



# Halifax Labour Market Monitor

~June 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

Employment levels dropped slightly in the Halifax area over the past 12 months as full-time employment losses were largely off-set by part-time gains. A decline in the area's participation rate has resulted in very little change in the size of the area's labour force even as the working age population in the area continues to grow.

<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfss05b-eng.htm>

Halifax	June	
Region: 250	2010	2011
Labour Force (000)	238.7	238.5
Employed (000)	224.4	223.8
Full Time	185.5	182.6
Part Time	38.9	41.1
Unemployed (000)	14.3	14.7
Participation Rate (%)	71.6	70.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.0	6.2

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

## Labour Market News by Industry

### Accommodation and Food

Halifax-based hotel owner and operator **Royal Host Inc.** ([www.royalhost.com](http://www.royalhost.com)) announced that it lost \$4.6 million in the 1st quarter of 2011, compared to a net loss of almost \$2.2 million during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2010. Halifax-based Holloway Lodging Real Estate Investment Trust, the owner and operator of limited service lodging facilities and full service hotels, also recorded a 1st quarter loss of \$3.2 million in 2011. Both companies had generated greater hotel revenues in 2011, compared to the same quarter in 2010. (Chronicle-Herald, June 11)

In January 2012, the **Citadel Halifax Hotel** ([www.citadelhalifax.com](http://www.citadelhalifax.com)) will close for about 18 months while undergoing a multimillion-dollar makeover. The closure will result in 80 people losing their jobs. The Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union is filing a grievance about the layoff on behalf of the 60 hotel staff it represents. **SilverBirch Hotels and Resorts**, which owns the 171 room hotel on Brunswick Street, plans to rebrand the hotel with a major hotel such as Marriott, Hilton or Sheraton. (Chronicle-Herald, June 10)

**Baton Rouge Restaurant & Bar** ([www.batonrougerestaurants.com](http://www.batonrougerestaurants.com)), a rib and steak restaurant chain, opened this month in the historic Morse's Tea building at the corner of Upper Water and Hollis street in Halifax. The 6,000 square-foot restaurant has almost 80 employees and is the first Baton Rouge location in Atlantic Canada and is the chain's 30th Canadian location.

(Chronicle-Herald, June 14)

### Economic Conditions

An **RBC Provincial Outlook** (<http://bit.ly/8th5MZ>) released this month is projecting that **Nova Scotia's economy** will grow by 1.7 percent in 2011, slightly lower than the growth experienced in 2010. Alberta and Newfoundland are placed well ahead of Nova Scotia, with projected growth levels of 4.3 percent and 4.0 percent respectively. With the start of several new major construction projects and an increase in energy production from the Deep Panuke offshore natural gas project, Nova Scotia is projected to grow by 2.0 percent in 2012. (Chronicle-Herald, June 10)

According to an annual **Major Projects Inventory** released by the **Atlantic Provinces Economic Council - APEC** ([www.apec-econ.ca](http://www.apec-econ.ca)), the amount of spending on large projects in Nova Scotia will drop 8 percent in 2011. A major project is considered to be at least \$25 million. The majority of the projects (61 percent) are in Newfoundland and Labrador, followed by Nova Scotia, with 21 percent. APEC has identified 130 major ventures underway in Nova Scotia for 2011, mainly in electricity projects and in the housing sector. The two largest projects underway are the \$1 billion Bedford West housing development and the \$960-million Deep Panuke offshore natural gas project. (Chronicle-Herald, June 07)

**Canada's annual inflation rate** rose to 3.7 percent mainly due to large increases in gasoline prices, with **Nova Scotia** recording the greatest annual increase among all the provinces at 4.6 percent. A provincial politician pinned the blame on the HST hike in Nova Scotia, which has the highest HST in the country. Statistics Canada ([www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)) reported that consumer prices in Canada rose by 0.7 percent in May compared to the previous month. (Chronicle-Herald, June 30)

### Education

The **Halifax Regional School Board** ([www.hrsb.ns.ca](http://www.hrsb.ns.ca)) passed its \$399 million budget without having to layoff any teachers. However, literacy programs and math coaching for teachers were cut in the budget, while teacher retirements and other attrition is expected to save additional money. Thirty-two central office positions and four positions with the Youth Pathways and Transition program were also cut. (Chronicle-Herald, June 09)

### Finance and Insurance

East Coast Credit Union and Heritage Credit Union have received regulatory approval, as of July 1, to amalgamate as **East Coast Credit Union** ([www.eastcoastcreditunion.ca](http://www.eastcoastcreditunion.ca)). The amalgamated financial institution will have 30,000 members in Halifax Regional Municipality, Hants, Colchester, Antigonish, Guysborough, Inverness, Richmond and Victoria counties. (Chronicle Herald, June 23)

