



Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

September 2022



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

OVERVIEW

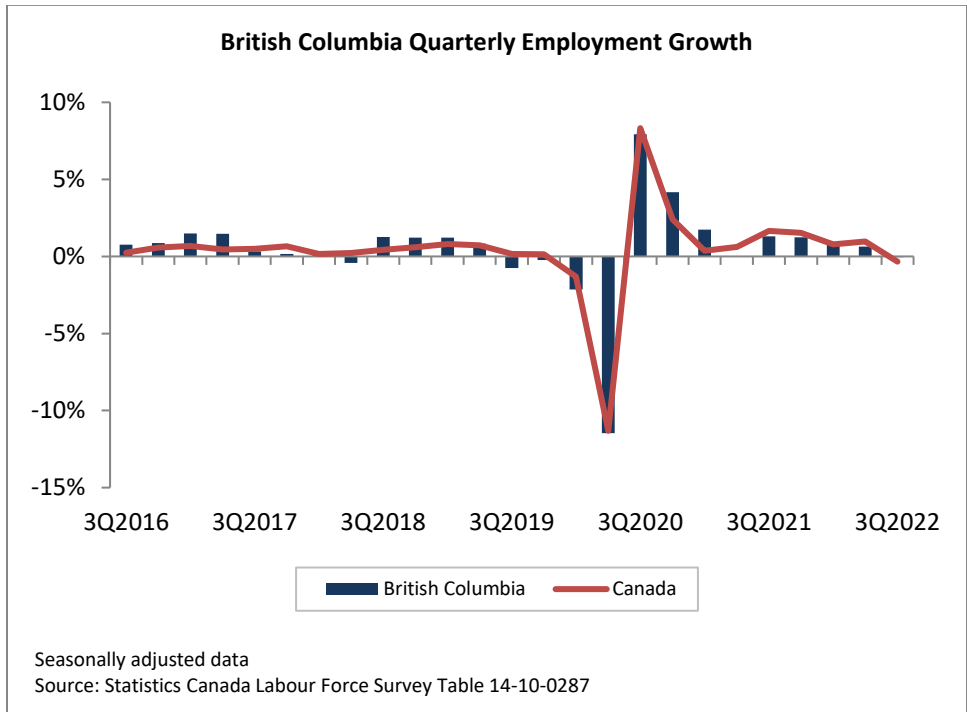
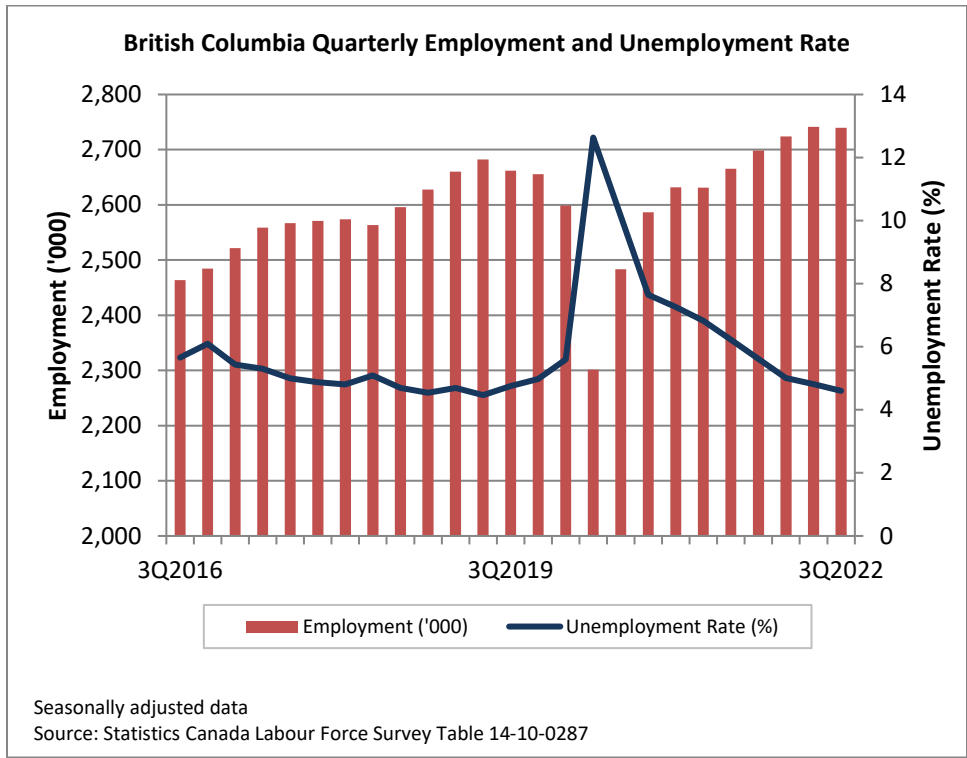
Over the third quarter, British Columbia’s employment remained relatively unchanged, down slightly by 1,500 people (-0.1%). There were job gains this quarter in full-time employment (0.5% or 11,900 jobs), while part-time employment erased those gains by losing 2.3% or 13,400 jobs. Year-over-year employment increased, however, with the economy adding 77,100 jobs compared to 2021.

