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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, April 14, 2008
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time

Releases

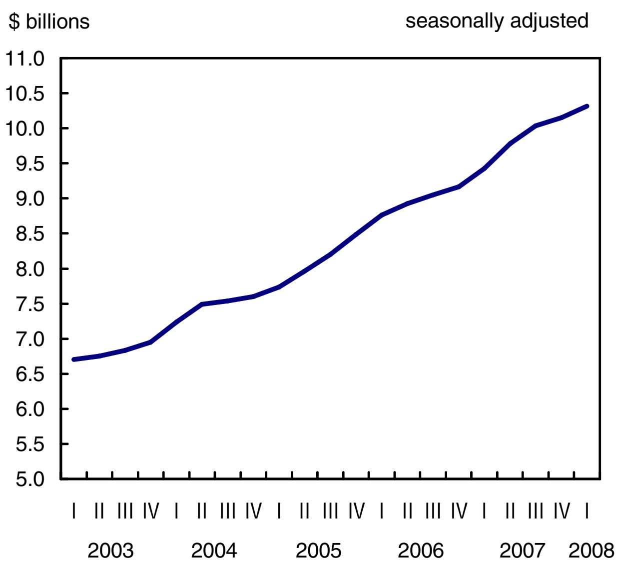
Releases

Investment in non-residential building construction

First quarter 2008

Last year's pace for investment in non-residential building construction continued into the first three months of 2008, again the result of major construction activity of office buildings underway in Alberta and Ontario.

Investments in non-residential building construction continues to grow



First-quarter investment hit $10.3 billion, up 1.6% from the fourth quarter and the 20th consecutive quarterly increase.

In constant dollars, investment in non-residential building construction declined 0.3% from the fourth quarter.

Investment increased in all three components from the fourth quarter. In the commercial component, it rose 1.6% to $6.3 billion; in the industrial component, it went up 4.0% to $1.5 billion; in the institutional component, it edged up 0.2% to $2.6 billion.

Provincially, the biggest first-quarter increase (in dollars) occurred in Alberta, where investment rose 5.1% to $2.5 billion, a 19th consecutive quarterly gain. In Ontario, which was a close second, investment increased 3.1% to $3.8 billion, as a result of gains in all three components.

In contrast, British Columbia posted the biggest drop as a result of a decline in spending on construction of industrial and institutional projects. These projects were started in 2006 and early 2007 and are now almost complete.

The non-residential sector continued to be positively affected by low office vacancy rates, a vigorous retail sector and strong corporate profits.

Furthermore, investment intentions (including engineering construction), according to Statistics Canada's Survey of Private and Public Investment, are forecast to increase by 6.8% in 2008 from 2007.

Of the 34 census metropolitan areas, 15 registered quarterly growth. The strongest gain (in dollars) was in Toronto, where investment rose 4.2% to $1.9 billion. It was followed by Hamilton, where investment increased 24.5% to $166 million, the result of higher spending in all three components.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.*
>
> *Investments in non-residential building construction exclude engineering construction. This series is based on the Building Permits Survey of municipalities, which collects information on construction intentions.*
>
> *Work put-in-place patterns are assigned to each type of structure (industrial, commercial and institutional). These work patterns are used to distribute the value of building permits according to project length. Work put-in-place patterns differ according to the value of the construction project; a project worth several million dollars will usually take longer to complete than will a project of a few hundred thousand dollars.*
>
> *Additional data from the Capital and Repair Expenditures Surveys are used to create this investment series. Investment in non-residential building data is benchmarked to Statistics Canada's System of National Accounts of non-residential building investment series.*
>
> *For the purpose of the Investment in non-residential building construction release, the census metropolitan area of Ottawa–Gatineau is divided into two areas: Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part) and Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part).*

