



# Infommat

## A Weekly Review

Friday, October 22, 1999

### OVERVIEW

#### ◆ Energy costs still driving consumer prices higher

In September, the annual inflation rate rose to 2.6%. Once again, the annual rate's climb was primarily due to higher energy prices. Excluding the increase in energy prices, the annual inflation rate was 1.6% in August and 1.6% in September.

#### ◆ Composite index: growth still improving

The growth of the leading indicator continued to improve in September, climbing to 0.5%. The number of rising components increased from 8 to 9 (out of 10)—a rare occurrence in the past two years.

#### ◆ Motor vehicle sales up as prices jump

In August, the number of new vehicles sold rose for a third month in a row (+0.5%). August's increase was due entirely to car sales. The average price of new vehicles jumped as new models arrived.

#### ◆ Public spending on culture continues to decline

In 1997/98, total spending on culture by all three levels of government was \$5.56 billion, down from the previous year by 1.7% and below the 1992/93 peak by 5.4%.

#### ◆ Calgary area has highest net inflow of new residents

Between June 1997 and June 1998, more people moved into and out of the Toronto area than any other metropolitan area. However, in terms of migration rates, the Calgary area had by far the highest net inflow of new residents.

#### ◆ Most schools connected to the Internet

In January and February 1999, more than 9 out of every 10 students at the elementary, intermediate and secondary levels in Canada attended schools that had access to the Internet for educational purposes.

### Energy costs still driving consumer prices higher

In September, the annual inflation rate on the goods and services contained in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket rose to 2.6%. As in August, when the annual inflation rate climbed to 2.1%, September's hike was primarily due to higher energy prices. September's annual increase in energy prices resulted chiefly from accelerated growth in gasoline and fuel oil prices and from rising natural gas prices. Excluding the increase in energy prices, the annual inflation rate was 1.5% in August and 1.6% in September.

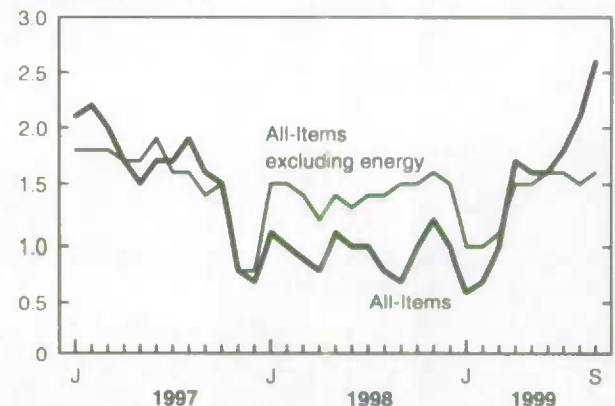
Aside from energy, the annual inflation rate was pushed up in September by vehicle prices and air transportation costs. However, that upward pressure was dampened by lower prices for computer equipment and telephone services.

From August to September, the CPI edged up 0.3%, a monthly increase identical to that of the two prior months. The greatest impact in September came from rising prices for owned accommodation, university tuition fees (included in the CPI every September), gasoline, footwear and household furnishings.

Owned accommodation prices rose 0.7%. Mainly, this occurred because of higher homeowner maintenance and repair costs,

#### Consumer Price Index

% change, previous year



Available also on the StatCan INTERNET (continued on page 2)

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### ... Energy costs still driving consumer prices higher

mortgage interest costs and replacement costs. As for university tuition, fees for the 1999/2000 academic year increased an average 6.7%. For the most part, the increase in tuition was due to provincial government cuts to university funding.

Gasoline prices rose from August to September by 2.1%. That was slower than the 6.3% increase seen in the previous month.