British Columbia Quarterly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally adjusted data	3rd Quarter 2022	2nd Quarter 2022	3rd Quarter 2021	Quarterly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	4,434.5	4,420.8	4,357.4	13.7	0.3	77.1	1.8
Labour Force ('000)	2,871.9	2,880.0	2,842.6	-8.1	-0.3	29.3	1.0
Employment ('000)	2,739.7	2,741.2	2,665.5	-1.5	-0.1	74.2	2.8
Full-Time ('000)	2,176.7	2,164.8	2,067.1	11.9	0.5	109.6	5.3
Part-Time ('000)	563.0	576.4	598.3	-13.4	-2.3	-35.3	-5.9
Unemployment ('000)	132.2	138.8	177.1	-6.6	-4.8	-44.9	-25.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.6	4.8	6.2	-0.2	-	-1.6	-
Participation Rate (%)	64.8	65.1	65.2	-0.3	-	-0.4	-
Employment Rate (%)	61.8	62.0	61.2	-0.2	-	0.6	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



British Columbia’s unemployment rate improved over the year (-1.6 percentage points), as significantly fewer people were unemployed (-44,900). The unemployment rate for B.C.’s youth (15 to 24 years) was 8.7% in the third quarter of 2022, a slight increase (+0.2 percentage points) from the previous quarter. Both men and women accounted for the drop in the youth unemployment rate on a yearly basis (-1.8 percentage points to 8.7%).

British Columbia Quarterly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally adjusted data	3rd Quarter 2022 (%)	2nd Quarter 2022 (%)	3rd Quarter 2021 (%)	Quarterly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	4.6	4.8	6.2	-0.2	-1.6
25 years and over	4.0	4.2	5.5	-0.2	-1.5
Men - 25 years and over	3.8	4.3	5.7	-0.5	-1.9
Women - 25 years and over	4.1	4.1	5.4	0.0	-1.3
15 to 24 years	8.7	8.5	10.5	0.2	-1.8
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.0	9.8	10.8	0.2	-0.8
Women - 15 to 24 years	7.5	7.2	10.2	0.3	-2.7

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY

Quarterly employment grew in the **goods producing sector** by 6,900 (1.4%) and fell in the **services producing sector** by 8,300 (-0.4%) over the quarter.

British Columbia Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally adjusted data ('000)	3rd Quarter 2022	2nd Quarter 2022	3rd Quarter 2021	Quarterly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,739.7	2,741.2	2,665.5	-1.5	-0.1	74.2	2.8
Goods-producing sector	498.8	491.9	477.5	6.9	1.4	21.3	4.5
Agriculture	28.2	27.1	19.5	1.1	4.1	8.7	44.6
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	47.5	45.1	49.7	2.4	5.3	-2.2	-4.4
Utilities	16.2	15.3	17.0	0.9	5.9	-0.8	-4.7
Construction	236.3	224.0	214.6	12.3	5.5	21.7	10.1
Manufacturing	170.5	180.5	176.7	-10.0	-5.5	-6.2	-3.5
Services-producing sector	2,241.0	2,249.3	2,188.0	-8.3	-0.4	53.0	2.4
Trade	418.5	431.0	399.8	-12.5	-2.9	18.7	4.7
Transportation and warehousing	139.0	143.5	139.3	-4.5	-3.1	-0.3	-0.2
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	163.3	163.2	171.1	0.1	0.1	-7.8	-4.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	265.9	261.5	258.3	4.4	1.7	7.6	2.9
Business, building and other support services	97.9	100.0	112.1	-2.1	-2.1	-14.2	-12.7
Educational services	202.4	199.1	186.7	3.3	1.7	15.7	8.4
Health care and social assistance	375.7	384.5	366.5	-8.8	-2.3	9.2	2.5
Information, culture and recreation	152.2	139.2	125.7	13.0	9.3	26.5	21.1
Accommodation and food services	177.7	178.6	181.6	-0.9	-0.5	-3.9	-2.1
Other services	110.5	110.6	109.9	-0.1	-0.1	0.6	0.5
Public administration	137.8	138.1	137.1	-0.3	-0.2	0.7	0.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