### Health Care

Local 22 of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union has reached a tentative contract agreement with the **IWK Health Centre** ([www.iwk.nshealth.ca](http://www.iwk.nshealth.ca)) in Halifax. The union represents 750 employees at the IWK, including medical lab technologists and nursing, mental health care and information technology workers. (Chronicle Herald, June 24)

## **Manufacturing**

Dartmouth-based **Ultra Electronics Maritime Systems** ([www.ultra-uems.ca](http://www.ultra-uems.ca)) won a \$7-million contract to install automated degaussing systems on the navy's 12 Halifax-class frigates. According to Ultra's president, the contract will help maintain the roughly 190 jobs at the company and possibly add a few more. The firm's main work is with sonar, but Ultra hopes there will be additional work opportunities with the navy. (Chronicle Herald, June 30)

## **Armament Technology Inc.**

([www.armament.com](http://www.armament.com)) of Dartmouth landed a contract with the Defence Department, which will be worth \$4.3 million in its first year and could be worth nearly \$22 million over five years. Armament will supply optical sighting and ranging equipment to be used on a standard Canadian service rifle and the contract allows for four one-year contract extensions to supply 5,000 units annually. The company does all final assembly, testing and quality control here in Nova Scotia and its partner, Raytheon Canada, does most of the manufacturing. Armament employs business professionals, engineers, technologists, and technicians, but will not be hiring additional staff to fulfill the contract. (Chronicle Herald, June 02)

## **Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction**

Halifax junior mining company, **Acadian Mining Corp.** ([www.acadianmining.com](http://www.acadianmining.com)), has started exploring for gold at Fifteen Mile Stream on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore. The initial drilling program will take until August to complete and is part of a comprehensive exploration plan, which will include Acadian's other Nova Scotia sites at Beaver Dam, Golden Seal, and FMS Trend. (Chronicle Herald, June 24)

## **Public Administration**

The nearly 80 lifeguards who work for the provincially funded **Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service** ([www.nsls.ns.ca](http://www.nsls.ns.ca)) are dissatisfied with the province's latest contract offer, which would pay them about a dollar less than their counterparts in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Lifeguards working provincial beaches would earn in the range of \$10.81 to \$11.02 per hour, while their HRM counterparts would make up to \$13.25 per hour. Acting and full-time beach captains with the province would make between \$11.12 and \$12.15, while HRM beach captains earn up to \$14.25 per hour. Under the new contract, lifeguards would have to cover 60 percent of their training costs, as opposed to 80 percent under the old contract. A ratification vote on the contract is expected to occur within a month's time. (Chronicle Herald, June 10)

## **Professional, Scientific and Technical Services**

### **Atlantic Flushing & Testing Inc.**

([www.atlanticflushing.com](http://www.atlanticflushing.com)) of Dartmouth has been awarded an \$800,000 contract to do repair, refit and conversion work on the coast guard icebreaker Sir William Alexander. Atlantic Flushing specializes in pressure testing, cleaning and flushing of piping systems and is part of the Guildfords Group of Companies ([www.guildfords.com](http://www.guildfords.com)). (Chronicle Herald, June 10)

## **Real Estate**

The **Nova Scotia Association of Realtors -NSAR** ([www.nsar-mls.ca](http://www.nsar-mls.ca)) reported that residential properties in Nova Scotia went up in price by an average of 2.2 percent from February to April 2011, compared to the same period in 2010. Home sales through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) in Nova Scotia decreased by 9.6 percent during this time. The Halifax-Dartmouth Region heavily impacted the Nova Scotia total, with Halifax experiencing a 10.9 percent drop in sales during this period as well. (Chronicle Herald, June 03)

According to **Cushman & Wakefield Atlantic** ([www.cweast.com](http://www.cweast.com)) in its first-quarter 2011 office market update, the office vacancy rate in Halifax's central business district is now at 8.7 percent. In 2010, the vacancy rate rose 2.3 percentage points over the year, but the first quarter of 2011 saw 33,000 square feet of office space taken off the market in downtown Halifax. The number of suburban developments continues to present challenges for downtown developers, as well as the benefit of lower taxes and greater parking offered in the suburbs. The overall vacancy rate in Dartmouth and Bedford for the first quarter was 11.4 percent and 16.4 percent respectively. (Chronicle Herald, June 21)

## Trade

**Big Eric's Inc.** ([www.bigerics.ca](http://www.bigerics.ca)), a large distributor of food service and sanitation equipment and supplies, has bought Janitor's Market Inc. in Burnside Park.

**Janitor's Market** (<http://janitorsmarket.com>) employs 11 staff at its 10,000-square-foot retail store and warehouse. There will be no loss of staff, but the business name is expected to change down the road. (Chronicle Herald, June 14)

*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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