



# The Daily

Statistics Canada

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Operating profits for Canadian corporations decreased in the first quarter of 2008. Results were mixed as 12 of 22 industry groups reported lower profits. Corporate profits amounted to \$67.8 billion, down 1.1% from the fourth quarter of 2007.	
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## New products

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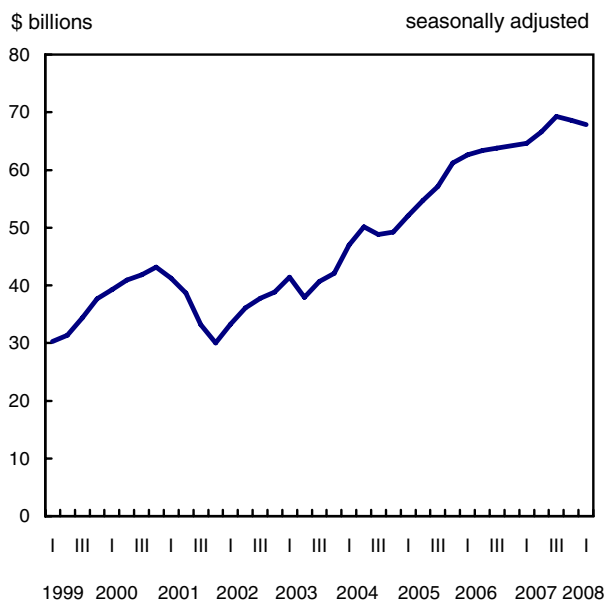
## Releases

### Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises

First quarter 2008 (preliminary)

Operating profits for Canadian corporations decreased in the first quarter of 2008. Results were mixed as 12 of 22 industry groups reported lower profits. Corporate profits amounted to \$67.8 billion, down 1.1% from the fourth quarter of 2007.

#### Operating profits decline



Of the industry groups reporting lower profits, three main sectors led the way: financial, transportation and warehousing, and manufacturing. These declines were offset by gains in information and culture, retail trade and oil and gas.

Profits in the non-financial sector edged up 0.5% to \$48.7 billion, while those in the financial sector fell 5.0% to \$19.1 billion.

#### Increased input costs and continuing adjustments to higher loonie slows manufacturing

Overall operating profits in the manufacturing sector contracted 2.3% to \$11.2 billion in the quarter. Profits in the sector have fallen in three of the last four quarters.

#### Note to readers

These quarterly financial statistics are based upon a sample survey and represent the activities of all corporations in Canada, except those that are government controlled or not-for-profit. An enterprise can be a single corporation or a family of corporations under common ownership and control, for which consolidated financial statements are produced.

Profits referred to in this analysis are operating profits. Operating profits represent the pre-tax profits earned from normal business activities, excluding interest expense on borrowing and valuation adjustments.

For non-financial industries, operating profits exclude interest and dividend revenue and capital gains/losses. For financial industries, interest and dividend revenue, capital gains/losses and interest paid on deposits are included in the calculation of operating profits.

Operating profits differ from after-tax profits, which represent the bottom-line profits earned by corporations.

Please note, effective this quarter, our program has converted to the 2007 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). All data from 1988 onwards have been revised to reflect this update. However, the impact on the historical series has been minimal. For more information on this change, consult the Standards industry classification page of our website.

The quarterly financial statistics for enterprises for the period covering 2005 to date have been revised following reconciliation to the 2005 and 2006 annual series and seasonal adjustment revisions.

Leading the decline in the sector were wood and paper manufacturers, whose profits fell \$240 million. More layoffs, plant closures, and scaled back production, brought on by slumping demand from the US housing market and a strong Canadian dollar, contributed to significant losses in the first quarter.