In the **goods-producing sector**, there was job growth over the quarter in **construction** (12,300 or 5.5%), **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** (2,400 or 5.3%) and **agriculture** (1,100 or 4.1%). However, this growth was partially offset by job losses in **manufacturing** (-10,000 or -5.3%).

The province's **agriculture** sector has faced unusual summer weather conditions with the early season cooler than normal and the rest of the summer very warm and dry. Despite these challenges, employment in the sector improved over the third quarter, gaining 1,100 jobs (4.0%). Still, climate change is an ongoing major issue for this sector, with unprecedented extreme weather resulting in crop and livestock losses, reduced yields and increasing costs. Recently, southwestern areas of the province such as the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island have been subject to drought conditions. These conditions are leading to smaller crop yields for vegetable producers who have struggled to sufficiently irrigate their crops.¹

Employment in the province's **construction** industry continued to grow on a quarterly basis (12,300 or 5.5%) and increased by 21,700 workers or 10.1% year-over-year. Housing activity in the province remained virtually unchanged in August month-over-month, with the number of housing starts steady at 45,620. Compared to last year, however, housing starts were up 8% in August.² Looking ahead, building permits signal a potential increase upcoming construction activity with permits up 37% year-over-year; month-over-month, the number of permits issued dipped 7.4% in August compared to July.³

Forestry is a key economic driver in many B.C. communities. Employment in **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** increased (2,400 or 5.32%) over the quarter. Despite these gains, employment in these industries declined 4.4% (-2,200) year-over-year. BC's forestry sector continued to adapt to the ongoing challenges of a shrinking timber supply, insect infestations, wildfires, and U.S. trade tariffs. In the longer term, logging in BC will be further limited by measures to protect caribou habitat and old-growth forest. This time of year historically sees the lowest prices on wood products, and lumber prices were indeed flat for most of September. Demand for lumber has been low this quarter, especially in the latter half, and sawmills are still curtailing production in response. Prices are expected to remain low from now until late November, unless there is increased demand from the construction industry.

Curtailments in the industry have increased, with a number of companies prolonging existing curtailments until the end of the year or announcing new production slowdowns. In September, Cariboo Pulp and Paper, located in Quesnel, announced that it would be undertaking a 16-day curtailment starting on October 29. The curtailment is expected to affect 160 workers at the facility. The company has cited challenges with log supply and market conditions as reasons for the curtailment.⁴ As well, Canfor curtailed production for two weeks at the majority of its solid wood facilities in B.C. as of September 26, citing challenging market conditions as the cause. Canfor had been operating at reduced capacity at its Western Canadian sawmills since March 2021. Once production resumes, the company plans to continue operating at reduced capacity until the end of the year.⁵ In early October, Catalyst Paper announced that it would curtail operations indefinitely within 60 days at its Crofton sawmill, affecting roughly 150 workers.⁶

Employment in the province's **services-producing sector** declined over the quarter (-8,300 positions or -0.4%) but was still up over the year (53,000 or 2.4%). There were quarterly employment drops within **transportation and warehousing** (-3.1%), **wholesale and retail trade** (-2.9%) and **health care and social assistance** (-2.3%). However, there were still employment gains in some sub sectors: **information, culture and recreation** (9.3%), **professional, scientific and technical services** (1.7%) and **educational services** (1.7%).

