



Labour Market Bulletin

Saskatchewan

October 2019



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Saskatchewan, including Regina-Moose Mountain, Swift Current-Moose Jaw, Saskatoon-Biggar, Yorkton-Melville and Prince Albert and Northern economic regions.

OVERVIEW

Employment in Saskatchewan stood at 582,800 in October, reflecting a monthly decrease of 300 positions (-0.1%). Year over year, employment increased 400 (+1.3%). October's employment losses were concentrated in part-time employment (-1,600) and were only partially offset by gains in full-time employment (+1,400).

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	891.9	891.2	885.8	0.7	0.1	6.1	0.7
Labour Force ('000)	613.9	615.9	612.6	-2.0	-0.3	1.3	0.2
Employment ('000)	582.8	583.1	575.4	-0.3	-0.1	7.4	1.3
Full-Time ('000)	475.2	473.8	470.2	1.4	0.3	5.0	1.1
Part-Time ('000)	107.7	109.3	105.2	-1.6	-1.5	2.5	2.4
Unemployment ('000)	31.1	32.8	37.2	-1.7	-5.2	-6.1	-16.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.1	5.3	6.1	-0.2	-	-1.0	-
Participation Rate (%)	68.8	69.1	69.2	-0.3	-	-0.4	-
Employment Rate (%)	65.3	65.4	65.0	-0.1	-	0.3	-

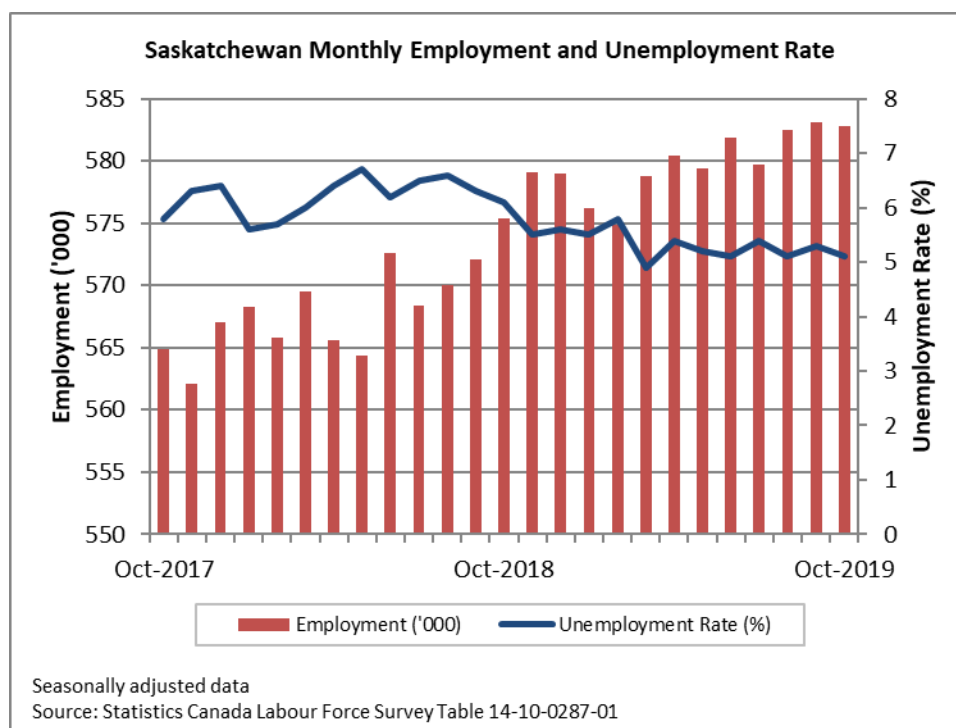
Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287-01, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

On a monthly basis, the majority of employment gains were in the public sector (+1,800) with self-employment contributing an additional 500 positions. Private sector employment dropped sharply (-2,600) in October.¹

The provincial unemployment rate lowered to 5.1% in October. This represents the third lowest unemployment rate among all provinces and is a full percentage below October 2018's rate.

Between August 2018 and August 2019 (the most recent data available), the number of Employment Insurance (EI) recipients in Saskatchewan fell by 3.9%, a larger decline than was seen nationwide (-2.2%) over the same period. Nonetheless, August marked the second consecutive month that the number of EI recipients in Saskatchewan rose.²



Unemployment by major demographic groupings

Looking at October's labour force results by demographic groupings, the unemployment rate for Saskatchewan youth (15 to 24 years) decreased both on a monthly and annual basis. Young women fared better than their male counterparts, with their unemployment rate dropping 5.5 percentage points to 7.6% month over month. At 11.9%, the unemployment rate for young men is the highest of all demographic groupings.