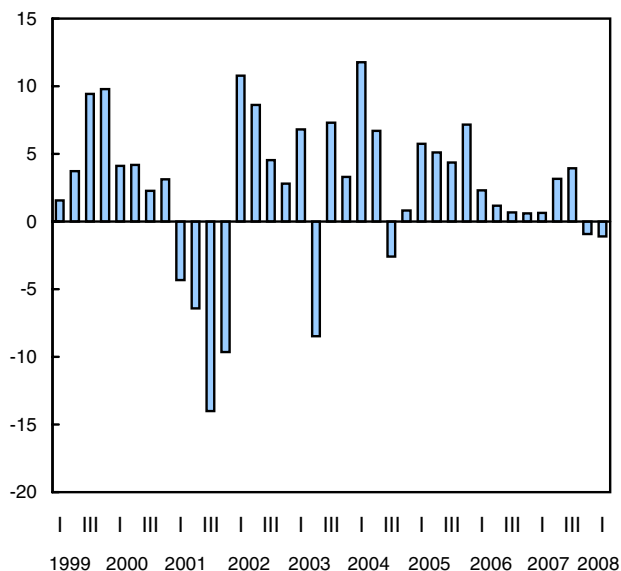
Rising worldwide grain prices, coupled with higher fuel costs, boosted operating expenses for food and soft drink manufacturers. This resulted in a decline in first-quarter profits.

Chemical, plastics, and rubber product producers also saw profits weaken, as rising prices for production inputs cut into margins. As in the case of wood and paper manufacturers, a number of plant closures in this sector have been recently announced.

First-quarter profits for petroleum and coal products manufacturers, which currently make up the largest share of manufacturing profits, improved slightly. However, maintenance on machinery and equipment, coupled with temporary production issues at refineries, acted as a drag on results.

**First quarter profit growth shows little change**

% change in profits



In addition, soaring costs in crude oil, the main production input for refiners, along with evidence of weakening demand for petroleum products other than gasoline, have pinched profit margins.

**Profits in oil and gas extraction industry continue to climb**

Corporate profits in oil and gas extraction rose 3.7% to \$7.1 billion, their highest level in six quarters. The industry benefited from strengthening crude oil prices and a rebound in natural gas prices.

**Other non-financial industries**

First-quarter profits for the transportation and warehousing industry declined a substantial 8.5%

to \$2.9 billion. Strong demand for air travel was more than offset by declining shipments to the United States, combined with a severe winter that forced the suspension of operations in parts of the country.

Despite the tough winter, consumers remained resilient, as retailers registered an impressive 6.5% gain in profits, which hit \$4.7 billion in the first quarter. Retail profits have grown in seven of the last nine quarters.

Profits in the information and cultural industry rebounded to \$3.8 billion, up 14.4% from the previous quarter.

**Financial sector: Declines in equity markets and slow sales**

Slower mutual fund sales, partly as a result of weakness in equity markets, dragged down profits for securities, commodity contracts and other financial companies. In addition, bank profits showed a modest decline, primarily due to lower fee revenue.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 187-0001 and 187-0002.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2501.**

The first quarter 2008 issue of the *Quarterly Financial Statistics for Enterprises* (61-008-XWE, free) will be available soon.

Financial statistics for enterprises for the second quarter of 2008 will be released on August 21.

For more information, or to order data, contact Louise Noel (toll-free 1-888-811-6235; 613-951-2604). To enquire about the concepts, methods, or data quality of this release, contact Boran Plong (613-951-2649; [boran.plong@statcan.ca](mailto:boran.plong@statcan.ca)), Philippe Marceau (613-951-4390; [philippe.marceau@statcan.ca](mailto:philippe.marceau@statcan.ca)), or David Sabourin (613-951-3735; [david.sabourin@statcan.ca](mailto:david.sabourin@statcan.ca)), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.

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Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises

	First quarter 2007 <sup>r</sup>	Fourth quarter 2007 <sup>r</sup>	First quarter 2008 <sup>p</sup>	First quarter 2007 to first quarter 2008	Fourth quarter 2007 to first quarter 2008
Seasonally adjusted					
	\$ billions			% change	
<b>All Industries</b>					
Operating revenue	742.8	769.7	779.0	4.9	1.2
Operating profit	64.6	68.6	67.8	5.1	-1.1
After-tax profit	43.5	47.6	45.4	4.4	-4.5
<b>Non-financial</b>					
Operating revenue	668.5	689.3	698.7	4.5	1.4
Operating profit	46.1	48.5	48.7	5.7	0.5
After-tax profit	30.8	34.4	33.3	8.2	-3.1
<b>Financial</b>					
Operating revenue	74.2	80.3	80.2	8.1	-0.1
Operating profit	18.5	20.1	19.1	3.5	-5.0
After-tax profit	12.7	13.2	12.1	-4.7	-8.2