Employment in **accommodation and food services** fell by 900 (-0.5%) over the quarter and is down 3,900 (-2.1%) year-over-year. The industry still faces many challenges such as rising costs, decreasing profit margins, increasing

rents and debt obligations. As well, a competitive labour market is causing challenges in hiring staff.⁷ Restaurants face tough decisions on costs since raising their menu prices in response to higher input costs may drive away price sensitive customers, further decreasing revenues.⁸ As inflation and labour challenges persist, the sector may have a difficult time in the slower winter season. To aid food establishments in keeping costs down, the Government of B.C. introduced legislation to cap delivery fees at 20% of an order's value. A temporary cap, introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, is in place until the end of the year.⁹

Employment in **transportation and warehousing** fell 4,500 (-3.1%) over the quarter while remaining nearly unchanged (-300 or -0.2%) year-over-year. Passenger numbers at Vancouver's international airport have returned to pre-pandemic levels, with the airport welcoming nearly the same number of travellers in September as in 2019.¹⁰ Metro Vancouver's transit operator, Translink, has launched a hiring blitz in order to meet increasing demand. The transit operator is looking to hire staff for a variety of roles including operations and management, repair and maintenance, and customer service. However, a tight labour market and a skilled trades shortage in the province presents challenges for this sector.¹¹ Translink is aiming to recruit more than 500 new employees by 2028 to meet future demand.¹²

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

While quarterly employment in British Columbia remained virtually unchanged, there was year-over-year improvement in the majority of the province's economic regions except for the **Kootenays**. Job growth remained strong, especially in B.C.'s metropolitan regions. The unemployment rate declined in all of the province's economic regions. The largest improvements were reported in **North Coast and Nechako** (-2.6 percentage points), **Lower Mainland and Southwest** (-2.2 percentage points) and the **Cariboo** (-1.1 percentage points).

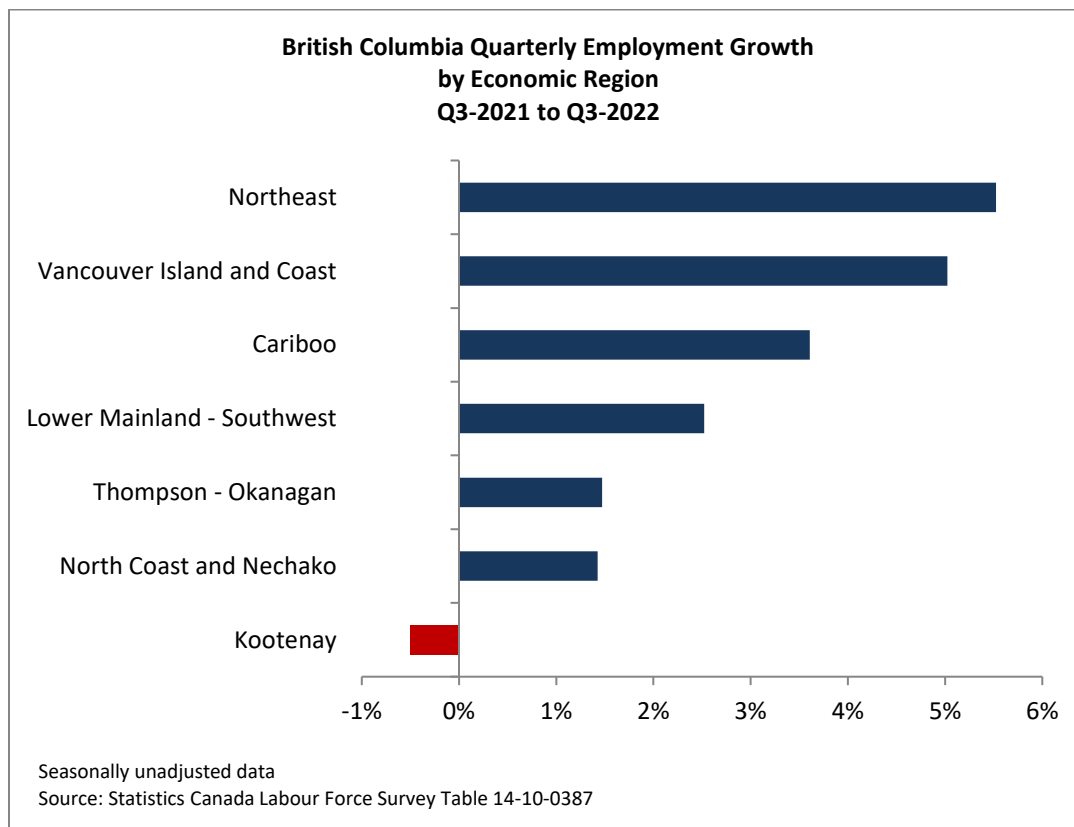
Please note that the statistics for the economic regions are not seasonally adjusted and should only be compared on a year-over-year basis. Employment is sometimes influenced by seasonal and calendar effects occurring at the same time and with the same magnitude every year, which can bring about changes in the data that make monthly comparisons difficult.

