



Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

February 2017



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

Employment in British Columbia increased by 19,400 (+0.8%) in February. Significant gains in full-time employment (+33,400) more than offset declines in part-time employment (-13,900). The province's unemployment rate declined 0.5 percentage points to 5.1% in February, which represents the lowest rate among provinces. At the national level, Canada's unemployment rate fell to 6.6% in February – the lowest it has been in two years.

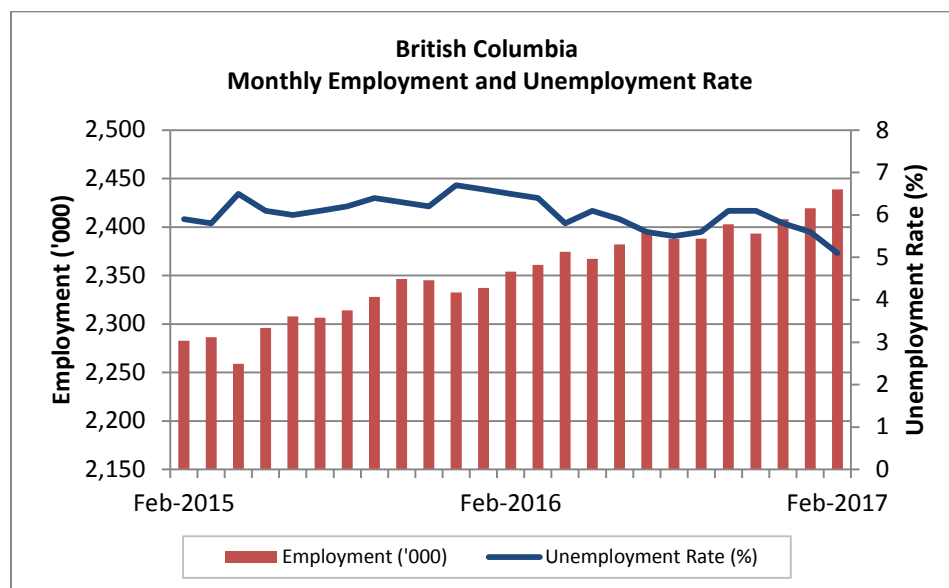
On a year over year basis, provincial employment is up 84,900 (+3.6%) – representing the strongest employment growth among all provinces during this period. The vast majority of employment growth came from the private sector (+5.5%) rather than the public sector (+2.2%), while the number of those who were self-employed declined (-1.5%).

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	February 2017	January 2017	February 2016	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	3,959.4	3,955.7	3,910.0	3.7	0.1	49.4	1.3
Labour Force ('000)	2,568.9	2,562.3	2,518.5	6.6	0.3	50.4	2.0
Employment ('000)	2,438.8	2,419.4	2,353.9	19.4	0.8	84.9	3.6
Full-Time ('000)	1,926.2	1,892.8	1,837.1	33.4	1.8	89.1	4.9
Part-Time ('000)	512.7	526.6	516.7	-13.9	-2.6	-4.0	-0.8
Unemployment ('000)	130.1	142.9	164.6	-12.8	-9.0	-34.5	-21.0
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.1	5.6	6.5	-0.5	-	-1.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	64.9	64.8	64.4	0.1	-	0.5	-
Employment Rate (%)	61.6	61.2	60.2	0.4	-	1.4	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



The unemployment rate for youth (15 to 24 years) is down 3.5 percentage points to 8.7% since last February. Young men saw their unemployment rate decline 3.7 percentage points to 10.6% over the year, while the unemployment rate for young women decreased 3.2 percentage points to 6.7%. This strong growth in youth employment continues a trend from 2016, where youth and older workers (55+ years) led employment gains in the province.

On an annual basis, the unemployment rate for labour market participants 25 years and older declined 1.1 percentage points to 4.4%. Men 25 years and older saw their unemployment rate decline 1.5 percentage points to 4.6% year over year. By comparison, women 25 years and older saw a more modest decline of 0.6 percent points to 4.3% during the same period.

British Columbia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	February 2017 (%)	January 2017 (%)	February 2016 (%)	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
				(% points)	(% points)
Total	5.1	5.6	6.5	-0.5	-1.4
25 years and over	4.4	4.8	5.5	-0.4	-1.1
Men - 25 years and over	4.6	4.8	6.1	-0.2	-1.5
Women - 25 years and over	4.3	4.8	4.9	-0.5	-0.6
15 to 24 years	8.7	9.9	12.2	-1.2	-3.5
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.6	11.9	14.3	-1.3	-3.7
Women - 15 to 24 years	6.7	7.8	9.9	-1.1	-3.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment in BC's services-producing sector increased 73,900 (+3.9%) during the past year. Several industries posted strong gains including, finance, insurance, real estate and leasing; accommodations and food services; and other services. Meanwhile, employment in the province's goods-producing sector increased 11,100 (+2.4%) year over year. Strong employment gains in construction and agriculture offset losses in manufacturing.

In the services-producing sector, employment in finance, insurance, real estate and leasing increased by an estimated 20,100 (+15.6%) since last February, due in large part to increased employment at banks and credit lending institutions.

In accommodations and food services, annual employment is up 17,500 (+10.6%). A number of events took place in Vancouver this February, including the Just for Laughs NorthWest comedy festival, Chutzpah! Festival and Dine Out Vancouver 2017.¹

On the goods-producing side, construction employment increased 17,000 (+8.2%) from February 2016 to February 2017. By subsector, employment gains were strongest in non-residential building and to a lesser extent residential building. The volume of non-residential building permits in BC jumped 36% in January compared to previous month.²

In Agriculture, employment is up 8,400 (+41.6%) on an annual basis, mainly in animal production, and to a lesser extent crop production. BC salmon, blueberries, and cherries are finding new and growing markets in Asia.³ In 2016, BC salmon farmers exported a total of \$754 million in farmed salmon.⁴ Salmon was one of BC's top 10 exports in 2016 by value.