**Consumer Price Index, September 1999**  
% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All-items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
<b>Canada</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>12.5</b>
Newfoundland	3.0	1.3	7.6	2.9	15.8
Prince Edward Island	2.7	0.4	4.2	4.6	11.9
Nova Scotia	3.9	1.2	7.1	4.8	19.9
New Brunswick	3.2	2.2	2.6	6.7	12.5
Quebec	2.4	1.2	1.4	6.1	10.6
Ontario	2.6	1.1	1.8	5.7	10.9
Manitoba	2.7	1.3	1.5	5.3	6.4
Saskatchewan	2.2	0.4	2.4	5.8	11.0
Alberta	3.5	2.2	4.7	6.7	20.3
British Columbia	2.0	1.5	-0.1	6.3	16.0
Whitehorse	1.4	1.0	-0.6	4.7	-0.1
Yellowknife	1.9	0.7	0.9	4.5	7.4

According to the Raw Materials Price Index, crude oil prices surged 6.6% in August after jumping 15.1% in July. As for household furnishings, prices rose in September by 0.6%. This monthly increase was almost completely due to higher prices for furniture, reflecting the end of a period of widespread sales. After rising 2.3% in August, footwear prices advanced 4.0%. Women's footwear showed the sharpest price increases.

Lower prices for fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and traveller accommodation slowed the CPI's overall growth from August to September. After dropping 8.1% in August and 3.2% in July, fresh produce prices fell 7.3%. These decreases reflect price reductions that are common at this time of year because of the availability of local crops. Traveller accommodation costs were down from August by 2.4%. This marked the end of the peak tourist season.

In the provinces, annual inflation rates ranged from a low of 2.0% in British Columbia to a high of 3.9% in Nova Scotia. The monthly rates ranged from 0.2% in Newfoundland and Ontario to 0.9% in Prince Edward Island.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 9940-9970.**

The September 1999 issue of *The Consumer Price Index* (62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-9606, fax: 613-951-1539, [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)), Prices Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

## Composite index: growth still improving

The growth of the leading indicator continued to improve in September, climbing from August's 0.4% gain (upward revised) to 0.5%. As well, the number of rising components increased from eight to nine, due to an upturn in demand for durable goods. This marks one of the most widespread gains in the index in the past two years, as both export and domestic demand firmed.

Manufacturing improved as the machinery and equipment sector continued to accelerate. After advancing 0.3% and 0.1% in the previous two months, new orders rose 0.4%. The average workweek grew sharply for a third straight month and recovered all of the losses that occurred earlier this year.

Demand in the household sector was still choppy. With incomes up, outlays for all durable goods—especially autos and recreation equipment—rose further. The growth of the housing index also picked up slightly, as housing starts rose above 150,000 units for only the second time this year. However, demand for services continued to fall, the only negative result in September among the index's 10 components.

In the United States, the leading indicator grew steadily and showed few signs that the recent gains in Canadian exports are about to let up. Although most components south of the border were up, employment and consumer confidence led the recent gains.

**Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.**

The October 1999 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. See also "Current trends" on page 8.



## Motor vehicle sales up as prices jump

In August, the number of new vehicles sold totalled 131,552, up from July by 0.5%. It was the third increase in as many months. (All figures are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise indicated.) Since last October, sales have grown a vigorous 15.6%. August's increase was due entirely to car sales, which rose 1.8% to 67,847 cars. It was the third straight monthly increase for car sales, which have been on the rise since the fall of 1998. As for trucks, after two months of substantial growth, sales dipped 0.9% to 63,705 trucks. Truck sales have been increasing since early this year.

The number of new vehicles sold this August was up from last August by 13.6% (not seasonally adjusted). In each province east of Manitoba, sales were higher by at least 10.0%. In Western Canada, the largest sales gain occurred in Saskatchewan (+6.9%). Much smaller sales increases occurred in Alberta (+1.2%) and Manitoba (+1.0%). Sales were virtually unchanged in British Columbia (+0.1%). Slow truck sales were responsible for the lacklustre sales growth in Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia. (Data for the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut have been included with British Columbia.)