Saskatchewan Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(% points)	(% points)
Total	5.1	5.3	6.1	-0.2	-1.0
25 years and over	4.3	4.1	5.1	0.2	-0.8
Men - 25 years and over	4.2	3.9	5.1	0.3	-0.9
Women - 25 years and over	4.4	4.4	5.1	0.0	-0.7
15 to 24 years	9.8	12.7	11.9	-2.9	-2.1
Men - 15 to 24 years	11.9	12.1	13.7	-0.2	-1.8
Women - 15 to 24 years	7.6	13.1	9.8	-5.5	-2.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Year-over-year, employment gains in Saskatchewan's services-producing sector (+9,400) more than offset job losses in the goods-producing sector (-2,000). The opposite trend is observed on a monthly basis where employment in the services-producing sector is down slightly (-400) from the previous month, while the goods-producing sector saw virtually no change (+100).

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	582.8	583.1	575.4	-0.3	-0.1	7.4	1.3
Goods-producing sector	145.6	145.5	147.6	0.1	0.1	-2.0	-1.4
Agriculture	40.3	38.6	39.1	1.7	4.4	1.2	3.1
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	22.5	22.9	22.1	-0.4	-1.7	0.4	1.8
Utilities	5.5	5.3	7.2	0.2	3.8	-1.7	-23.6
Construction	46.2	47.8	50.5	-1.6	-3.3	-4.3	-8.5
Manufacturing	31.1	31.0	28.7	0.1	0.3	2.4	8.4
Services-producing sector	437.2	437.6	427.8	-0.4	-0.1	9.4	2.2
Trade	82.7	85.5	86.8	-2.8	-3.3	-4.1	-4.7
Transportation and warehousing	25.6	25.8	28.3	-0.2	-0.8	-2.7	-9.5
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	30.0	29.7	28.8	0.3	1.0	1.2	4.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	27.7	28.6	26.4	-0.9	-3.1	1.3	4.9
Business, building and other support services	16.7	15.7	16.3	1.0	6.4	0.4	2.5
Educational services	46.0	46.3	45.7	-0.3	-0.6	0.3	0.7
Health care and social assistance	81.2	79.5	80.1	1.7	2.1	1.1	1.4
Information, culture and recreation	22.2	22.7	20.5	-0.5	-2.2	1.7	8.3
Accommodation and food services	40.0	41.0	38.5	-1.0	-2.4	1.5	3.9
Other services	31.8	30.0	26.1	1.8	6.0	5.7	21.8
Public administration	33.4	32.8	30.2	0.6	1.8	3.2	10.6

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355, formerly CANSIM 282-0088

The **agriculture** industry gained 1,700 positions in October, while all other goods-producing industries saw negligible employment growth or declined. The industry received positive news in early November when China reopened its markets to imports of Canadian pork and beef. Nevertheless, China continues to block exports of Canadian canola and soybeans.

The number of people working in **construction** fell 1,600 in October. The industry saw the largest yearly drop in employment across all industries, shedding 4,300 workers since October 2018. Sluggish residential construction activity across the province, particularly in Regina and Saskatoon, is a likely contributor to the industry's downturn. However, housing starts and home sales in Saskatchewan are expected to improve moderately in 2020. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's fall 2019 Housing Market Outlook predicts that between 700 to 1,400 new homes will be built in Regina in 2020, while Saskatoon will see 1,300 to 2,000 new housing starts.³

Employment prospects in construction are also likely to improve in the new year once road work resumes. The Saskatchewan government has already tendered nearly \$260 million worth of highway construction to be completed in 2020.⁴

Saskatchewan's resource extraction industry (**forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**) shed 400 positions in October, but employment remained relatively stable year-over-year, despite ongoing global market uncertainties. Oilpatch conditions in Alberta and Saskatchewan have prompted many drilling companies, like Citadel Drilling, to move their equipment and workers to the United States in pursuit of work. Of the 900 drilling rigs operating in Western Canada before the 2014 oil price crash, only 550 remain.⁵ The migration south is not expected to slow in the foreseeable future with the Petroleum Services Association of Canada forecasting a 10% decline in oil well drilling in 2020. Instead, producers are spending cash on reducing debt, paying dividends and buying back shares rather than investing in growing production.⁶ Locally, Husky Energy provided some optimism with its commitment to continue its Saskatchewan investments despite scaling back its activities in Alberta. The company recently started up a 10,000 barrel-a-day thermal heavy oil project and has five similar projects in development.⁷

The services-producing sector employed 437,200 people in October 2019 – all but two service-industries posted employment growth over the past year. **Wholesale and retail trade**, Saskatchewan's largest industry by employee count, along with **transportation and warehousing**, posted job losses year-over-year.

