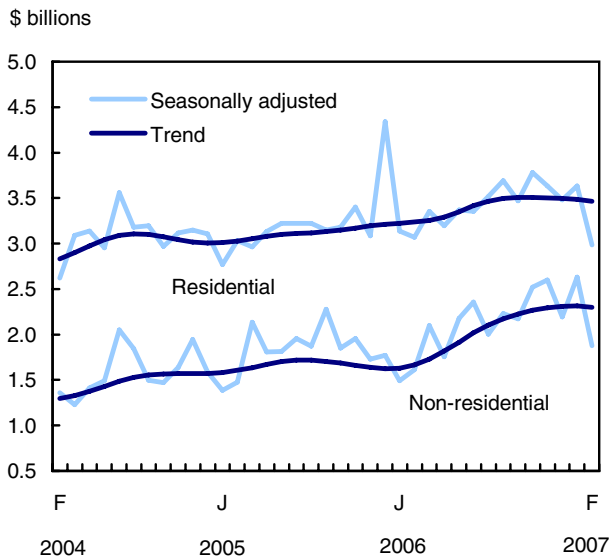
the inventory of unsold new housing has been on the rise since August 2006.

Provincially, Ontario incurred the biggest loss (in dollars) in the total value of residential permits, posting its lowest value since December 2001 at \$1.0 billion.

Significant declines were also recorded in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec. As in Ontario, the declines came from retreats in both the single- and multi-family components.

The value of residential permits rose in only three provinces, and these gains for the most part were modest. However, in Newfoundland and Labrador, the value of residential permits surged 36.7% to \$35 million.

Significant declines in both the residential and non-residential sectors



Non-residential: Across the board decline halts half a year of strong growth

February's plunge in non-residential intentions came after several very strong months in the second part of 2006 and in January this year.

Non-residential intentions declined in every province except Manitoba. Most recorded double-digit declines. By far, the largest (in dollars) occurred in Ontario (-43.9% to \$770 million), which set a record high in January with a 79.0% gain.

The biggest decline occurred in the industrial sector, where the value of permits plunged 53.3% to \$308 million in February, the lowest level since April 2006. This followed a 48.2% gain in January. February's level was 18.4% below last year's monthly average.

Industrial intentions had been on an upward trend throughout last year. However, during the past three months, they have remained relatively flat.

The decline in the industrial sector has been largely caused by a retreat in construction intentions for plants in Ontario.

In the commercial component, the value of permits fell 20.2% to \$1.1 billion, the lowest level since February 2006 and the third decline over the last four months. February's value was 11.0% below last year's monthly average. The decrease in this component came largely from lower construction intentions for office buildings.

The decline in commercial permits was spread among eight provinces, with the largest decreases (in dollars) in Alberta, Quebec and Ontario. In Alberta, the \$187-million value of commercial permits was the lowest level since September 2005.

In contrast, British Columbia and Manitoba recorded monthly gains in commercial permits, fuelled largely by projects for trade and services buildings in both provinces.

In the institutional sector, the value of permits declined 20.7% to \$498 million, following a 71.5% gain in January. This level was 4.3% lower than the monthly average for 2006, which was a banner year for institutional construction projects.

The main factors in the decrease in the institutional component were large declines in the medical buildings category in Ontario and Quebec and in intentions for schools in British Columbia. They were only partly offset by a strong gain in Alberta, where the value of permits for schools and medical buildings surged.

Despite February's showing, several factors could have a positive impact on non-residential construction intentions. These include recent strong growth in corporate operating profits, declining vacancy rates for office buildings, intentions among businesses and governments to increase their spending in non-residential construction in 2007, according to the latest Private and Public Investment Survey, and the continuing advantageous interest rates.

Metropolitan areas: Marked declines in Toronto and Vancouver

The value of permits in the 34 census metropolitan areas represented 70% of the total value of permits in February.

Among those 34 areas, 20 recorded declines in their value of building permits compared to January. In dollars, the largest losses occurred in Toronto and Vancouver.

In Vancouver, the decline came from both the residential and non-residential sectors. In Toronto, it

was due to a marked decline in the demand for new dwellings.

In contrast, the largest gain (in dollars) came from Winnipeg, which had increases in both sectors.

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

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2802.

The February 2007 issue of *Building Permits* (64-001-XWE, free) will be available soon.

The March building permit estimate will be released on May 7.