Manufacturing employment declined by 8,400 (-4.7%) over the past year, with the majority of losses in wood product manufacturing. A short supply of BC timber, due in part to the long shadow cast by the mountain pine beetle infestation of a decade ago, is a major concern for the industry.⁵ Tolko industries closed its Merritt mill, located in the Thompson-Okanagan region, in late 2016, affecting 200 workers. The president of the company said the decision to shut the mill was a result of the province's recent reduction to the annual allowable cut.⁶

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	February 2017	January 2017	February 2016	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,438.8	2,419.4	2,353.9	19.4	0.8	84.9	3.6
Goods-producing sector	482.5	477.8	471.4	4.7	1.0	11.1	2.4
Agriculture	28.6	27.4	20.2	1.2	4.4	8.4	41.6
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	48.2	49.4	53.9	-1.2	-2.4	-5.7	-10.6
Utilities	12.8	13.1	13.2	-0.3	-2.3	-0.4	-3.0
Construction	223.6	217.6	206.6	6.0	2.8	17.0	8.2
Manufacturing	169.2	170.5	177.6	-1.3	-0.8	-8.4	-4.7
Services-producing sector	1,956.3	1,941.6	1,882.4	14.7	0.8	73.9	3.9
Trade	365.7	375.3	384.8	-9.6	-2.6	-19.1	-5.0
Transportation and warehousing	144.8	142.3	133.3	2.5	1.8	11.5	8.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	149.3	147.7	129.2	1.6	1.1	20.1	15.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	192.1	194.4	189.9	-2.3	-1.2	2.2	1.2
Business, building and other support services	110.4	103.8	98.9	6.6	6.4	11.5	11.6
Educational services	167.0	163.8	164.1	3.2	2.0	2.9	1.8
Health care and social assistance	292.5	287.1	291.3	5.4	1.9	1.2	0.4
Information, culture and recreation	129.3	127.4	122.8	1.9	1.5	6.5	5.3
Accommodation and food services	182.9	184.3	165.4	-1.4	-0.8	17.5	10.6
Other services	115.3	113.5	103.1	1.8	1.6	12.2	11.8
Public administration	106.9	102.1	99.6	4.8	4.7	7.3	7.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment is up in six of the seven economic regions in BC on an annual basis.

Lower Mainland-Southwest region had an unemployment rate of 4.8% in February, a decline of 1.3 percentage points compared to February 2016. Employment gains were extensive across several industries, led by accommodation and food services. Sales in BC restaurants, bars and other food services increased to \$889.6 million in November 2016 or 10 percent on a year-to-date basis⁷, the strongest performance in the country during that period.⁸

In Vancouver Island and Coast region, employment is up just over 6.0% on an annual basis. Job gains are spread across several industries including public administration; manufacturing; and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing. Not surprisingly, the region's unemployment rate fell 1.8 percentage points to 5.7% on a year over year basis.

Kootenay region saw its unemployment rate decline 0.9 percent points to 6.7% on a year over year basis in February. During the same period, employment increased by 13.6%, led by employment gains in

accommodation and food services; forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas; manufacturing; construction; and public administration.

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	February 2017 ('000)	February 2016 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	February 2017 (%)	February 2016 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
British Columbia	2,399.1	2,316.7	3.6	5.7	6.8	-1.1
Economic Regions						
Vancouver Island and Coast	379.0	357.2	6.1	5.7	7.5	-1.8
Lower Mainland-Southwest	1,534.0	1,499.2	2.3	4.8	6.1	-1.3
Thompson-Okanagan	250.6	237.7	5.4	8.6	9.3	-0.7
Kootenay	75.1	66.1	13.6	6.7	7.6	-0.9
Cariboo	79.5	76.7	3.7	9.7	7.4	2.3
North Coast and Nechako	40.2	40.3	-0.2	7.4	6.7	0.7
Northeast	40.7	39.6	2.8	8.7	9.2	-0.5

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 Business in Vancouver. February 26, 2017. Dine Out Vancouver: Bigger and Better than ever.
<https://www.biv.com/article/2017/1/dine-out-vancouver-bigger-and-better-ever/>

² Central 1 Credit Union. B.C. Economic Briefing. Volume 23, Issue 10. Week of March 6 – 10, 2017.
https://www.central1.com/sites/default/files/uploads/files/analysis_report/report_file/2310%20BC.pdf

³ Business in Vancouver. B.C.'s business of growing is growing fast. January 20, 2017.
<https://www.biv.com/article/2017/1/bcs-business-growing-growing-fast/>

⁴ Business in Vancouver. B.C. salmon farmers had record sales in 2016. March 9, 2017.
<https://www.biv.com/article/2017/3/bc-salmon-farmers-had-record-sales-2016/>

⁵ Business in Vancouver. January 31, 2017. Mill closures feared as allowable harvest slashed
<https://www.biv.com/article/2017/1/mill-closures-feared-allowable-harvest-slashed/>

⁶ Merritt Herald. September 22, 2016. Tolko Industries to close Merritt mill.

<http://www.merritherald.com/tolko-industries-close-merritt-mill/>

⁷ Central 1 Credit Union. B.C. Economic Briefing. Volume 23, Issue 5. Week of January 30 – February 3, 2017.

https://www.central1.com/sites/default/files/uploads/files/analysis_report/report_file/2305%20BC.pdf

⁸ Ibid.