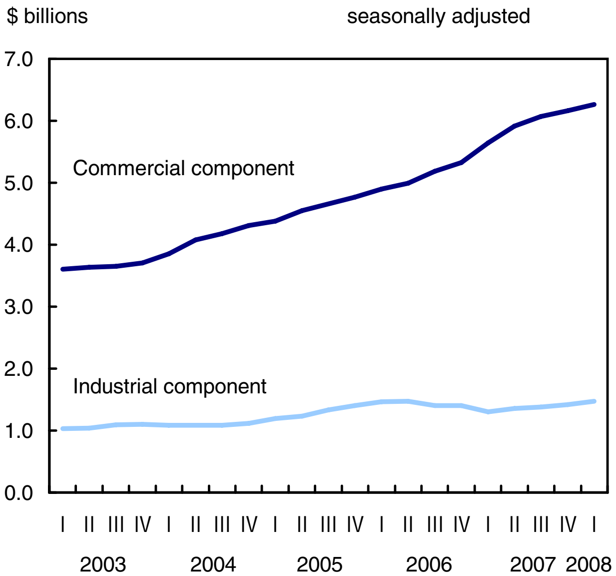
Commercial component: Robust office activity in Alberta and Ontario

Investment in commercial building construction reached a quarterly record high, thanks to the strong activity underway on office building construction sites in Alberta and Ontario.

Overall, four provinces and two territories showed increases in commercial investment in the first quarter. The largest contributions (in dollars) occurred in Alberta (+5.6% to $1.7 billion) and in Ontario (+1.9% to $2.2 billion). Both amounts are all-time highs.

After six consecutive quarterly increases, Quebec recorded the most significant decline as a result of a slowdown in investment in office buildings and shopping centres construction.

Investment in commercial and industrial buildings increases in the first quarter



Among census metropolitan areas, 17 posted first-quarter gains. Commercial investment in Calgary and Toronto recorded the strongest gains in dollars.

In contrast, Montréal posted the largest decline, following seven consecutive quarterly increases, as several commercial projects that started in 2006 and 2007 are now almost complete.

A decline in vacancy rates in the major urban centres continued to put positive pressure on office building construction. In addition, growth in retail and wholesale trade in 2007 appears to have had a favourable impact on the construction of warehouses, which have posted eight quarterly gains in the last two years.

Industrial component: Gains in manufacturing plants and utilities buildings

Investment in industrial building construction increased for the fourth straight quarter. This was the result of strong investment gains in the construction of manufacturing plants and utilities buildings in six provinces, particularly Alberta and Ontario.

At the provincial level, the largest contribution to the quarterly increase (in dollars) occurred in Alberta. This was the result of spending on the construction of major projects for manufacturing plants and utilities buildings that began in 2007.

British Columbia posted the largest decline (in dollars), as investment in all industrial building categories fell after four consecutive quarterly gains. This decline was the result of several industrial projects, in particular warehouse and storage buildings, which started in 2006 and are now mostly complete.

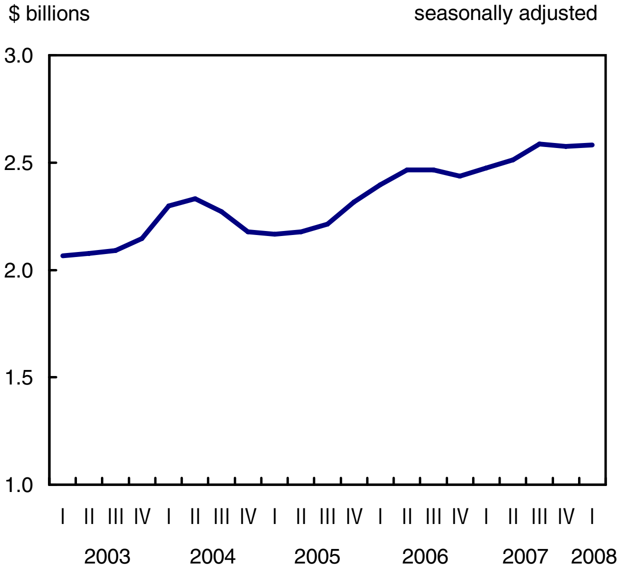
Overall, 14 metropolitan areas registered quarterly growth, with the strongest gains in Edmonton and Toronto.