The employment outlook for **healthcare and social assistance**, Saskatchewan's second largest industry by employee count, is more promising following the provincial government's efforts to decrease surgical wait times. According to the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative, there were 23,558 patients waiting for surgery across the province as of June 30, with the majority in Regina and Saskatoon.⁸ Data indicates that more than 10% of patients wait for more than six months, while 3% wait longer than one year. The initiative to decrease surgical wait times is driven by a cash infusion of \$10 million from the provincial government that aims to fund 1,700 additional surgeries by March 2020.⁹

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Over the past year, employment increased in all five of Saskatchewan's economic regions. Yorkton-Melville led the province in job growth on a percentage basis, while Saskatoon-Biggar saw the greatest increase in new positions (+ 5,900).

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	October 2019 ('000)	October 2018 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	October 2019 (%)	October 2018 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Saskatchewan	587.4	574.9	2.2	5.1	6.1	-1.0
Economic Regions						
Regina - Moose Mountain	185.0	183.8	0.7	4.9	6.1	-1.2
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	52.8	50.8	3.9	5.4	3.8	1.6
Saskatoon - Biggar	211.0	205.1	2.9	5.1	6.4	-1.3
Yorkton - Melville	38.9	37.3	4.3	3.0	4.4	-1.4
Prince Albert and Northern	99.7	98.0	1.7	6.1	7.2	-1.1

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0293, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

The number of individuals employed in **Regina-Moose Mountain** is up 1,200 on a year-over-year basis, led by gains in the professional, scientific and technical services industry (+3,300). Labour market focus in the region is increasingly turning towards the upcoming phasing-out of coal and natural gas fired power plants in south-east Saskatchewan. The provincial government recently announced up to \$10 million in new economic development funding towards helping the Estevan and Coronach districts transition away from coal mines and power plants that have been the foundation of their economies.¹⁰ This follows an earlier contribution of \$1.3 million from the federal government's Canada Coal Transition Initiative towards similar skills development and economic diversification activities for local coal workers and communities.¹¹

Employment increased in **Swift Current – Moose Jaw** year-over-year, led by job gains in the services-producing sector. Overall, the region added 2,000 jobs, up 3.9% on the year. The most significant employment gains were in the health care and social assistance industry. Looking ahead, prospects in the construction industry should improve with two large projects moving forward. Work is underway on the \$325 million Golden South Wind Energy Facility near Assiniboia, providing employment to 200 workers.¹² Meanwhile, SaskPower recently announced that Moose Jaw will be the site for its new 350-megawatt natural gas plant. The Crown corporation anticipates the project will create more than 500 construction jobs.¹³

Meanwhile, employment in **Saskatoon-Biggar** is up 2.9% year-over-year. During the past year, the regional unemployment rate declined 1.3 percentage points to match the provincial rate of 5.1%. Job growth occurred mostly in the goods-producing sector as significant losses in the wholesale and retail trade industry and the information, culture and recreation industry created sluggish results in the services-producing sector. Employment in the region's health care and social assistance industry remains strong as the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital becomes fully operational and new social services programs ramp up. One example is Fusion

22, a \$5.8 million provincial funded community partnership that combines affordable housing with support services and employment training.¹⁴

The **Yorkton-Melville** region added 1,600 positions between October 2018 and October 2019, largely due to gains in the services-producing sector. Recently, the provincial government announced targeted funding to ensure that people with disabilities are able to transition into meaningful positions in the labour force. The Saskatchewan Abilities Council received over \$570,000 to deliver career training services to people with disabilities through its Partners in Employment program in Yorkton.¹⁵

The **Prince Albert** and **Northern** region continued to see job gains, with employment increasing 1,700 on an annual basis. Several municipal centres are benefiting from new construction projects, including EnviroSafe Chemical Canada's medicinal cannabis cultivation and processing facility in North Battleford¹⁶, the Lake Estates Retirement community complex in Prince Albert¹⁷, the Thunderchild Wellness Centre northeast of Turtleford¹⁸, and a new \$1.4 million Waskesiu beach house in the Prince Albert National Park.¹⁹ The economic outlook is less positive in Lloydminster as the area continues to be impacted by the downturn in the oil and gas sector. With only two of 45 local drilling rigs in operation and new oil technology requiring fewer workers, companies are considering layoffs and closures or adapting to market realities by seeking new international markets.²⁰

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.