To order data, contact Jasmine Gaudreault (613-951-6321 or toll-free 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

	January 2007 ^r	February 2007 ^p	January to February 2007	January to February 2006	January to February 2007	January–February 2006 to January–February 2007
Seasonally adjusted						
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions		% change
St. John's	23.3	24.5	5.2	54.9	47.8	-12.8
Halifax	31.4	25.5	-18.6	91.0	56.9	-37.4
Moncton	10.5	14.3	36.6	20.0	24.7	23.4
Saint John	21.3	21.3	0.2	28.5	42.6	49.6
Saguenay	4.2	5.9	39.1	10.2	10.2	-0.5
Québec	96.8	113.9	17.7	175.9	210.7	19.8
Sherbrooke	17.5	24.0	37.2	73.6	41.4	-43.7
Trois-Rivières	17.6	13.2	-25.1	39.0	30.7	-21.2
Montréal	467.2	428.6	-8.3	935.4	895.8	-4.2
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	228.7	166.4	-27.2	266.9	395.1	48.0
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part)	43.8	31.8	-27.5	79.0	75.6	-4.2
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	184.8	134.6	-27.2	187.9	319.4	70.0
Kingston	10.5	8.6	-18.4	17.2	19.2	11.4
Peterborough	2.1	6.5	208.6	21.2	8.6	-59.5
Oshawa	100.0	28.3	-71.7	153.3	128.3	-16.3
Toronto	1,243.6	926.1	-25.5	1,623.9	2,169.8	33.6
Hamilton	84.3	66.1	-21.6	163.9	150.4	-8.2
St. Catharines–Niagara	20.0	34.3	71.7	58.5	54.3	-7.2
Kitchener	41.2	62.2	51.0	153.8	103.4	-32.8
Brantford	9.1	9.9	8.6	37.3	19.0	-49.0
Guelph	12.7	33.4	163.4	40.4	46.1	14.2
London	72.2	49.4	-31.5	163.9	121.6	-25.8
Windsor	20.3	21.9	7.9	111.5	42.1	-62.2
Barrie	15.2	14.0	-8.2	78.2	29.2	-62.7
Greater Sudbury	110.1	6.1	-94.5	10.5	116.2	1,002.9
Thunder Bay	10.2	4.5	-55.9	17.6	14.7	-16.2
Winnipeg	66.0	92.7	40.5	144.3	158.8	10.1
Regina	33.3	14.6	-56.3	45.2	47.8	5.7
Saskatoon	46.3	37.3	-19.6	63.8	83.6	31.1
Calgary	435.2	342.0	-21.4	656.9	777.2	18.3
Edmonton	348.7	281.7	-19.2	479.1	630.4	31.6
Kelowna	34.2	46.4	35.5	63.8	80.6	26.3
Abbotsford	48.9	28.8	-41.1	42.5	77.7	82.7
Vancouver	653.4	428.4	-34.4	768.8	1,081.8	40.7
Victoria	82.8	66.8	-19.3	103.3	149.6	44.9