Every fall, the average price of new vehicles takes a sudden jump, primarily because of the flood of new models on the market. This August, consumers paid an average of \$27,071 (not seasonally adjusted) for a new vehicle, a jump from a year earlier of 5.0%. The average price of a new truck (excluding most heavy trucks and buses) rose faster (+6.5%) than the average price of a new car (+3.1%). Since last fall, the shift in demand from cars to trucks, which cost more on average, has accentuated this price movement. Choice of model/options and changes in standard equipment have also played a role in lifting the average prices. However, it is notable that the average price of new trucks has stabilised since April, whereas the average price of new cars has been on the decline since January.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

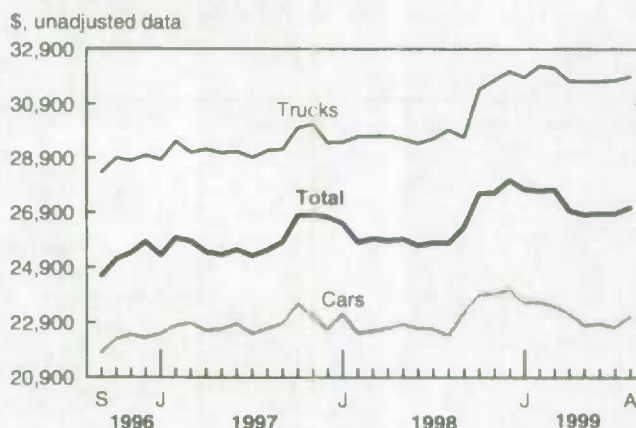
The August 1999 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XIB, \$13/\$124) is available online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca). To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549, 1 877 421-3067, [retailinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:retailinfo@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades

### Note to readers

In 1998, the number of motor vehicles registered to use the road increased from 17.5 million in 1997 to 18.0 million. That is an increase of 2.7%. Breaking that down, the number of cars registered rose 2.8% to 13.9 million, while truck and truck tractor registrations increased 2.6% to 3.6 million. Of the total, 59.1% were registered in the most populated provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Cars accounted for 77.2% of the total registrations in 1998, followed by truck and truck tractors with 20.2%. The remaining 2.6% consisted of buses, motorcycles, mopeds and all other road motor vehicles such as ambulances, hearses and fire trucks.

Complete details will be available shortly in the 1998 issue of *Road motor vehicles: registrations* (for sale at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 53-219-XIB, \$21). For further information on registrations, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486, fax: 613-951-0009, [larocque@statcan.ca](mailto:larocque@statcan.ca)), Transportation Division.

### Average price of new motor vehicles



Division. For analytical information, contact Clérance Kimanyi (613-951-3592, [kimacle@statcan.ca](mailto:kimacle@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades Division.

## Public spending on culture continues to decline

In 1997/98, total spending on culture by all three levels of government was \$5.56 billion, down from the previous year by 1.7% and below the 1992/93 peak by 5.4%. (Taking inflation into account, 1997/98 represented the eighth straight year that total government spending on culture declined.)

Excluding severance expenses, federal spending on culture has been declining for the last seven years. In 1997/98, federal outlays for culture were down 3.9% to \$2.67 billion. The federal spending drop affected nearly all the provinces and territories. Federal spending on culture grew in Prince Edward Island and in Nova Scotia.

The overall decline in federal expenditures on culture in 1997/98 largely resulted from a cut to departments' operating

### Note to readers

A census of federal, provincial and territorial cultural departments and agencies yielded the data for those levels of government for the financial year April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998. The municipal data are based on a sample of municipalities for a financial year from January 1 to December 31, 1997.

There are three main categories of spending on culture: operating expenditures, capital expenditures, and grants and contributions. Government cultural spending is primarily financed through government appropriations, but it also includes revenue generated from other sources such as advertising.

Unless otherwise stated, all amounts are in current dollars with no adjustment for inflation.

