



Halifax Labour Market Monitor



~February 2011~

This is an overview of the Halifax Region which includes all of Halifax County. It consists of dense urban areas, as well as less populated communities. The Halifax County line starts along the coast just west of Hubbards and runs along the coast including Dartmouth, Lawrencetown, Tangier, Sheet Harbour, and Moser River. Communities along the top of the border include Enfield, Milford, Upper Musquodoboit, and Dean.

The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report focusing on Labour Market Information.

Labour Force Trends

The labour market in Halifax improved slightly on a year over year basis. The labour force in the region increased by 1,300 from February 2010 to February 2011, while employment in the region increased slightly (300) over the period. The employment growth reflected an increase in full time work of 1,100 that was offset by a decrease of almost a thousand in part time work. With the labour force expanding faster than employment, the unemployment level rose on a year over year basis (1,100) and the unemployment rate increased to 6.6 percent this month compared to 6.2 percent in the same period last year.

For more information, please visit the Statistics Canada website at:

<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfs05b-eng.htm>

Halifax	Feb	
	2010	2011
Region: 250		
Labour Force (000)	233.8	235.1
Employed (000)	219.2	219.5
Full Time	176.1	177.2
Part Time	43.2	42.3
Unemployed (000)	14.5	15.6
Participation Rate (%)	70.4	69.7
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.2	6.6

Data is 3 month moving average from the Labour Force Survey - Statistics Canada

Labour Market News by Industry

Accommodation and Food services

A new Halifax waterfront restaurant called **The Bicycle Thief** (<http://bicyclethief.ca>) was opened by the Bertossi Restaurant Group this month at 1475 Lower Water Street. The location formerly belonged to Bish World Cuisine and while most of Bish's staff returned, additional staff were also hired to work at the 5,600 square-foot location. The company employs about 140 people and also owns other restaurants in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. (Chronicle Herald, February 24)

Education

The **Nova Scotia Community College** (www.nsc.ca) announced this month that it will discontinue its machinist program in Halifax, once the 17 students currently enrolled in the program at the Leeds Street campus complete their programs. According to the college's dean of trades and technology, the college is adjusting to increasing demand for other programs and will still offer machinist training through the Pictou and Kingstec campuses. Some local employers stated that properly trained operators are hard to find, and that many

machinist graduates in Pictou and Kentville only want to work near home.
(Chronicle Herald, February 18)

Economic Conditions

Nova Scotia's unemployment rate dropped to 9.5 percent in January, compared to 10.4 percent in December 2010, according to **Statistics Canada** (www.statcan.gc.ca). Based on their numbers another 6,200 jobs were added in January, while 4,300 fewer people in Nova Scotia were unemployed when compared to December. The wholesale and retail trade had an increase of 4,200, the finance, insurance, real estate and leasing sector were up 1,200 jobs, and agriculture added 600 jobs. Nationally the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent.
(Chronicle Herald, February 5)

Health Care

Due to a \$3.1 million deficit, **Capital Health** (www.capitalhealth.ca) has enacted a hiring slowdown, meaning that non-urgent vacancies won't be filled and new positions won't be created or approved. According to a spokesperson, the deficit won't affect access to services.
(Chronicle Herald, February 3)

The **Dalhousie Medical School** (www.medicine.dal.ca) is looking to increase its research faculty from 83 to 100 people, but has to double its research funding for that to happen. The school currently pulls in about \$50 million each year for research, but with shrinking budgets, the medical school is looking to develop more co-operative efforts and take advantage of grants from private fundraising organizations. According to the dean, the research work creates economic spin-offs for the Halifax area and the province.
(Chronicle Herald, February 24)

Manufacturing

Enfield's **Ledwidge Lumber Co. Ltd.** (www.ledwidge.com) will receive a \$1.5-million loan from the provincial **Industrial Expansion Fund**, allowing the company to secure an inventory of logs prior to the spring season, when poor road conditions can halt deliveries. Ledwidge is Nova Scotia's third largest sawmill and employs 100 people when fully operational.
(Chronicle Herald, February 23)