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

**Note:** Figures may not add up to totals because of rounding.



## Retail trade

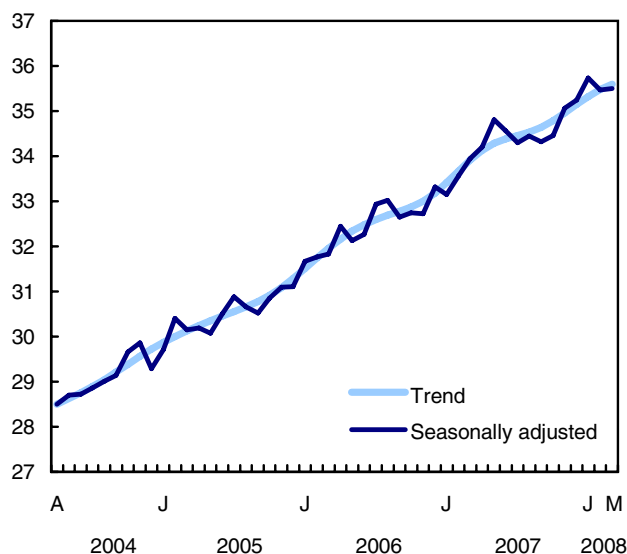
March 2008

After a decrease in February, retailers saw their sales remain relatively stable in March, edging up 0.1% to an estimated \$35.5 billion.

However, the strong rise in January led to a 1.8% increase in retail sales in the first quarter of 2008, a growth rate similar to that of the previous quarter. Although retailers experienced moderate sales in the middle of 2007, retail sales have generally been rising at a rapid clip since 2004.

### Retail sales remain stable in March after a decline in February

\$ billions



The sales increase posted by the automotive sector was offset by a notable 2.6% drop in sales at clothing and accessories stores. The exceptional level of snow accumulation in March, particularly in Quebec, seems to have hit clothing sales especially hard. Consumers seem to have delayed their purchases of spring clothing. Following a period of strong growth that began in 2006, sales for this sector have been rising at a much slower pace since the middle of 2007.

The weather also seems to have had a dampening effect on sales by general merchandise stores (that sell, among other things, clothing and lawn and garden products) and by building and outdoor home supplies stores.

Sales in the automotive sector were up 0.4% in March, the fifth increase in six months. All three components of this sector showed increases, led by a

0.7% rise in sales at gasoline stations. After declining in mid-2007, sales in this sector have picked up since late 2007.

According to the New Motor Vehicle Sales Survey, the number of new motor vehicles sold in the first quarter of 2008 rose by 9.1%, the strongest growth rate in 10 years. This rate of growth compares with a 3.0% increase in sales by new car dealers. The growth in the number of new vehicles sold was concentrated on passenger cars, which generally have a lower selling price than trucks.

Taking price changes into account, retail sales in constant dollars were up 0.5% in March, indicating an increase in sales volumes. With the exception of February 2008, sales in constant dollars have been on the rise since October 2007.

### Sales down in Quebec

While seven provinces reported sales gains in March, sales were dragged down by a 3.1% drop in Quebec. However, sales in Quebec were up 1.9% for the first quarter of 2008 compared with the last quarter of 2007. Part of the March decline in Quebec reflects lower new motor vehicle sales, after an exceptionally strong January.

Heavy snowfalls seem to have deterred consumers from springtime shopping in most of the Atlantic provinces in March. Nova Scotia was the only Atlantic province that posted a significant increase in sales.

All provinces west of Quebec witnessed increased retail sales in March. Sales in British Columbia were up by 2.0% after declining in previous months. Saskatchewan saw its retail sales increase for the 11th consecutive month. Sales in Ontario partially recovered February's decline.

For information on related indicators, please consult the *Latest statistics* page of our website.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0014 to 080-0017.**

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

The March 2008 issue of *Retail Trade* (63-005-XWE, free) will be available shortly.

Data on retail trade for April will be released on June 20.

For more information or to order data, contact Client Services (613-951-3549; toll-free 1-877-421-3067; [retailinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:retailinfo@statcan.ca)). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Claude Bilodeau (613-951-1816), Distributive Trades Division.

