



Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

November 2015



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of British Columbia (BC), including the regions of Northern BC, Vancouver Island and Coast, Lower Mainland, Thompson–Okanagan and the Kootenays.

OVERVIEW

November 2015 was not a good month for Canada's labour market as employment fell in eight of ten provinces.

In BC the number of employed was little changed, down 1,400 (-0.1%) from October to 2,343,400. The number of people working full-time hours fell 18,500, largely offset by a 17,100 increase in part-time workers. Fewer people looked for work in November than during the previous month (-3,300) pushing BC's unemployment rate down a tick to 6.2%. With both employment and unemployment lower on the month, BC's participation rate declined to 64.1%, well below the national figure of 65.8%.

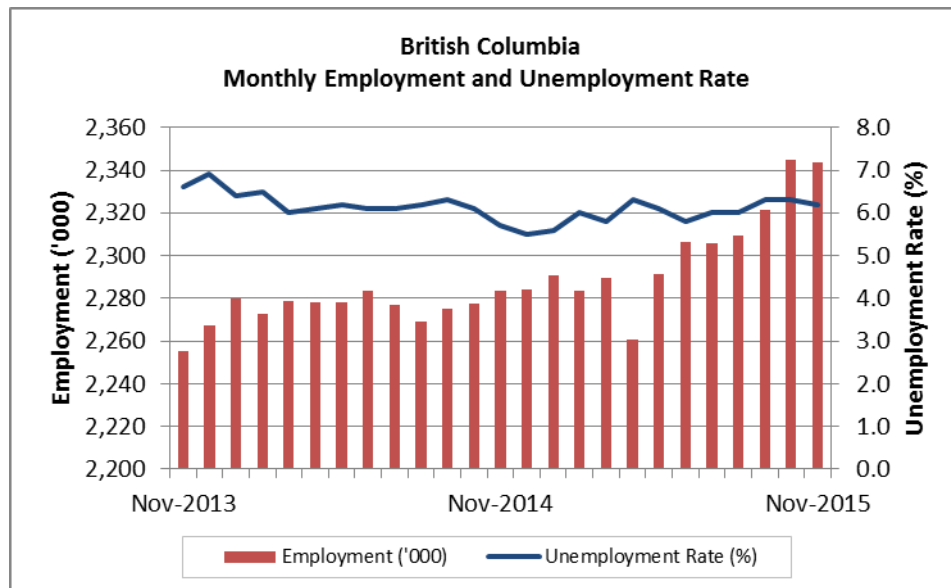
BC's labour market picture appeared brighter when compared with November 2014. Employment increased by 59,600 (+2.6%), the largest percentage gain of any province. The number of full-time workers increased by 43,300. Part-time employment also grew, up 16,300 on the year. Nevertheless, the ranks of the unemployed jumped by double digits (+12%) to 154,900. Unemployment across the four western provinces in November was much higher than one year earlier (+102,200). At 6.2%, BC's unemployment rate was one-half a percentage point higher than it was in November 2014.

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	November 2015	October 2015	November 2014	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	3,899.9	3,895.1	3,844.3	4.8	0.1	55.6	1.4
Labour Force ('000)	2,498.4	2,503.0	2,422.5	-4.6	-0.2	75.9	3.1
Employment ('000)	2,343.4	2,344.8	2,283.8	-1.4	-0.1	59.6	2.6
Full-Time ('000)	1,838.7	1,857.2	1,795.4	-18.5	-1.0	43.3	2.4
Part-Time ('000)	504.7	487.6	488.4	17.1	3.5	16.3	3.3
Unemployment ('000)	154.9	158.2	138.7	-3.3	-2.1	16.2	11.7
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.2	6.3	5.7	-0.1	-	0.5	-
Participation Rate (%)	64.1	64.3	63.0	-0.2	-	1.1	-
Employment Rate (%)	60.1	60.2	59.4	-0.1	-	0.7	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0087



Unemployment increased disproportionately along gender lines during the 12 months ending November 2015. For the population 15 years and older, the number of unemployed increased by 17% among men and by 5% among women. A similar pattern was seen among youth aged 15 to 24 and in the 25 years and older cohort as well. While higher unemployment rates for men are not unusual in Canada, the difference between the rates for BC men and women in the 15 to 24 years age group as of November 2015 was striking: 8.1% for women, 14.0% for men.

British Columbia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	November 2015	October 2015	November 2014	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	%	%	%	(% points)	(% points)
Total	6.2	6.3	5.7	-0.1	0.5
25 years and over	5.3	5.5	4.9	-0.2	0.4
Men - 25 years and over	5.6	5.9	4.9	-0.3	0.7
Women - 25 years and over	5.0	5.1	4.8	-0.1	0.2
15 to 24 years	11.2	10.9	10.7	0.3	0.5
Men - 15 to 24 years	14.0	11.7	13.0	2.3	1.0
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.1	9.9	8.3	-1.8	-0.2