^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

	January 2007 ^r	February 2007 ^p	January to February 2007	January to February 2006	January to February 2007	January-February 2006 to January-February 2007
Seasonally adjusted						
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions		% change
Canada	6,264.7	4,862.4	-22.4	9,314.3	11,127.2	19.5
Residential	3,632.7	2,985.1	-17.8	6,208.3	6,617.8	6.6
Non-residential	2,632.0	1,877.4	-28.7	3,106.0	4,509.4	45.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	43.5	40.6	-6.5	74.7	84.1	12.6
Residential	25.7	35.2	36.7	62.8	60.9	-3.0
Non-residential	17.7	5.5	-69.2	11.9	23.2	95.4
Prince Edward Island	12.1	9.8	-18.6	22.7	21.9	-3.3
Residential	9.0	7.9	-12.6	17.6	17.0	-3.5
Non-residential	3.0	1.9	-36.6	5.1	4.9	-2.9
Nova Scotia	79.0	65.4	-17.2	185.5	144.4	-22.1
Residential	58.1	54.0	-7.1	141.8	112.1	-21.0
Non-residential	20.9	11.4	-45.2	43.6	32.3	-26.0
New Brunswick	59.0	57.9	-1.8	155.7	117.0	-24.9
Residential	38.8	38.1	-1.8	77.8	77.0	-1.1
Non-residential	20.2	19.8	-1.8	77.9	40.0	-48.7
Quebec	962.9	860.9	-10.6	1,788.6	1,823.8	2.0
Residential	634.1	589.6	-7.0	1,174.5	1,223.7	4.2
Non-residential	328.7	271.3	-17.5	614.1	600.0	-2.3
Ontario	2,633.7	1,741.8	-33.9	3,522.3	4,375.5	24.2
Residential	1,259.4	971.5	-22.9	2,295.3	2,230.9	-2.8
Non-residential	1,374.3	770.3	-43.9	1,227.1	2,144.6	74.8
Manitoba	114.5	142.0	24.0	211.5	256.4	21.2
Residential	78.5	85.3	8.7	143.8	163.8	13.9
Non-residential	36.0	56.7	57.4	67.8	92.7	36.8
Saskatchewan	103.1	93.9	-9.0	142.0	197.0	38.7
Residential	61.7	62.7	1.6	73.0	124.5	70.6
Non-residential	41.4	31.1	-24.8	69.1	72.5	5.0
Alberta	1,173.6	996.6	-15.1	1,754.8	2,170.2	23.7
Residential	745.8	612.3	-17.9	1,226.7	1,358.0	10.7
Non-residential	427.8	384.3	-10.2	528.1	812.1	53.8
British Columbia	1,073.5	833.5	-22.4	1,450.8	1,907.0	31.4
Residential	717.4	522.4	-27.2	990.4	1,239.8	25.2
Non-residential	356.1	311.1	-12.6	460.4	667.2	44.9
Yukon	4.4	16.8	280.2	4.8	21.3	340.9
Residential	2.7	3.6	33.8	4.6	6.2	36.0
Non-residential	1.8	13.3	649.9	0.3	15.1	5,779.3
Northwest Territories	4.2	0.9	-78.7	0.7	5.0	617.9
Residential	0.1	0.2	42.6	0.1	0.4	290.2
Non-residential	4.0	0.7	-83.2	0.6	4.7	667.3
Nunavut	1.4	2.2	65.2	0.0	3.6	...
Residential	1.3	2.2	69.0	0.0	3.6	...
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	-100.0	0.0	0.0	...

^r revised

^p preliminary

... figures not applicable

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

Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating

2004

The public use microdata file from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) is now available. This file contains information collected from more than 20,000 respondents aged 15 and over residing in private households in the 10 provinces.

The public use microdata file provides provincial-level information about the ways in which Canadians donate money and in-kind gifts to charitable and nonprofit organizations; volunteer their time to these organizations; provide help directly to others; and participate as members in groups and organizations. Socio-demographic, income and labour force data are also included on the file.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4430.

The *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating: Public Use Microdata File, 2004*, is available on CD-ROM (89M0017XCB, \$1,500), along with complete documentation including a user guide and data dictionary.

The initial results from the 2004 CSGVP were released in *The Daily* on June 5, 2006. This release also featured a publication *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004* (71-542-XIE, free), available online from the *Publications* module of our website. A paper version of the publication (71-542-XPE, \$20) is also available. See *How to order products*.

To obtain a copy of the CD, for more information on related products and services, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-461-9050 or 613-951-3321; fax: 613-951-4527; ssd@statcan.ca), Special Surveys Division. ■

Accounting services price indexes

2005

The Accounting Services Price Indexes (ASPI), which measure the change in the price of accounting services including auditing, tax preparation and bookkeeping, are now available for 2004 (revised) and 2005.

The ASPI increased 3.9% to 119.2 (2000=100) in 2005, down from the 4.6% increase in 2004 (revised). Prices for accounting services are now 26.4% higher

than they were in 1999, when these indices were established.

In 2005, all accounting service categories registered price increases in Canada, ranging from gains of 2.8% for bookkeeping and compilation services, to 5.4% for tax preparation for individuals and unincorporated businesses.

Higher prices in Alberta contributed to a 5.4% rise in accounting service prices in the Prairie region, the biggest jump across Canada. Second to that was a 4.2% increase in British Columbia, while prices in the Atlantic region grew the least in 2005, by only 3.4%.

The ASPI series are disseminated both nationally and by region.

Available on CANSIM: table 326-0014.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2334.

For more information or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, call (toll-free 1-866-230-2248; 613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; prices-prix@statcan.ca), or Monique Beyrouti (613-951-1673; monique.beyrouti@statcan.ca), Prices Division. ■

Canadian Business Patterns

December 2006

The CD-ROM *Canadian Business Patterns* provides counts of active establishments by various geography levels, industry classification and employment size.