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**Retail sales**

	March 2007	December 2007 <sup>r</sup>	January 2008 <sup>r</sup>	February 2008 <sup>r</sup>	March 2008 <sup>p</sup>	February to March 2008	March 2007 to March 2008
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions				% change		
<b>Automotive</b>	<b>11,738</b>	<b>12,376</b>	<b>12,665</b>	<b>12,513</b>	<b>12,567</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>7.1</b>
New car dealers	6,385	6,473	6,646	6,532	6,549	0.3	2.6
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,519	1,644	1,701	1,643	1,651	0.5	8.7
Gasoline stations	3,834	4,259	4,318	4,338	4,368	0.7	13.9
<b>Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>2,496</b>	<b>2,581</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>2,553</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Furniture stores	841	827	862	850	841	-1.1	0.0
Home furnishings stores	492	503	520	514	518	0.7	5.4
Computer and software stores	116	114	117	114	113	-1.2	-2.5
Home electronics and appliance stores	1,010	1,052	1,083	1,074	1,081	0.7	7.1
<b>Building and outdoor home supplies stores</b>	<b>2,175</b>	<b>2,229</b>	<b>2,269</b>	<b>2,257</b>	<b>2,246</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Home centres and hardware stores	1,755	1,818	1,835	1,831	1,829	-0.1	4.2
Specialized building materials and garden stores	420	411	434	426	418	-2.0	-0.6
<b>Food and beverage stores</b>	<b>7,533</b>	<b>7,759</b>	<b>7,813</b>	<b>7,809</b>	<b>7,837</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Supermarkets	5,396	5,566	5,596	5,590	5,630	0.7	4.3
Convenience and specialty food stores	816	835	838	833	819	-1.7	0.4
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,321	1,359	1,379	1,386	1,388	0.1	5.1
<b>Pharmacies and personal care stores</b>	<b>2,330</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>2,411</b>	<b>2,383</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Clothing and accessories stores</b>	<b>1,973</b>	<b>1,983</b>	<b>2,026</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>1,958</b>	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
Clothing stores	1,510	1,513	1,557	1,541	1,491	-3.2	-1.3
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	463	470	470	469	468	-0.3	1.0
<b>General merchandise stores</b>	<b>3,980</b>	<b>4,214</b>	<b>4,170</b>	<b>4,157</b>	<b>4,135</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Miscellaneous retailers</b>	<b>1,758</b>	<b>1,797</b>	<b>1,796</b>	<b>1,783</b>	<b>1,789</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	889	888	888	883	899	1.8	1.2
Miscellaneous store retailers	869	909	908	899	890	-1.0	2.4
<b>Total retail sales</b>	<b>33,945</b>	<b>35,248</b>	<b>35,732</b>	<b>35,464</b>	<b>35,497</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers</b>	<b>26,040</b>	<b>27,131</b>	<b>27,386</b>	<b>27,289</b>	<b>27,297</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>Provinces and territories</b>							
Newfoundland and Labrador	533	569	584	582	572	-1.6	7.3
Prince Edward Island	135	138	142	141	141	0.1	4.1
Nova Scotia	965	978	1,015	1,017	1,026	1.0	6.3
New Brunswick	760	789	805	804	785	-2.3	3.4
Quebec	7,426	7,682	7,895	7,867	7,621	-3.1	2.6
Ontario	12,088	12,525	12,739	12,533	12,638	0.8	4.5
Manitoba	1,146	1,234	1,253	1,251	1,279	2.3	11.7
Saskatchewan	1,062	1,171	1,174	1,180	1,205	2.1	13.4
Alberta	5,078	5,209	5,195	5,206	5,252	0.9	3.4
British Columbia	4,635	4,826	4,800	4,753	4,848	2.0	4.6
Yukon	39	44	44	44	44	-0.5	14.2
Northwest Territories	55	60	61	62	61	-2.5	9.6
Nunavut	22	24	25	25	24	-1.9	9.1