Calgary experienced the largest drop. This decline was the result of several industrial projects that started in 2006 and 2007, and are now mostly complete.

Institutional component: Spending remains stable

Following previous declines, spending in the institutional component saw a slight rebound of 0.2% to $2.6 billion in first quarter. A strong gain in spending on health care facilities more than offset declines in all other institutional categories.

Investment in institutional building edges up during the first quarter



Provincially, by far the biggest first-quarter increase (in dollars) occurred in Ontario, where investment rose 5.0% to $1.0 billion. This was due mainly to strong spending in the construction of health care facilities.

In contrast, British Columbia saw investment fall 4.5% to $372 million. The decrease was the result of institutional construction projects that started in mid-2005 and early 2006 and are now mostly complete.

Among census metropolitan areas, Hamilton led first-quarter growth, with investments rising 44.9% to $75 million. The gain was driven by substantial investments in health care and educational facilities.

For the second consecutive quarter, Calgary registered the most significant decline in dollars, in the wake of a drop in the majority of institutional construction building categories. Of the 34 census metropolitan areas, 22 posted declines.

Available on CANSIM: table 026-0016.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5014.

More detailed data on investment in non-residential building construction are also available in free tables online from the *Summary tables* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, Bechir Oueriemmi (613-951-1165; *bdp_information@statcan.ca*), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

□

Investment in non-residential building construction, by census metropolitan area[1]

	First quarter 2007	Fourth quarter 2007	First quarter 2008	Fourth quarter 2007 to first quarter 2008
	Seasonally adjusted			
	$ millions			% change
St. John's	38	35	35	-2.1
Halifax	103	72	71	-2.2
Moncton	44	48	46	-4.6
Saint John	26	38	32	-17.1
Saguenay	38	43	37	-12.2
Québec	177	217	241	11.0
Sherbrooke	43	40	36	-10.1
Trois-Rivières	41	59	49	-17.5
Montréal	793	889	870	-2.1
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	426	393	377	-4.2
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part)	44	54	54	0.0
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	383	339	323	-4.9
Kingston	44	51	54	5.5
Peterborough	16	14	14	6.5
Oshawa	98	88	87	-1.7
Toronto	1,543	1,809	1,885	4.2
Hamilton	147	133	166	24.5
St. Catharines–Niagara	76	59	65	9.5
Kitchener	135	130	137	5.3
Brantford	40	31	22	-31.0
Guelph	51	44	45	4.1
London	106	144	146	1.7
Windsor	88	76	73	-3.9
Barrie	60	64	60	-6.5
Greater Sudbury	45	69	72	4.3
Thunder Bay	19	20	19	-3.7
Winnipeg	162	135	127	-5.8
Regina	62	87	80	-8.0
Saskatoon	97	92	111	21.0
Calgary	974	1,236	1,257	1.7
Edmonton	455	450	479	6.3
Kelowna	48	70	78	10.2
Abbotsford	86	57	53	-7.4
Vancouver	787	856	852	-0.5
Victoria	96	97	92	-5.2

1. *Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the census metropolitan areas.*

Investment in non-residential building construction

	First quarter 2007	Fourth quarter 2007	First quarter 2008	Fourth quarter 2007 to first quarter 2008
	Seasonally adjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Canada	**9,423**	**10,153**	**10,317**	**1.6**
Newfoundland and Labrador	61	60	60	-0.8
Prince Edward Island	28	17	20	17.4
Nova Scotia	181	155	150	-3.7
New Brunswick	142	165	151	-8.6
Quebec	1,520	1,694	1,680	-0.8
Ontario	3,437	3,708	3,822	3.1
Manitoba	225	208	196	-5.6
Saskatchewan	231	255	258	1.4
Alberta	2,156	2,409	2,531	5.1
British Columbia	1,412	1,448	1,417	-2.1
Yukon	17	15	11	-21.0
Northwest Territories	8	17	18	4.2
Nunavut	5	3	3	-8.5