Scanwood Canada Ltd. won court approval this month to get a \$1 million operating loan to help increase production and keep about 220 people working at its Burnside Park plant. The bankrupt company has been working on a restructuring plan and recently laid off 14 employees. Court documents, prior to this latest loan, indicate Scanwood owes creditors more than \$12 million. A Royal Bank spokesperson, said it was unfair to add more debt when the furniture maker was about to collapse.
(Chronicle Herald, February 26)

Halifax's **Propeller Brewing Company** (www.drinkpropeller.ca) is looking to increase production by 15 or 20 percent in 2011, with the help of a new bottling line. According to Propeller's owner, the company has been adding fermenters every year since it was founded in the summer of 1997, and now produces about ten times the amount of beer it did in its first year. Propeller employs 22 people at its Gottingen Street location, and with the installation of a new rinser and a rebuilt filler in November, effectively doubled the brewery's packaging speed.
(Chronicle Herald, February 2)

Public Administration

Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service (www.halifax.ca/fire/) announced it will scrap its list of 94 eligible applicants at the end of December 2011, due to a low number of minorities on the list. There have

been 54 applicants hired from the list since October 2008, with the possibility of another 20 people being hired off the list this April. According to a spokesperson, if the list was retained, the department would not be able to meet its commitment to employment equity and no new applicants could apply. While new applicants will have to pay up to \$1,000 in fees for tests, current applicants on the list won't have to pay any fees if they choose to reapply.

(Chronicle Herald, February 5)

Real Estate

According to the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation –CMHC** (www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca) Nova Scotia reported a 0.4 percent increase in residential sales from 2009 to 2010. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) saw new home sales increase by 6.6 percent in 2010 compared to 2009, while existing home sales over the same period, dropped 1.7 percent. New home construction in the HRM increased 38 percent for the year compared to 2009 and the average sale price rose by 5.9 percent over the year. CMHC expects that Halifax will experience modest declines in 2011, with singles construction forecasted to drop by 7.5 percent and apartment construction to increase by 10 percent. Halifax is expected to be the main driver of growth in Nova Scotia, due to some large projects and contracts. (Chronicle Herald, February 4)

Trade

New vehicle sales in Nova Scotia were down 0.5 percent in 2010 when compared with 2009, according to **Statistics Canada** (www.statcan.gc.ca). Nova Scotia was the only province to see a decline in sales, while the number of new vehicles sold nationally rose 6.7 percent in 2010. One car dealer speculated that the closure of several large dealerships across the province in 2010 and the rise in the harmonized sales tax, may have contributed to the decline in sales. (Chronicle Herald, February 5)

A company spokesperson announced this month that **The Bay** department store at the West End Mall in Halifax will close at the end of April. It was not revealed what would become of the two-storey location or its employees, although the company said it would explore alternative positions within its other stores. Last month **Hudson's Bay Company** (www.hbc.com) announced that it was selling leasing rights to more than 200 Zellers locations to Target Corp. (Chronicle Herald, February 5)

Retail sales in Nova Scotia increased by five percent in 2010 compared to the previous year, according to **Statistics Canada** (www.statcan.gc.ca). Overall sales figures for 2010 were \$12.7 billion. Sales in July 2010 dropped 5 percent, following the increase in the harmonized sales tax, when compared to July 2009. (Chronicle Herald, February 5)

Utilities

According to the president of **Heritage Gas** (www.heritagegas.com), a shortage of gas pipe fitters is posing a distribution challenges in the province, with thousands of customers waiting for gas. The company has been working with the **Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education Department**, as well as the **Nova Scotia Community College** to address the shortfall. Dalhousie University recently converted to natural gas thanks to a \$1.4-million contribution from the provincial Gas Market Development Fund. Heritage has 3,000 customers in Halifax Regional Municipality, Amherst and the area around Halifax Stanfield International Airport. (Chronicle Herald, February 15)

Note: In preparing this document, Service Canada has taken care to provide clients with labour market information from reliable sources 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 Service Canada.

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