(continued on page 4)

### ... Public spending on culture continues to decline

budgets (-4.6%). Grants, contributions and other transfers to artists and cultural organisations increased for a second straight year (+4.0%). The film and video sector benefited most from that increase. Capital expenditures, which tend to fluctuate considerably, fell again after two consecutive annual declines (-12.0% in 1997/98).

Broadcasting, which represented about one-half of the federal cultural budget, obtained \$1.37 billion in 1997/98 (-8.0%). This decline was largely a result of spending cuts in Quebec and Ontario, where most of the federal broadcasting production facilities are located. Federal outlays on other cultural industries (includes film and video production, book and periodical publishing, and the sound recording industry) amounted to \$460 million (+3.5%). This was the second consecutive annual increase after seven declines. Ontario benefited significantly from the spending growth in these industries.

Federal spending on heritage activities (includes museums, archives, historic sites and nature parks) amounted to \$611.1 million (down about 2%). This decline was largely due to a reduction in spending on nature parks in British Columbia. As for the performing arts, federal spending jumped 15.5% to \$111.6 million, with Ontario organisations benefiting the most.

#### Government expenditures on culture

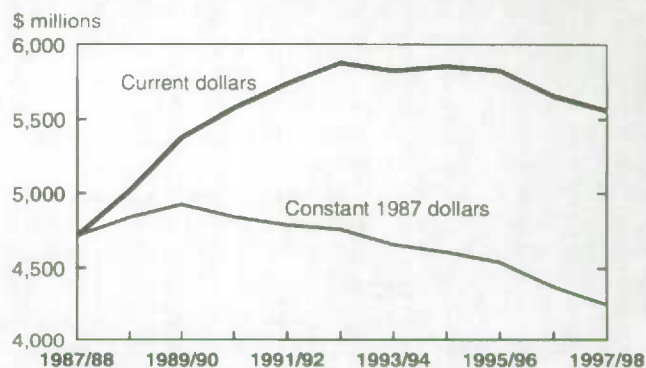
	1997/98	Share of spending	1996/97 to 1997/98
	\$ millions (current)	%	% change
<b>All levels of government<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5,561</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>-1.7</b>
Federal	2,668	100	-3.9
Operating expenditures	2,008	75	-4.6
Capital expenditures	215	8	-12.0
Grants and contributions	445	17	4.0
Provincial/territorial	1,716	100	-0.8
Operating expenditures	658	38	1.0
Capital expenditures	49	3	-10.4
Grants and contributions	1,009	59	-1.4
Municipal <sup>2</sup>	1,480	...	2.6

<sup>1</sup> Total expenditures exclude inter-governmental transfers, so they cannot be derived by adding the respective figures of the three levels of government.

<sup>2</sup> Municipal spending is on a calendar-year basis.

... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.

#### Total government expenditures on culture



Turning to the provincial and territorial governments, their spending on culture declined for a fifth consecutive year (-12.6% over the past five years). In 1997/98, these governments spent a total \$1.7 billion on culture (-0.8%). Over half (53%) of the operational budgets for departments and agencies went to operate heritage resources. Libraries got nearly two-thirds of the assistance allocated to artists and cultural organisations in 1997/98. Provincial/territorial government spending on libraries totalled \$641.9 million, unchanged from the previous year—but down 8.9% over the last five years. The remaining provincial/territorial budget for grants and contributions amounted to \$367.1 million in 1997/98. This amount has declined 20.2% over the last five years, with three-quarters of this drop hitting film and video production, performing arts and heritage activities.

As for municipal cultural spending, it has been on the rise almost continuously for the last decade (+8.2 since 1992). In the 1997 calendar year, the municipalities' cultural spending rose 2.6% to \$1.48 billion. Libraries were allocated four-fifths of that total. Over the last five years, municipal cultural expenditures increased in all provinces and territories with the exception of Ontario, where spending fell largely due to a reduction in capital funding for cultural centres.