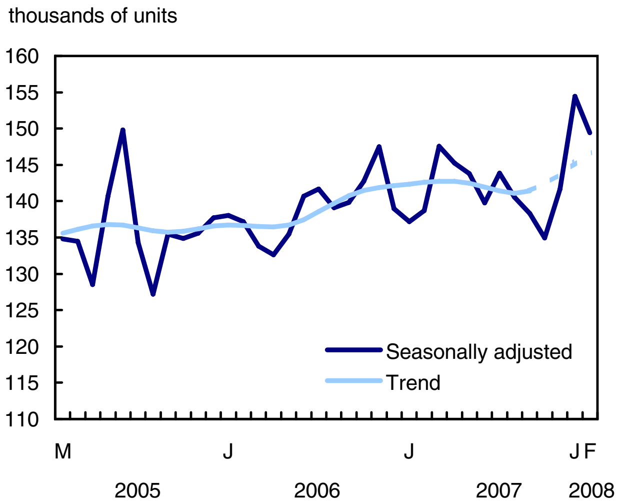
■

New motor vehicle sales

February 2008

The number of new motor vehicles sold fell 3.2% in February, after two months of very strong growth. New motor vehicle sales had recovered in December and January, following a downward trend in the second half of 2007.

New motor vehicle sales drop in February



Note: The last few points could be subject to revisions when more data are added. This is indicated by the dashed line.

According to seasonally adjusted data from the New Motor Vehicle Sales Survey, consumers purchased 149,439 new vehicles in February, down 5,003 units from the previous month. Almost three-quarters of this decline was in Ontario.

Looking ahead, preliminary industry data for March suggest that the number of new motor vehicles sold will remain relatively unchanged.

Truck sales slump in February

Sales of both passenger cars and trucks declined in February. Sales of new trucks (which include minivans, sport-utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans and buses) slumped 4.7% to 68,811 units. This drop follows the sharp increase in sales in December that was maintained in January.

After experiencing the strongest growth in 10 years in January, passenger car sales dropped 1.9% to 80,628 units in February. This was due entirely to a 6.0% decline in sales of North American-built passenger cars, of which 50,500 units were sold.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Seasonally adjusted estimates of new motor vehicle sales have been revised for 2003 to 2007 to reflect an update in seasonal adjustment factors. Because of the constant evolution of seasonal factors, revisions can be more significant for some months of the year. However, the annual sum of seasonally adjusted figures corresponds to the annual sum of unadjusted estimates.*
>
> *The unadjusted series have been revised back to January 2006.*

Nevertheless, this decline followed a 24.3% increase in sales of North American-built cars in January. Sales of overseas-built passenger cars increased 5.7% to 30,128 units, continuing the strong sales observed over the previous two months.

Sales down in seven provinces

New motor vehicle sales decreased in all provinces with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Quebec. The largest decrease was observed in Ontario (-6.6%). Nevertheless, this decline was not enough to erase the strong advances observed in December and January.

Each of the western provinces saw declines in the sales of new motor vehicles. With a 5.6% decrease, British Columbia experienced the largest drop in this region followed by Manitoba (-5.4%), Alberta (-3.3%) and Saskatchewan (-0.8%). Trucks traditionally account for the majority of new vehicle sales in these provinces.

After rising by an astounding 18.1% in January, sales in Quebec rose for the third month in a row in February (+1.0%), reaching 40,395 units sold. Gains were also observed in Newfoundland and Labrador (+6.5%) and New Brunswick (+0.9%).

Available on CANSIM: table 079-0003.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2402.

The February 2008 issue of *New Motor Vehicle Sales* (63-007-XWE, free) will be available soon.

Data on new motor vehicle sales for March will be released on May 16.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Mark Switzer (613-951-7137), Distributive Trades Division.

