

January 2014

Prince George Experiences Strong Employment Growth in 2013

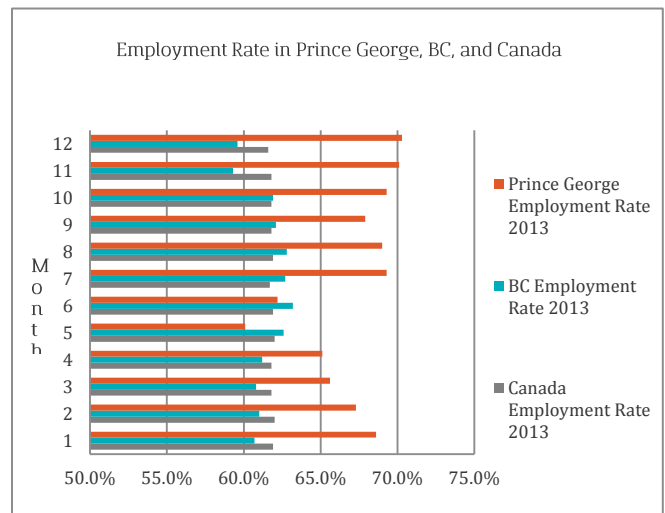
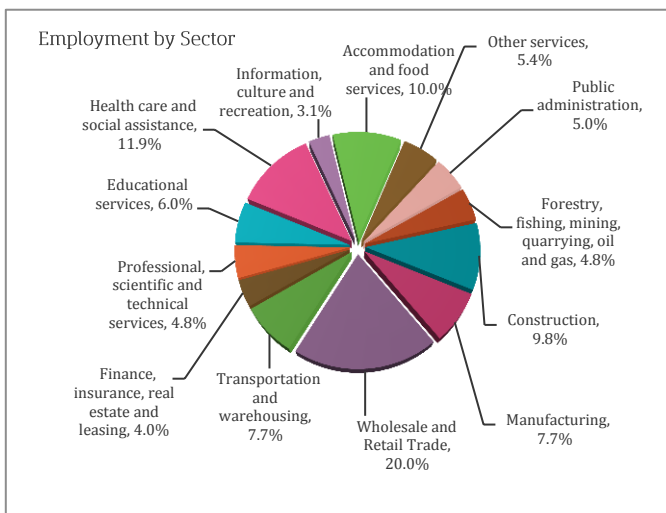
During most of 2013, the Prince George employment rate surpassed national and provincial averages. The average annual employment rate in the city was 67.1% compared to the national rate of 61.8% and the provincial rate of 61.5%.¹ A total of 1,000 jobs were added in Prince George during 2013, amounting to a 2.1% increase in employment. This is three times the national growth in employment (0.6%) recorded during 2013.

The service providing² and goods producing sectors provided employment to 77% and 23% of the workforce, respectively, in 2013. The wholesale and retail trade industry was the largest employer, accounting for 20% of all employment, which works out to nearly 9,600 people. This is closely followed by health care and social assistance (11.9%) and accommodation and food services (10.0%).

The three industries with the highest growth in employment were: professional scientific and technical services, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation and warehousing. Employment in these sectors grew by 53.3%, 35.2%, and 23.3% respectively during 2013. Together these industries employ nearly one-third of all employees in Prince George. Other sectors with notable growth in recent years include the construction; finance; real-estate, insurance, and leasing; and information culture and recreation sectors. The expansion of these sectors can be attributed to strong economic activity across Northern British Columbia (BC) and highlight the role of Prince George as the service and supply hub for most industrial activities in Northern BC.

The Education sector is one of the most important sectors, contributing to the sustained growth and diversification of the Prince George economy. The city is home to the main campuses of the University of Northern BC (UNBC) and the College of New Caledonia (CNC), which have a combined student population of about 10,000 students annually. These institutions provide a wide range of programming to facilitate the continued development of a work force with the diverse skill sets to support business expansion across all industries.

The employment growth trend in recent years is expected to continue in 2014 and beyond, as Prince George plays a major role in the economy of one of the fastest-growing regions in Canada.



¹ Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

² Sector activities include but are not limited to: legal and finance; engineering; specialized and computer systems design; management, scientific & technical consulting; research & development and; advertising & public relations

Economic Statistics

Employment

The number of people employed in Prince George continued on a slight upward trend for the third consecutive month in 2013 from 49,000 in October to 49,500 in November and 49,600 in December. The number of people in the workforce went down from 52,200 in November to 51,900 in December. The unemployment rate in Prince George decreased to 4.2%; the lowest level in the last 10 months. The unemployment rate in Prince George was the lowest in the province for the second consecutive month. This is in contrast to Prince George's unemployment rate of 4.3% in November 2013.

In British Columbia (BC), the number of full time jobs fell by 10,300 in December 2013, while part-time employment increased by 23,100. Employment in the private sector increased by 16,800 compared to 8,600 jobs in public sector. Across Canada, employment fell by 45,900 jobs in December. Employment rates in BC and across Canada were 59.6% and 61.6%, respectively, while Prince George was significantly higher than both, at 70.3%. In comparison to the British Columbia (6.6%), Alberta (4.8%), Manitoba (5.5%) and national (7.2%) unemployment rates, Prince George continued to stay below all of the provinces except for Saskatchewan (3.9%).

(Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey)

Real Estate

During 2013, a total of 1,291 properties were sold in Prince George compared to 1,244 properties in 2012. The average selling price of a single family dwelling went up from \$246,484 in 2012 to \$259,962 in 2013, an increase of 5.4%.

There were 183 units sold in Northern BC in December 2013, up 19.0% compared to December 2012. During 2013, sales totaled 4,177 units, up 3.0% from 2012. The annual average price of homes sold was 243,665, up 4.3% in contrast to the price in 2012. The total value of properties sold was \$46.3 million, up 34% compared to December 2012.

National home sales declined by 1.8% between November and December, but the average price rose by 10.4% on a year-over-year basis.

(Source: BC Northern Real Estate Board; Canadian Real Estate Association)

Housing Construction

During 2013 there were 195 new housing starts, out of which 140 were single family dwellings and 55 were multiple dwellings. In contrast to 2012, housing starts in 2013 were down by 7.5%. There were 17 housing starts in Prince George during December 2013 (16 single family dwellings and 1 multiple dwelling), compared to 10 during the same month in 2012.

(Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Building Permits

During 2013, the City of Prince George issued 91 building permits for single family dwellings, compared to 116 in 2012. The value of these permits amounted to \$40 million in 2013 compared to \$42 million for the permits issued in 2012. The value of commercial construction amounted to \$55 million in 2013, which is more than double the value in 2012 (\$25 million). Industrial permits were at \$17.0 million, which is off from \$34.2 million in 2012 during peak conditions.

A total of 487 building permits valued at \$116 million were issued during 2013. Of these numbers, 366 were for residential, 98 for commercial, 10 for institutional, and 11 for industrial buildings. The construction value of all building permits issued in 2013 was at the same level as in 2012.

(Source: City of Prince George; Statistics Canada)

Business Licenses

The City of Prince George received 4 new business license applications in December 2013 (2 new and 2 renewals). This was down from 15 applications in November. The City approved 324 business licenses in December.

(Source: City of Prince George)

Airport Passenger Volumes

The Prince George Airport (YXS) set a new record for annual passenger growth in 2013 with 426,709 passengers using the airport. This resulted in a 2.0% increase compared to 2012 levels. A total of 37,018 passengers moved through the Prince George Airport in December 2013, 5.3% more than in November.

(Source: Prince George Airport Authority)