*Selected data from the Government Expenditures on Culture Survey are available in table format (87F0001XPB, \$50). Data from this survey are also available by province and territory. Readers may request special tabulations on a cost-recovery basis. For further information, contact Norman Verma (613-951-6863, fax: 613-951-9040, vermnor@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.*



## Calgary area has highest net inflow of new residents

**B**etween June 1997 and June 1998, more people moved into and out of the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Toronto than any other CMA. This gave Toronto, the country's largest CMA, a net inflow of 71,210 new residents—two-and-a-half times the level of any other metro area. However, in terms of migration rates, the Calgary area had the highest net inflow at 28 for every 1,000 residents—far above the rate for any other CMA. Inter-provincial migration was most significant on the Prairies, accounting for 58% of all people who moved to Calgary and 50% of the inflow to Edmonton.

**Migration by census metropolitan area,  
June 1997 to June 1998**

	In	Out	Net	Net rate per 1,000 population
Calgary	59,390	34,970	24,420	28.0
Toronto	166,410	95,190	71,210	15.8
Oshawa	15,820	12,030	3,790	13.4
Vancouver	85,210	59,050	26,170	13.3
Edmonton	43,080	31,640	11,440	12.7
Windsor	11,110	7,450	3,660	12.5
Kitchener	19,330	14,830	4,500	11.2
Hamilton	26,190	20,090	6,100	9.4
Ottawa-Hull	41,084	32,871	8,213	7.8
Halifax	16,740	15,000	1,750	5.1
London	18,100	16,010	2,090	5.1
Saskatoon	12,220	11,390	840	3.7
Montreal	79,110	68,520	10,590	3.1
Sherbrooke	7,080	6,610	470	3.1
Quebec City	18,170	18,220	-50	-0.1
Victoria	14,930	15,020	-90	-0.3
Trois-Rivières	4,500	4,860	-360	-2.5
Winnipeg	21,390	23,430	-2,050	-3.0
Regina	8,690	9,300	-610	-3.1
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	4,080	4,630	-550	-3.4
Saint John	3,710	4,540	-830	-6.5
St. John's	5,940	7,150	-1,210	-6.9
Thunder Bay	4,040	5,190	-1,160	-9.0
Sudbury	4,750	6,950	-2,210	-13.5

### Note to readers

*These migration data were derived by comparing addresses supplied on personal income tax returns filed in spring 1997 and spring 1998. They reflect intra-provincial moves between census metropolitan areas or census divisions (sub-provincial geographic areas such as counties, regional or district municipalities), as well as inter-provincial and international moves. Moves across town or across the street are excluded. To calculate total population change, both migration and natural increase (births minus deaths) must be taken into account.*

In Vancouver, 26,170 more individuals arrived than left during the one-year period, while the net inflow to Calgary was 24,420, to Edmonton it was 11,440, and to Montreal it was 10,590. By contrast, as the table shows, the Sudbury area incurred the largest net outflow (2,210). Winnipeg had the second largest net outflow, with 2,050 more people moving out than moving in.

International migration accounted for about 56% of the 166,400 people who moved into Toronto, while about 16% came from other provinces and the remainder migrated from within Ontario. Two-thirds of the people who left Toronto moved to another part of Ontario. International migration accounted for 48% of the people who moved to Vancouver, but only 35% of those who moved to Montreal. About 57% of the people who moved out of Montreal stayed in Quebec, while about half of those who moved out of Vancouver stayed within British Columbia.

Overall, 1.2 million individuals moved from one place to another within Canada during 1997/98. Of these, 300,000 changed provinces, while 900,000 people moved between census divisions within their province. Of the 10 census divisions with the largest influx of migrants, half were in Alberta, which experienced the largest net inflow of any province.