□

New motor vehicle sales

	February 2007[r]	January 2008[r]	February 2008[p]	February 2007 to February 2008	January to February 2008
	Seasonally adjusted				
	number of vehicles			% change	
New motor vehicles	**137,186**	**154,442**	**149,439**	**8.9**	**-3.2**
Passenger cars	69,337	82,215	80,628	16.3	-1.9
North American[1]	43,752	53,700	50,500	15.4	-6.0
Overseas	25,585	28,515	30,128	17.8	5.7
Trucks, vans and buses	67,849	72,227	68,811	1.4	-4.7
New motor vehicles					
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,147	3,094	3,295	53.5	6.5
Prince Edward Island	420	510	486	15.7	-4.7
Nova Scotia	3,691	4,718	4,693	27.1	-0.5
New Brunswick	2,811	3,291	3,321	18.1	0.9
Quebec	33,467	39,998	40,395	20.7	1.0
Ontario	49,158	54,728	51,108	4.0	-6.6
Manitoba	3,764	4,411	4,173	10.9	-5.4
Saskatchewan	3,451	4,322	4,289	24.3	-0.8
Alberta	21,292	22,143	21,410	0.6	-3.3
British Columbia[2]	16,985	17,227	16,269	-4.2	-5.6

	February 2007	January 2008[r]	February 2008[p]	February 2007 to February 2008
	Unadjusted			
	number of vehicles			% change
New motor vehicles	**99,877**	**105,543**	**113,841**	**14.0**
Passenger cars	47,256	51,844	58,327	23.4
North American[1]	30,361	34,557	37,369	23.1
Overseas	16,895	17,287	20,958	24.0
Trucks, vans and buses	52,621	53,699	55,514	5.5
New motor vehicles				
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,253	1,710	2,013	60.7
Prince Edward Island	278	288	355	27.7
Nova Scotia	2,606	3,115	3,515	34.9
New Brunswick	2,019	2,138	2,527	25.2
Quebec	23,310	25,040	29,750	27.6
Ontario	35,347	37,287	38,605	9.2
Manitoba	2,652	2,949	3,086	16.4
Saskatchewan	2,429	2,958	3,204	31.9
Alberta	16,333	16,968	17,263	5.7
British Columbia[2]	13,650	13,090	13,523	-0.9

r revised
p preliminary
1. Manufactured or assembled in Canada, the United States or Mexico .
2. Includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut .
Note: *Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.*

■

Study: Community vulnerability to population and employment decline
1981 to 2001

Over the last two decades, one of the most important factors of change for Canadian communities has been the process of global economic integration.

Globalization has opened new economic opportunities for various sectors, such as the primary resource sector. However, the economy of certain regions relying on these sectors has become more vulnerable to declines in population and employment in the wake of foreign competition.

The study, "An index of community vulnerability: Conceptual framework and application to population and employment changes," is among the first to create a conceptual framework suitable for gauging how vulnerable rural and urban communities in Canada are to population and employment declines, using demographic and economic characteristics.

It found that 1 out of every 5 communities in Canada are vulnerable to a loss of population, and about 1 in 20 are vulnerable to a decline in employment.

The most vulnerable communities are in regions characterized by a steady and constant loss of population over the past two decades. These consist of the Prairies, northern Ontario, northern Quebec and the most remote regions of Atlantic Canada.

However, each of these regions also contains communities with characteristics that improve the likelihood of maintaining their population and employment levels. These communities buck the trend of the wider region within which they are located.

The study also found that communities are more vulnerable to declines in population and employment if they have a higher incidence of jobs in traditional sectors, such as agriculture, forestry and labour-intensive manufacturing. These sectors are particularly exposed to foreign competition.

High unemployment rates and low labour force participation rates are also associated with an increased likelihood of declines in population and employment.

In contrast, certain resources or assets reduce vulnerability, such as a more highly educated workforce, employment spread across a variety of different sectors, and proximity to larger cities.