Canadian Business Patterns (CBP) is compiled from the Business Register, which is a repository of information on the Canadian business population.

Nationally, there were 2,331,337 active establishments recorded for December 2006. Data from the CBP are now available on CD-ROM. They are presented by the 2001 Standard Geographical Classification, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS 2007), and by employment categories.

Beginning with this December 2006 edition, the new version of the NAICS 2007 has replaced the NAICS 2002 in the CBP tables. However, the majority of changes occur within sector boundaries. The product includes a concordance table indicating the relationship between NAICS 2002 and NAICS 2007.

Note: The Standard Industrial Classification is no longer available in the CBP tables.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1105.

The December 2006 edition of *Canadian Business Patterns* (61F0040XCB) is now available. The cost varies between \$150 and \$2,000 depending on the number of tables or cells. See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Beau Cinnamon (613-951-9021; BRDinfoDRE@statcan.ca) or Alex Côté (613-951-0829), Business Register Division. ■

Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business 2005

The three-volume series of *Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business* for 2005 is now available in CD-ROM format. *Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business* is an authoritative reference source of key financial ratios for many industries in Canada.

Volume 1 covers large incorporated firms in both the financial and non-financial sectors, at the national level. Beginning with the 2004 version of *Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business*, Volume 1, now covers firms with annual sales revenue exceeding \$25 million.

Volume 2 covers medium-sized incorporated firms in the non-financial sector, at the national level, with annual sales revenue between \$5 million and \$25 million.

Volume 3 covers small-sized incorporated firms with annual sales revenue between \$30,000 and \$5 million in the non-financial sector at the national, provincial and territorial levels, and for the Atlantic and Prairie regions.

Data showed median profitability ratios for firms in all three groups improved for a second consecutive year.

Large corporations recorded a median operating profit margin of 2.7% in 2005, up from 2.6% in 2004 and 2.3% in 2003.

Median operating profit margins for medium firms were 2.8% in 2005, 2.6% in 2004 and 2.3% in 2003,

while those for small firms were 4.0% in 2005, 3.5% in 2004 and 3.1% in 2003.

Volume 3 provides ratio distributions for small-sized corporations at the provincial level. Given the robust economic activity driven by the oil and gas, mining and construction industries, it is not surprising that Alberta posted the highest median operating profit margin (7.0%) in 2005.

This series uses up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive data on Canadian businesses derived from Statistics Canada databases of financial statements.

This CD-ROM enables users to compare their firm's performance to that of their industry to address issues such as profitability, efficiency and business risk. *Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business* can also be used for inter-industry comparisons.

The CD-ROM provides three reference years of data (2003, 2004 and 2005). It offers a full slate of financial ratios and a common-sized balance sheet for sectors and industries in Canada. Data are compiled based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS 2002).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2510.

Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business (61-224-XCB) is now available. All volumes cost \$1,045; Volumes 1, 2 and 3, national, \$590; Volume 1, \$240; Volume 2, \$240; Volume 3, national, \$240; Volume 3, province, territory or region, \$240 each). See *How to order products*.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services Division (toll-free 1-800-263-1136) or Louise Noel (toll-free 1-888-811-6235; louise.noel@statcan.ca), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Danielle Lafontaine-Sorgo (613-951-2634; danielle.lafontaine-sorgo@statcan.ca) or Haig McCarrell (613-951-5948; haig.mccarrell@statcan.ca), Industrial Organization and Finance Division. ■

New products

The Canadian Productivity Review: Multifactor Productivity in Canada: An Evaluation of Alternative Methods of Estimating Capital Services, no. 9
Catalogue number 15-206-XIE2007009
(free).

Canadian Business Patterns, December 2006
Catalogue number 61F0040XCB
(various prices).

Financial Performance Indicators for Canadian Business, 2003 to 2005
Catalogue number 61-224-XCB
(various prices).

Canadian Foreign Post Indexes, April 2007
Catalogue number 62-013-XIE
(free).

Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating: Public Use Microdata File, 2004
Catalogue number 89M0017XCB (\$1,500).

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

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11-001-XIE (11-001-XIE) 11-001-XIE (11-001-XIE)



Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 9:30 a.m.



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 six 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 and industry work force in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001-XIE.

Published each working day by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-G, R.H. Coats Bldg., Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

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