### Available on CANSIM: matrix 6981.

*Migration data for the provinces and territories, census divisions and CMAs are now available. Four tables covering these levels of geography have been produced that provide information on origin/destination, age and sex of migrants. To order tables, or for further information, contact Client Services (613-951-9720, fax: 613-951-4745, [saadinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:saadinfo@statcan.ca)), Small Area and Administrative Data Division.*

## Most schools connected to the Internet

The majority of Canadian schools are connected to the Internet for educational purposes. In January and February 1999, more than 9 out of every 10 students at the elementary, intermediate and secondary levels in Canada attended schools that had access to the Internet for educational purposes. However, despite major strides taken in introducing computers to schools and connecting them to the Internet, schools still face significant challenges as they move toward taking fuller advantage of the new information age.

Principals and school informatics technicians report a number of obstacles to fuller use of computer technology in the classroom, the biggest of which are a lack of computers and a lack of training opportunities and course preparation time for teachers. Informatics technicians also report too few copies of software, as well as a lack of technical support to maintain computers and solve minor problems.

Nevertheless, schools have made major strides in bringing their students online. On average, during the last school year, there were seven students per computer in secondary schools. About 4 out of 10 students at the elementary, intermediate and secondary levels had used e-mail by the end of the school year. In addition, 73% of students attended an intermediate or a high school with its own site on the World Wide Web.

Internet use is expanding in Canadian schools. In January and February 1999, only 12% of elementary students attended a school without Internet access for instructional purposes, while less than 3% of students attended intermediate and secondary schools without Internet access. In some provinces, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick for example, all schools are connected to the Internet.

During the last school year, about 33% of elementary and intermediate students, and half of all secondary students, used e-mail. In addition, 76% of elementary students, 80% of

### Note to readers

Data for this article were drawn from the *Second International Technology in Education Study (SITES)* conducted in January and February 1999 in 30 nations, including Canada. This survey was designed to profile the use of new information and communication technology in elementary and secondary schools. In Canada, the survey (a random sample covering 4,000 schools) was conducted by Statistics Canada under the auspices of several partners. A comparison of Canada's standing with that of other nations will be released shortly.

intermediate and 87% of secondary students made use of external databases to find and extract information. Overall, just over 33% of all students disseminated information via the Internet, and about 30% designed or maintained a Web site.

Use of the Internet varies widely from province to province. For example, about 65% of students in Prince Edward Island used e-mail during the last school year, compared with 31% of those in New Brunswick. Students in Prince Edward Island are also in the forefront in developing Web sites. About 46% were involved in maintaining a Web site during the last school year, compared with 16% in Saskatchewan.

In general, computers are more available to students in higher grades. In January and February 1999, there was one computer for every seven students at the secondary level, compared with one for every eight intermediate students and one for every nine elementary students.

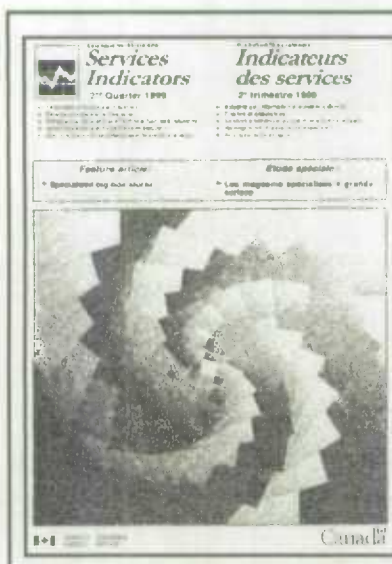
A report presenting more details on the use of information and communication technology in the field of education will be released early in 2000. To order tables, or for general inquiries, contact Daniel Perrier (613-951-1503, fax: 613-951-9040, [perddan@statcan.ca](mailto:perddan@statcan.ca)). For further analytical information, contact Raynald Lortie (613-951-1525, [lortray@statcan.ca](mailto:lortray@statcan.ca)) or Nanci Comtois (613-951-1740, [comtnan@statcan.ca](mailto:comtnan@statcan.ca)), Centre for Education Statistics.