Prepared by: Labour Market Information (LMI) Directorate, Service Canada, Saskatchewan

For further information, please contact the LMI team at: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/cqi-bin/contact/edsc-esdc/eng/contact_us.aspx?section=lmi

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

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada as represented by Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019, all rights reserved

¹ Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0288-01 Employment by class of worker, monthly, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted, last 5 months (x 1,000). Accessed November 8, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028801>

² Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0011-01 Employment insurance beneficiaries (regular benefits) by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted. Accessed October 11, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410001101>

³ CBC News, CMHC predicts moderate Sask. Housing market rebound in next year; October 25, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/sask-housing-market-rebound-1.5334908>

⁴ Government of Saskatchewan, Nearly \$260 Million Worth of Highway Construction Being Tendered in The Fall; October 17, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2019/october/17/construction-update-fall-tenders>

-
- ⁵ CBC News, “It’s the smart thing to do”: Canadian oil driller moves all of its rigs to the U.S.; October 30, 2019; Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/citadel-drilling-caodc-oilpatch-1.5339892>
- ⁶ Global News, Canadian oil and gas drilling activity expected to fall by 10 per cent in 2020; October 31, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/6110110/oil-drilling-forecast-canada-october-mar-alberta/>
- ⁷ CBC News, Husky CEO says layoffs weren’t due to Liberals winning election, calls social media chatter “B.S.”; October 24, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/husky-layoffs-not-due-to-liberals-winning-federal-election-1.5333876>
- ⁸ Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative, Actual patient waits for procedures performed Apr 2019 to Jun 2019 and patients waiting on 30-Jun-2019. Accessed on 2019-11-8. Retrieved from: <http://sasksurgery.ca/tableau/sp6months.html>
- ⁹ Government of Saskatchewan, Government Invests \$10 Million to Reduce Surgical Wait Times; October 30, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2019/october/30/surgical-wait-times>
- ¹⁰ Regina Leader-Post, Throne Speech commits up to \$10 million to coal communities in peril; October 23, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/throne-speech-commits-up-to-10-million-to-coal-communities-in-peril>
- ¹¹ Government of Canada, Minister Sohi announces support for fair coal and just energy transition; June 28, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/western-economic-diversification/news/2019/06/minister-sohi-announces-support-for-fair-and-just-coal-energy-transition.html>
- ¹² CBC News, New wind farm near Assiniboia, Sask., to double province’s wind energy production; August 20, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/new-wind-farm-near-assiniboia-sask-1.5253552>
- ¹³ Global News, SaskPower to move forward with natural gas plant in Moose Jaw; November 7, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/6140159/saskpower-to-move-forward-with-natural-gas-plant-in-moose-jaw/>
- ¹⁴ Government of Saskatchewan, Province and EGADZ Announce Fusion 22 Partnership; October 25, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2019/october/25/fusion-22-partnership>
- ¹⁵ Government of Saskatchewan, Government to Invest in Career Training Services for People With Disabilities in Yorkton; November 7, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2019/november/07/career-training-services-in-yorkton>
- ¹⁶ The Battlefords News-Optimist, EnviroSafe hopes to provide 36-100 jobs as cannabis business grows in North Battleford, September 19, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/envirosafe-hopes-to-provide-36-100-jobs-as-cannabis-business-grows-in-north-battleford-1.23951844>
- ¹⁷ paNOW, New retirement homes will be ready by next summer; August 30, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://panow.com/2019/08/30/new-retirement-homes-will-be-ready-by-next-summer/>
- ¹⁸ Government of Canada, Canada and Saskatchewan support Thunderchild Wellness Centre; September 6, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2019/09/canada-and-saskatchewan-support-thunderchild-wellness-centre.html>
- ¹⁹ CTV News, Year round beach house to open in Waskesiu next spring; October 10, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/year-round-beach-house-to-open-at-waskesiu-next-spring-1.4632004>
- ²⁰ CBC, “Proud to be a Canadian”: Frustration but little appetite for separation in heart of Prairie oil country; November 1, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/frustration-oil-country-western-separation-1.5343547>
-