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

**Note:** Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

**Retail sales**

	March 2007	February 2008 <sup>r</sup>	March 2008 <sup>p</sup>	March 2007 to March 2008
	Unadjusted			
	\$ millions			% change
<b>Automotive</b>	<b>11,955</b>	<b>10,275</b>	<b>11,978</b>	<b>0.2</b>
New car dealers	6,785	5,239	6,377	-6.0
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,416	1,197	1,387	-2.1
Gasoline stations	3,753	3,839	4,214	12.3
<b>Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores</b>	<b>2,316</b>	<b>2,122</b>	<b>2,323</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Furniture stores	800	707	783	-2.2
Home furnishings stores	472	430	467	-1.1
Computer and software stores	132	113	122	-7.6
Home electronics and appliance stores	912	873	951	4.3
<b>Building and outdoor home supplies stores</b>	<b>1,740</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>-1.8</b>
Home centres and hardware stores	1,393	1,232	1,380	-0.9
Specialized building materials and garden stores	347	293	328	-5.5
<b>Food and beverage stores</b>	<b>7,574</b>	<b>7,070</b>	<b>7,528</b>	<b>-0.6</b>
Supermarkets	5,575	5,228	5,517	-1.0
Convenience and specialty food stores	781	729	776	-0.6
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,218	1,112	1,235	1.4
<b>Pharmacies and personal care stores</b>	<b>2,339</b>	<b>2,280</b>	<b>2,351</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Clothing and accessories stores</b>	<b>1,731</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>1,641</b>	<b>-5.2</b>
Clothing stores	1,352	1,068	1,288	-4.7
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	379	353	353	-6.9
<b>General merchandise stores</b>	<b>3,501</b>	<b>3,148</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Miscellaneous retailers</b>	<b>1,578</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	771	666	774	0.3
Miscellaneous store retailers	806	779	808	0.2
<b>Total retail sales</b>	<b>32,734</b>	<b>29,286</b>	<b>32,702</b>	<b>-0.1</b>
<b>Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers</b>	<b>24,532</b>	<b>22,850</b>	<b>24,938</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Provinces and territories</b>				
Newfoundland and Labrador	495	463	492	-0.5
Prince Edward Island	120	111	119	-0.7
Nova Scotia	916	833	934	2.1
New Brunswick	722	654	715	-0.9
Quebec	7,184	6,395	7,049	-1.9
Ontario	11,603	10,304	11,485	-1.0
Manitoba	1,115	1,028	1,178	5.7
Saskatchewan	990	959	1,096	10.7
Alberta	4,921	4,320	4,919	0.0
British Columbia	4,548	4,103	4,585	0.8
Yukon	36	35	39	9.4
Northwest Territories	63	59	66	5.0
Nunavut	23	22	25	6.6

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

**Note:** Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

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## Current economic conditions

Output slumped again in February, after recovering in January from a steep decline in December. Several factors have contributed to the recent weakness in real gross domestic product (GDP). The new Family Day holiday in Ontario shortened work hours in February for many firms. Weather also has been erratic, with record snow this winter in much of Eastern Canada and the coldest weather in years in Western Canada. Meanwhile, the US economy remained sluggish in the first quarter, as the worsening state of its housing market offset higher exports.

But mostly, growth in Canada has been restrained by large drops in auto assemblies. The recent volatility of auto production in Canada is in marked contrast with the United States. Auto output in Canada tumbled 23% in December, about two-thirds due to model changeovers and one-third to weaker sales in the United States. Output rebounded in both January and February, but remained 14% below its November level. Meanwhile, output in the US dipped only 5% over the same period. The strike at a US parts manufacturer further disrupted auto production on both sides of the border in March, and continued into April.

It is unclear at the moment whether the economy is in a cyclical slowdown like in 2001 that will last several months, or is traversing an extended period when irregular events depress output, as occurred in 2003. At that time, a series of mishaps, ranging from the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), mad cow disease and the Iraq war, as well as the electricity blackout in Ontario and bad weather, kept real GDP growth below 1% for the year ending in August 2003. Once these events passed, however, growth quickly resumed, rising 1.8% for all of 2003.

Comparing the pattern of GDP recently with 2001 and 2003 sheds little light on which course the economy has taken. One encouraging sign is that employment growth continued. However, job growth itself does not always distinguish between cyclical slowdowns and irregular events: employment stalled in mid-2003, but rose slowly in 2001. Still, cyclical slowdowns are not usually associated with the ongoing strength seen in commodity and stock markets and

strong sales of autos and housing in Canada. The leading indicator remains neutral about the direction the economy is taking.