### Use of computer technology in schools, January and February 1999

	E-mail	Using information from external databases	Designing and maintaining Web sites	Disseminating information via the Internet	Discussing and exploring ideas by video conferencing
	%				
<b>Canada</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>7</b>
Newfoundland	52	81	44	45	9
Prince Edward Island	65	83	46	41	2
Nova Scotia	53	79	33	38	8
New Brunswick	31	86	21	29	5
Quebec	44	80	30	40	7
Ontario	34	83	32	31	6
Manitoba	50	81	32	38	15
Saskatchewan	46	82	16	33	3
Alberta	41	81	25	42	7
British Columbia	39	75	30	26	6



## New from Statistics Canada



### Services indicators Second quarter 1999

This latest edition of *Services indicators* features an article titled "Specialized big-box stores". Among the many changes in retail trade over the past century is the relatively recent emergence and expansion of big-box stores. This study determines the share of the total chain-store market accounted for by big-box stores in recent years in terms of sales, floor space and number of locations. It also compares the effectiveness of big-box stores to other stores, using median sales per square foot as an indicator.

*Services indicators* is a quarterly publication that profiles Canada's service industries. Besides the feature article, it carries about 40 tables and charts showing output, financial, employment and remuneration figures for various service industries over the past eight quarters.

The second quarter 1999 issue of *Services indicators* (online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 63-016-XIB, \$26/\$87; paper: 63-016-XPB, \$35/\$116) is now available. For further information, contact Don Little (613-951-6739, [littdon@statcan.ca](mailto:littdon@statcan.ca)), Service Industries Division.

### Social policy simulation database and model 1995

Version 7.0 of the *Social policy simulation database and model* (SPSD/M), which is based on 1995 micro-data, is a static micro-simulation model. It includes a database, a series of tax/transfer algorithms and models, analytical software and user documentation.

The SPSP/M allows the user to answer "what if" questions. What if there were a change to the taxes Canadians paid or transfers they received? Would single parent households in a particular province be better off? By how much? How much extra money would federal or provincial governments collect or pay out? The SPSP/M is a tool designed to help researchers examine the potential impacts of changes in taxes, earnings, demographic trends, and a wide range of other factors. It can be used to study federal and provincial tax and transfer changes from 1984 through 2001.

Version 7.0 of the *Social policy simulation database and model* (SPSD/M) is now available on CD-ROM (89F0002XCB, \$5,000/\$12,500). To order this product, or for further information, contact Susan Carrothers (613-951-1782, [spsdm@statcan.ca](mailto:spsdm@statcan.ca)), Socio-economic Modelling Group, Social and Economic Studies Division.

### Telecommunications statistics First quarter 1999

The first report from the new quarterly survey on the telecommunications industry is now available. It includes, for the first time, statistical information about the major alternative wireline carriers and the wireless industry. In addition, data are now provided for those units that are not covered in the survey (reseller, satellite and small wireline and wireless service providers).

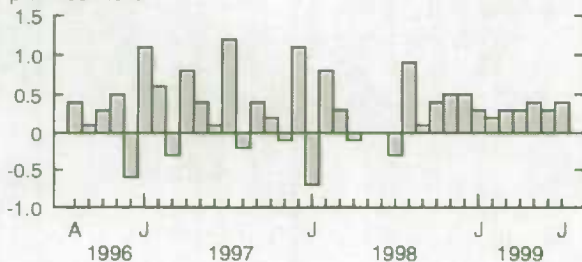
Information is presented on operating revenues and expenses, capital expenditures, employment, network infrastructure (access lines and wireless subscribers) and traffic.

The First quarter 1999 issue (vol. 23, no. 1) of *Quarterly telecommunications statistics* (available online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 56-002-XIB, \$21/\$40) can now be ordered. For further information, contact Haig McCarrell (613-951-5948), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division.