The study "An index of community vulnerability: Conceptual framework and application to population and employment changes" is now available in the *Agriculture and Rural Working Papers*, 1981 to 2001 (21-601-MIE2008088, free), from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Alessandro Alasia (613-951-1204; *alessandro.alasia@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Dairy statistics
February 2008 (preliminary)

Dairy farmers sold 618 400 kilolitres of milk and cream to dairies in February, up 8.1% from February 2007.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3430, 3431 and 3432.

The first quarter 2008 issue of *Dairy Statistics*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (23-014-XWE, free) will be available in May.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Anna Michalowska (613-951-2442; toll-free 1-800-465-1991; fax: 613-951-3868), Agriculture Division. ■

Annual Survey of Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment Rental and Leasing
2006

Total operating revenues for the commercial and industrial machinery and equipment rental and leasing industry rose 6.7% from 2005 to $6.0 billion in 2006.

Rising prices for crude petroleum and metals provided incentive for expanding mining activity and continued construction in the Alberta oil sands. In turn, this has stimulated continuing demand for the rental and leasing of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers, earthmoving equipment, mining machinery and oil field equipment.

About 72% of the operating revenues of this industry are derived from the rental and leasing of heavy equipment.

In terms of operating expenses, labour costs represented 24% of the total, or the largest share, followed by cost of goods (21%) and depreciation (17%).

Operating profit margins remained strong at 14.6%, up from 13.1% in 2005.

Businesses account for about 90% of the client base. This industry is dominated by large firms. The 20 largest firms generated 60% of the operating profits and just over 40 % of the revenues.

Note: Results from the 2006 Annual Survey of Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment Rental and Leasing (and revised 2004 and 2005 data) are now available. The data for 2004 and 2005 have been revised to reflect more accurate coverage of the target population for this industry. Previous year figures have been revised to reflect more accurate coverage of the target population, based on information received in the current reference year. These data provide information such as the industry's revenue, expenditures, salaries and wages, and profit margin. The financing arm of the commercial and industrial machinery and equipment rental and leasing industry is excluded from this survey.

Available on CANSIM: table 352-0009.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2441.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact David Binks (613-951-0521, fax: 613-951-6696; *david.binks@statcan.ca*), Service Industries Division. ■

Consulting Engineering Services Price Index

2006 (preliminary)

The Consulting Engineering Services Price Index (CESPI) is now available for 2006. The CESPI measures the change in the total price of engineering and consulting services, as well as changes in the wage rate and realized net multiplier components. Detailed indexes are available for fields of specialization and for regional, domestic and foreign markets.

The Canada total CESPI for 2006 was 127.9 (1997=100), up 3.4% from the revised index of 123.7 for 2005.

Available on CANSIM: table 327-0007.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2328.

Consulting engineering services price indexes will be published in the fourth quarter 2007 issue of *Capital Expenditure Price Statistics* (62-007-XWE, free), which will soon be available.

For more information on these indexes, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-866-230-2248; 613-951-9606; *prices-prix@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Sangita Dubey (613-951-3351; *sangita.dubey@statcan.ca*), Prices Division. ■

New products

Agriculture and Rural Working Paper Series: "An index of community vulnerability: Conceptual framework and application to population and employment changes", 1981 to 2001, no. 88
Catalogue number 21-601-MIE2008088
(free).

Private and Public Investment in Canada, Intentions, 2008
Catalogue number 61-205-XWE
(free).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

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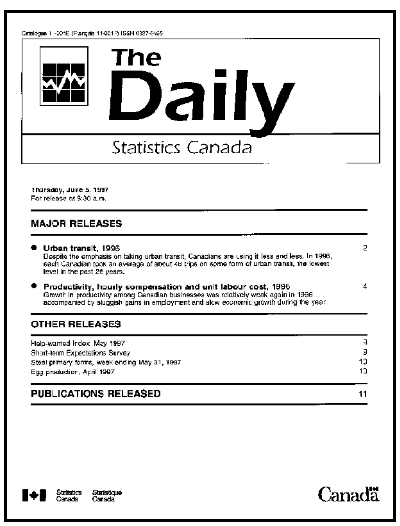
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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** — 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** — 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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