British Columbia Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

Seasonally unadjusted data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	3rd Quarter 2022 ('000)	3rd Quarter 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	3rd Quarter 2022 (%)	3rd Quarter 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
British Columbia	2,766.5	2,692.0	2.8	4.8	6.5	-1.7
Economic Regions						
Vancouver Island and Coast	439.0	418.0	5.0	4.3	5.2	-0.9
Lower Mainland - Southwest	1,768.5	1,725.0	2.5	4.8	7.0	-2.2
Thompson - Okanagan	309.9	305.4	1.5	4.9	5.4	-0.5
Kootenay	79.1	79.5	-0.5	6.1	6.5	-0.4
Cariboo	89.0	85.9	3.6	5.2	6.3	-1.1
North Coast and Nechako	42.7	42.1	1.4	5.3	7.9	-2.6
Northeast	38.2	36.2	5.5	0.0	5.7	-5.7

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0387, formerly CANSIM 282-0122



The **Vancouver Island and Coast** economic region remained resilient despite a general slowdown in the BC economy. Employment in the region rose 21,000 (5.0%) this month over the same time last year, while the unemployment rate decreased 0.9 percentage points to 4.3% over the same period. The region's forestry sector faces challenges as Catalyst Paper is closing their Crofton mill. The Government of Canada is supporting the industry by providing \$1.4M in funding to Atli Chip LP, located in Beaver Cove, through the Indigenous Forestry Initiative program, to support ongoing Indigenous-led economic development in the forestry sector.¹³ The Government of British Columbia is also supporting forestry workers through the Forest Employment Program, which is keeping forest workers affected by old-growth deferrals and other sector impacts, employed in short-term forest service road repair and repairing the McNair Lake Dam.¹⁴

Employment in the **Lower Mainland – Southwest** region continued to rise. Year-over-year, more than 43,500 jobs (2.5%) were added in the region, and the unemployment rate declined 2.2 percentage points to 4.8%. **Information, culture and recreation** is an important industry for Metro Vancouver, specifically the motion picture industry, for which Metro Vancouver is one of two major hubs in Canada. The industry is expected to continue to grow, with the Willingdon Lands development, an Indigenous led project in Burnaby, planning to build a new 450,000 square foot, 15-stage film studio. The project, which is in the conceptual stages, could support over 3,000 jobs in the area.¹⁵ As well, the world's largest LED Volume stage, a new filmmaking technology that creates virtual sets to offer dynamic and lifelike settings, has opened and is in use in Burnaby. Continued investments into this industry will aid in driving growth in BC's film and television industry, which contributed \$3.3 billion to the provincial GDP in 2021.¹⁶

Employment in the **Thompson – Okanagan** economic region rose 4,500 (1.5%) over the year, while the unemployment rate improved by 0.5 percentage points to 4.9% over the same period. Fruit harvesting is well underway in the Okanagan. Producers are harvesting grapes slightly later this year due to cooler temperatures that were present at the beginning of the season. Despite this delay, some producers are estimating that yields will be in line with projections this year.¹⁷

Year-over-year employment dropped 400 (-0.5%) in the **Kootenay** region. Despite minor losses in employment, the region's unemployment rate was down 0.4 percentage points to 6.1%. In positive news for the region, the Columbia Basin Trust, a major economic development organization, has added 125km of high-speed fiber to its network. The expanded network in the Slocan Valley will help to connect residents and businesses with modern, reliable internet.¹⁸