## Current trends

### Gross domestic product

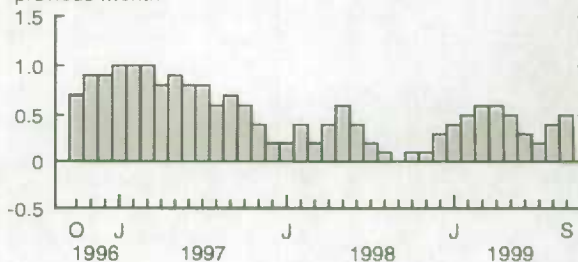
% change,  
previous month



Economic activity continued to advance in July (+0.4%). This extended the expansion to 12 months – the longest uninterrupted string of advances in more than a decade.

### Composite Index

% change,  
previous month



The growth of the leading indicator continued to improve in September, rising to 0.5%. It marked one of the rare times in the past two years where the growth extended to 9 of the index's 10 components.

### Consumer Price Index

% change,  
previous year



Consumers paid 2.6% more for goods and services in September 1999 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.4%.

### Unemployment rate

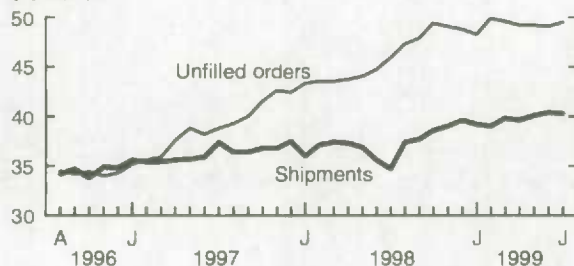
%



In September, the unemployment rate fell 0.3 percentage points to 7.5%, its lowest level since June 1990.

### Manufacturing

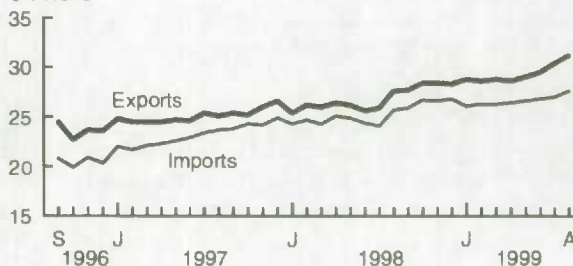
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments slipped 0.1% in July to \$40.3 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders increased 0.7% to \$49.5 billion.

### Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In August, the value of merchandise exports climbed 2.7% from July to \$31.2 billion. Imports increased 2.3% to 27.6 billion.

**Note:** All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.



## Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	July	748.7	0.4%	4.6%
Composite Index (1981=100)	September*	217.4	0.5%	4.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q2 1999	37.2	1.6%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1999	83.8	0.5†	1.0†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	July	21.7	1.3%	5.5%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	August*	131.6	0.5%	10.3%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	August*	30.6	1.4%	10.6%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	September	14.74	0.4%	2.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	September	7.5	-0.3†	-0.8†
Participation rate (%)	September	65.4	0.0†	0.2†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	July	612.85	0.5%	1.2%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	September	160	1.3%	11.1%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	August*	31.2	2.7%	12.8%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	August*	27.6	2.3%	7.6%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	August*	3.6	0.3	1.6
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	July	40.3	-0.1%	16.2%
New orders (\$ billion)	July	40.7	1.1%	13.4%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	July	49.5	0.7%	7.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	July	1.27	0.02	-0.15
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	September*	111.4	0.3%	2.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	August	122.5	0.4%	2.0%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	August	120.5	2.3%	13.1%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	August	101.1	0.3%	0.9%

*Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.*

\* new this week

† percentage point

.. figures not available yet due to a survey redesign

## Infomat

### A weekly review

Published by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10th floor,  
R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Editor: Tim Prichard (613) 951-1197; prictim@statcan.ca  
Head of Official Release: Chantal Prévost (613) 951-1088; prevcha@statcan.ca

Price per issue: paper version, \$4; Internet version, \$3. Annual subscription: paper  
version, \$145; Internet version, \$109. Prices outside Canada are the same, but are  
in U.S. dollars. All prices exclude sales tax.

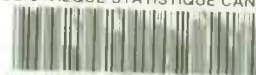
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1010292346

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