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

The print version of the May 2008 issue of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Vol. 21, no. 5 (11-010-XPB, \$25/\$243), is now available. See *How to order products*.

This issue summarizes the major economic events that occurred in April and presents an article entitled "From lagging to leading: Newfoundland and Saskatchewan dig into the resource boom."

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](mailto:ceo@statcan.ca)), Current Economic Analysis Group. ■

## Large urban transit

March 2008 (preliminary)

Combined ridership on 10 large urban transit systems in Canada was 0.2% lower in March than it was for the same month in 2007.

Approximately 129.4 million passenger trips were taken on these transit systems in March. These systems account for about 80% of total urban transit in Canada.

The trips generated \$216.8 million in revenue in March (excluding subsidies), a 7.1% increase over March 2007.

**Available on CANSIM: table 408-0004.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2745.**

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Dissemination Unit (toll-free 1-866-500-8400; fax: 613-951-0009; [transportationstatistics@statcan.ca](mailto:transportationstatistics@statcan.ca)), Transportation Division. ■



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## Census Subdivision Boundary File

The 2008 *Census Subdivision Boundary File* portrays the census subdivision geographical limits and provides a framework for mapping and spatial analysis. This file is available as a free download.

The boundaries, names, codes and status of census subdivisions reflect those in effect on January 1, 2008, the geographic reference date for this edition of the *Census Subdivision Boundary File*.

The *Census Subdivision Boundary File* depicts the full extent of the geographical areas, including the coastal water area. The file is available in three formats: ArcInfo®, Geography Markup Language and MapInfo®.

The 2008 *Census Subdivision Boundary File* does not replace the 2006 *Census Subdivision Boundary File* (92-160-XWE, free), which is a similar product available as part of the 2006 suite of geography products, and used in conjunction with products and services from the 2006 Census.

The 2008 *Census Subdivision Boundary File* (92-162-XWE, free) and *Census Subdivision Boundary File, Reference Guide* (92-162-GWE, free), are now available in electronic format from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, to order these files, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Geo-Help (613-951-3889; [geohelp@statcan.ca](mailto:geohelp@statcan.ca)), Geography Division. ■

## Annual Retail Non-store Survey

2006

Data for the 2006 Retail Non-store Survey are now available.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0012 and 080-0013.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2448.**

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; [retailinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:retailinfo@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades Division. ■

## Innovation Analysis Bulletin

May 2008

The *Innovation Analysis Bulletin* focuses on trends in science, technology and the information society.

This issue features articles about the last decade at Statistics Canada's Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division; Statistics Canada's life sciences statistics program; biotechnology spinoffs; findings from the Survey of Innovation; the use of patents and the protection of intellectual property in the Canadian manufacturing industry; interpreting indicators of the commercial value of intellectual property; commercializing innovative products; tracking the use of radio frequency identification tags in Canadian organizations; and, profiling Internet use among workers in the information and communications technologies sector.

**Available on CANSIM: tables 358-0063 to 358-0117.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4218.**

The *Innovation Analysis Bulletin*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (88-003-XWE, free) is now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Rad Joseph (613-951-6830; fax: 613-951-9920; [robert.joseph@statcan.ca](mailto:robert.joseph@statcan.ca)), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division. ■

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## New products

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**Canadian Economic Observer**, May 2008, Vol. 21, no. 5  
**Catalogue number 11-010-XPB** (\$25/\$243).

**Human Activity and the Environment: Annual Statistics**, 2007 and 2008  
**Catalogue number 16-201-XPE** (\$68).

**Work Absence Rates**, 2007  
**Catalogue number 71-211-XWE**  
(free).

**Innovation Analysis Bulletin**, Vol. 10, no. 1  
**Catalogue number 88-003-XWE**  
(free).

**Interim List of Changes to Municipal Boundaries, Status, and Names**, January 2, 2006 to January 1, 2008  
**Catalogue number 92F0009XWE**  
(free).

**Census Subdivisions Boundary File, Reference Guide**, May 2008  
**Catalogue number 92-162-GWE**  
(free).

**Census Subdivisions Boundary File**, May 2008  
**Catalogue number 92-162-XWE**  
(free).

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
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