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0087

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	November 2015	October 2015	November 2014	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,343.4	2,344.8	2,283.8	-1.4	-0.1	59.6	2.6
Goods-producing sector	471.7	461.5	440.2	10.2	2.2	31.5	7.2
Agriculture	26.0	20.7	21.7	5.3	25.6	4.3	19.8
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	47.4	49.5	49.7	-2.1	-4.2	-2.3	-4.6
Utilities	14.9	14.6	13.7	0.3	2.1	1.2	8.8
Construction	202.5	202.4	191.7	0.1	0.0	10.8	5.6
Manufacturing	180.8	174.3	163.3	6.5	3.7	17.5	10.7
Services-producing sector	1,871.8	1,883.3	1,843.7	-11.5	-0.6	28.1	1.5
Trade	354.4	360.9	363.1	-6.5	-1.8	-8.7	-2.4
Transportation and warehousing	141.7	138.5	140.9	3.2	2.3	0.8	0.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	120.1	128.8	137.8	-8.7	-6.8	-17.7	-12.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	188.3	189.6	182.3	-1.3	-0.7	6.0	3.3
Business, building and other support services	99.0	94.3	82.8	4.7	5.0	16.2	19.6
Educational services	165.3	162.6	164.7	2.7	1.7	0.6	0.4
Health care and social assistance	297.1	300.8	268.2	-3.7	-1.2	28.9	10.8
Information, culture and recreation	121.9	119.3	113.6	2.6	2.2	8.3	7.3
Accommodation and food services	176.9	179.7	182.8	-2.8	-1.6	-5.9	-3.2
Other services	108.1	107.6	107.3	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.7
Public administration	98.8	101.2	100.1	-2.4	-2.4	-1.3	-1.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0088

In November, employment in BC's goods-producing sector increased 2.2% from October and 7.2% year over year. A strengthening U.S. housing market and a low Canadian dollar are lifting BC soft-wood lumber exports and offsetting weakening demand from China. However, while forest industry volumes are up, prices are down, reducing industry revenues and threatening the viability of the province's weaker producers. Currently, about 30,000 people are employed in wood products manufacturing, roughly the same level as one year ago. Despite a relatively stagnant wood products sector, overall manufacturing employment increased sharply (+10.7) on the year, led by gains in food and beverage manufacturing.

Employment in natural gas extraction has retreated since November 2014 as the number of wells drilled in the province declined by more than 30%.¹ BC's construction industry continues to show strength with employment gains of 5.6% on the year, largely thanks to on-going demand for residential properties in the Lower Mainland.

Employment in BC's services-producing sector increased by 28,100 from a year ago, with health care and social assistance accounting for gains of 28,900. By contrast, employment in finance, insurance, real estate and leasing reportedly declined by 17,700 over the same period.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment increased in all BC economic regions on the year with the exception of Cariboo (-5.9%), which also posted BC's highest unemployment rate as of November 2015 (7.1%). This central region relies heavily on the forest sector and on mining, two industries that have been hurt by reduced Chinese demand for industrial commodities.²

On the Northcoast, Terrace's Skeena Sawmills cut production in half in November after closing entirely for two months earlier in the year.³

The unemployment rate in Thompson-Okanagan rose to 6.4%, as Kelowna continues to be affected by the slowdown in neighbouring Alberta's economy. To Kelowna's southeast, Canfor completed the final shutdown of its Canal Flats sawmill, laying-off 53 workers who did not accept transfers to other mills.⁴

In the Northeast, the unemployment rate stood at 7.0%, the highest rate since May 2014.

The Lower Mainland, which accounts for about 65% of provincial employment, saw job growth of 3.5% over the past year and a drop in its unemployment rate to 5.8%. As widely reported, economic activity has been fueled by the region's booming housing market.

Vancouver Island and Coast unemployment rates edged up 0.9 percentage points from last November. TimberWest has suspended plans to build a \$60 million pellet plant outside of Nanaimo, pending a review of project economics.⁵

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	November 2015 ('000)	November 2014 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	November 2015 (%)	November 2014 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
British Columbia	2,346.2	2,285.4	2.7	6.0	5.8	0.2
Economic Regions						
Vancouver Island and Coast	362.8	353.5	2.6	6.3	5.4	0.9
Lower Mainland-Southwest	1,504.5	1,454.1	3.5	5.8	5.9	-0.1
Thompson-Okanagan	249.4	246.0	1.4	6.4	6.2	0.2
Kootenay	69.0	67.5	2.2	5.7	6.6	-0.9
Cariboo	80.2	85.2	-5.9	7.1	4.8	2.3
North Coast and Nechako	40.6	40.4	0.5	6.9	5.4	1.5
Northeast	39.8	38.8	2.6	7.0	-	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0122

Note: In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.

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For information on the Labour Force Survey, please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: www.statcan.gc.ca

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¹ Derrick Penner, The Vancouver Sun – B.C. natural gas drilling suffers decline; November 25, 2015.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/natural+drilling+suffers+decline+report/11544423/story.html>

² Derrick Penner, The Vancouver Sun – China slowdown poses challenges for B.C. forest products; November 27, 2015.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/china+slowdown+poses+challenges+forest+products/11549662/story.html#ixzz3tfClzWPI>

³ Josh Massey, Terrace Standard – Terrace B.C. sawmill curtails operations; November 17, 2015.

<http://www.terracestandard.com/news/351025621.html>

⁴ The Daily Townsman, November 19, 2015

⁵ Chris Bush, Nanaimo News Bulletin – TimberWest put pellet plant construction on hold; November 22, 2015.

<http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/351839191.html>