



August 2012



Employment activity over the first seven months of 2012 has been considerably strong in Prince George; in July, the number of persons employed reached the highest level for any month on current record.¹ Over the past six months, the level of employment increased by a monthly average of 0.5%; in July, there were 3.3% more persons employed in the city than there were in January and 2.0% more than in July of 2011.

The city's labour force has also been increasing alongside growing employment, reflecting the attraction of persons into the local workforce in response to strong economic activity and ever-increasing employment opportunities in Prince George and throughout the region. The monthly increase in the labour force averaged 0.3% over the last six months for an overall increase of 1.9% since January and 2.1% compared to the same month last year.

Goods-producing sectors have led the increase in employment throughout 2012;² over the past six months, the combined number of persons employed in these sectors increased at a monthly average of 10.4%, for a total increase of 79.3% since January. Manufacturing and Construction accounted for the majority of goods-producing employment in July, with 6,400

and 4,900 persons employed, respectively. Employment growth in these sectors has increased at a monthly average of 15.7% and 7.8%, respectively, throughout 2012.

... ever-increasing employment opportunities in Prince George and throughout the region ...

Compared to July 2011, Manufacturing employment was up 23.1% and Construction employment was up 2.1% last month. Employment in Forestry, Mining and Oil & Gas has increased at a monthly average of 10.3% over the past six months; with 3,900 persons employed, the level of employment has nearly doubled since the same month last year.³

Despite the attraction of individuals into the labour force, the rate of employment growth in the city continues to exceed increases in the workforce and employment demand in a large number of sectors far exceeds the available supply of workers. In addition to the strong demand for skilled tradespeople, a considerable number of jobs are available for truck drivers, engineers, doctors and nurses, as well as senior managers and supervisors across all sectors.

The insufficient supply of qualified persons to fill available positions is dampening the impact of strong economic conditions on

employment. The level of employment reflects only the number of persons employed; it does not capture the number of jobs that are available to be filled. As such, the current level of employment in the city fails to fully capture the range of job opportunities available in Prince George and the surrounding region.

The ability of employers to fill available positions is critical to ensuring that local businesses have the capacity to take on additional work. As economic activity continues to accelerate throughout the region, staffing levels will be one of the most important factors enabling local businesses to capitalize on economic opportunities.

Initiatives Prince George has developed new recruitment and retention resources that promote the qualities that differentiate Prince George from other communities, making it a preferred place to live and work. These resources will be available for use by employers to assist in the attraction of skilled workers to available jobs. The materials will be officially launched at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon on September 5th. For more details and to [register](http://www.pgchamber.bc.ca), visit: www.pgchamber.bc.ca.

¹ Current annual labour force statistics date back to 1996; Initiatives Prince George has been tracking monthly statistics since 2006.

² Goods-producing sectors include Agriculture, Forestry, Mining and Oil & Gas, Utilities, Construction and Manufacturing.

³ The Agriculture and Utilities sectors each employ fewer than 1,500 persons; employment numbers are suppressed and cannot be estimated.



ECONOMIC UPDATE

Economic Statistics

Employment

50,600 persons were employed in Prince George in July, up 600 (1.2%) from the previous month. The labour force increased by 500 persons (0.9%), leading the number of unemployed persons to decline by 2.7% and the unemployment rate to decrease 0.3% (to 6.6%). In BC, the number of persons employed and in the labour force decreased by 0.6% and 0.2%, respectively. Subsequently, the number of unemployed persons increased by 5.4% and the unemployment rate increased 0.4% (to 7.0%). Across Canada, the number of employed persons decreased 0.2% while the labour force was relatively unchanged; the number of unemployed persons increased by 1.7% and the unemployment rate increased 0.1% (to 7.3%). Prince George's working age population was unchanged last month; the employment rate increased 0.9% (to 71.3%). Employment rates declined 0.5% in BC and 0.2% across Canada, to 60.4% and 61.7%, respectively.

(Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey)

Real Estate

89 single family homes were sold in the city in July, 7 more than in the same month in 2011, with an average price of \$262,449. Year-to-date, the average house price was up 1.4% compared to the first seven months of 2011; unit sales were up 10.7%. Comparatively, the year-to-date average price of a single family home was down 9.4% in BC; units were down 7.9%. In Canada, the average price was relatively



unchanged compared to July 2011; units were up 4.5%.

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



Housing Construction

There were 30 housing starts in Prince George last month (28 single and 2 multiple units), 21 more than in July 2011. Year-to-date starts were up 46.2%, compared to the first seven months of 2011. Comparatively, starts were up 9.0% and 14.9%, in BC and Canada, respectively, at the end of July. There were 12 residential units completed in the city (all single family dwellings), 8 more than in the same month last year. 171 housing units were under construction last month (129 single family and 42 multiple dwelling units); 9.0% fewer than in the same month in 2011.

(Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Building Permits

The City of Prince George issued 65 building permits valued at \$9.8M in July. The value of permits issued was down 41.8% compared to the same month last year; the number of permits issued was down 9.7%. Year-to-date, the value of permits issued by the City was up 72.4% at the end of July; the number of permits was up 11.4%. Commercial building permits accounted for 63.9% of the total value of permits issued in the city last month, with the \$4.7M permit for the Target renovation at Pine Centre Mall making up 74.7% of the category. 15.5% of the remaining Commercial permits

were issued for tenant improvements to downtown properties. Projects include renovations for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, BC Housing, Telus and the Post Office building on 5th Avenue. Residential permits made up 35.9% of the value of permits issued, with 12 new single family dwellings making up 84.2% of the category. Institutional permits made up the remainder of the value of permits issued. The value of building permits was up 19.1% in BC and 9.1% across Canada at the end of June.

(Source: City of Prince George; Statistics Canada)

Business Licenses

The City of Prince George issued 78 business licenses in July (30 new⁴ and 48 renewals). 6 of the new licenses were a result of businesses changing location.

(Source: City of Prince George)

Airport Passenger Volumes

33,394 passengers moved through the Prince George airport in June, 2.8% more than in June 2011. Year-to-date passenger traffic through the airport was up 6.0% compared to the first six months of 2011. Comparatively, traffic through Vancouver's airport was up 4.1% at the end of June.

(Source: Prince George Airport Authority; Vancouver Airport Authority)



⁴ New business licenses are issued when a new business is established, when a business is re-established after not operating for a period of time and when a business changes ownership or relocates.