Employment in the **Cariboo** region grew year-over-year (3,100 or 3.6%), while the unemployment rate decreased 1.1 percentage point to 5.2%. Hydra Energy began construction on its new hydrogen refuelling station, which will be the largest in the world. The facility will produce 3,250 kilograms of hydrogen per day once operational. This alternative fuel source, which is less carbon intensive than fossil fuels, will aid in replacing diesel fuel in trucks. The station is expected to be complete and operation in 2024.¹⁹

Employment in the **Northeast** region grew year-over-year (2,000 or 5.5%). Employment in the region continues to be supported by the \$16B Site C Hydroelectric Dam project, located in Northeast British Columbia, which as of July 2022 employed 5,414 workers.²⁰

Employment in the **North Coast and Nechako** region grew by 600 (1.4%) compared to the same period last year. As well, the unemployment rate fell by 2.6 percentage points over the same period to 5.3%. The Coastal Gas Link pipeline continues construction in the region; as of September, the project was around 72% complete overall and employed 6,269 workers.²¹ In addition, the company is seeking to increase its workforce by 1,200 people at its camp south of Houston.²² The LNG Terminal in Kitimat, the end point for the pipeline, is also expected to expand its construction workforce. An estimated 7,500 workers will be employed on the terminal next year to bring the project to completion.²³

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- ¹ CTV News. (October 7, 2022) [Drought conditions hit Level 5 in several B.C. regions](#)
 - ² Statistics Canada. [Table 34-10-0156-01 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts in all centres 10,000 and over, Canada, provinces, and census metropolitan areas, seasonally adjusted at annual rates, monthly \(x 1,000\)](#)
 - ³ Statistics Canada. [Table 34-10-0066-01 Building permits, by type of structure and type of work \(x 1,000\)](#)
 - ⁴ Quesnel Cariboo Observer. (September 26, 2022) [16-day curtailment planned at Cariboo Pulp and Paper due to forestry challenges](#)
 - ⁵ CBC News. (September 20, 2022) [Canfor temporarily reducing production capacity in B.C. due to market conditions](#)
 - ⁶ CBC News. (October 7, 2022) [Vancouver Island paper mill curtails operations indefinitely](#)
 - ⁷ CTV News. (September 16, 2022) [Inflation, staff shortages mean bumpy road to recovery for most restaurants in Canada](#)
 - ⁸ CBC News. (September 15, 2022) [Your restaurant meal is about to get even pricier](#)
 - ⁹ Government of British Columbia. (October 6, 2022) [B.C. serving up permanent delivery fee cap to support restaurants](#)
 - ¹⁰ Business in Vancouver. (October 3, 2022) [YVR traffic returns to pre-pandemic levels](#)
 - ¹¹ Global News. (September 28, 2022) [TransLink launches SkyTrain recruiting blitz as major expansions get underway](#)
 - ¹² Business in Vancouver. (October 5, 2022) [TransLink to hire 500 workers by 2028](#)
 - ¹³ Yahoo. (September 22, 2022) [Canada Supports Indigenous Economic Development in BC's Forest Sector](#)
 - ¹⁴ Government of British Columbia. (September 1, 2022) [Projects on northern Vancouver Island support forest workers](#)
 - ¹⁵ Business in Vancouver. (October 4, 2022) [Development in Burnaby eyes Indigenous-focused film academy](#)
 - ¹⁶ Business in Vancouver. (September 23, 2022) [LED Volume stage delivers strange new virtual worlds to B.C. film industry](#)
 - ¹⁷ Business in Vancouver. (September 9, 2022) [B.C. wineries prepare for later grape harvest](#)
 - ¹⁸ Trail Times. (September 10, 2022) [Columbia Basin Trust adds 125 km to broadband network](#)
 - ¹⁹ Castanet. (September 20, 2022) [Northern B.C. hydrogen station the world's largest](#)
 - ²⁰ Dawson Creek Mirror. (September 05, 2022) [Record 5,414 Site C workers](#)
 - ²¹ Coastal GasLink. (September 28, 2022) [Coastal GasLink Construction Update: September 28, 2022](#)
 - ²² Houston Today. (September 14, 2022) [Coastal GasLink seeks workforce increase south of Houston](#)
 - ²³ Terrace Standard. (October 03, 2022) [LNG Canada ramps up construction at Kitimat natural gas facility](#)