



Halifax Labour Market Monitor

~August 2010~



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 in Halifax increased slightly (700) in August 2010 compared with the same month last year. The increases in part-time work (2,900) accounted for the employment gains, while full-time employment declined by 2,200 in August compared with the same month last year. There was a slight decrease in the labour force during the same period. With employment growth and a declining labour force, the level of unemployment decreased by 1,000 on a year-over-year basis and the unemployment rate declined from 6.9 percent to 6.4 percent this month.

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

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

Halifax	August	
	2009	2010
Region: 250		
Labour Force (000)	234.9	234.6
Employed (000)	218.8	219.5
Full Time	184.9	182.7
Part Time	33.9	36.8
Unemployed (000)	16.1	15.1
Participation Rate (%)	73.1	72.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.9	6.4

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

Labour Market News by Industry

Agriculture Forestry Fishing and Hunting

Nova Scotia apple growers are getting an early start on their harvest season, with farmers picking their crops at least a week earlier this year. According to a spokesperson with the **Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association** (www.nsapples.com), there is good local demand for apples, especially with recent marketing efforts to promote locally grown products. Growers are also in the final year of a five-year tree replacement program, where old orchards are being replaced with the new Honeycrisp variety of apples, which offers farmers greater market opportunities. (Chronicle-Herald, August 27)

Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction

ExxonMobil's announcement that it will not extend the life of the \$2-billion **Sable natural gas project** has numerous local businesses exploring other opportunities. Halifax's **Marener Industries** (www.marener.ca) has completed millions of dollars worth of steel fabrication on the Sable project, but has now ventured into renewable energy work, aluminum boat building, and is in the process of becoming qualified to build high-pressure tanks like those found in refineries and pulp mills. Dartmouth's **Parker Kaefer Inc** (www.parkerkaefer.com), which does insulation, painting and fireproofing on gas platforms, is now focused on the Newfoundland offshore. **Survival Systems**, which employs about 30 people at its Dartmouth facility, is also looking at the growing market in Newfoundland for its training expertise. Even the hotel business in Halifax is predicted by some to drop by one or two



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percentage points when Sable stops production. (Chronicle-Herald, August 09)

Manufacturing

Almost 250 workers with **Farmers Cooperative Dairy** (www.farmersdairy.ca) have accepted a new three year contract, ending a six-week labour dispute. The trades, machine operators, shippers, truck drivers and merchandisers are represented by Local 40N of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (www.cep.ca). No details were provided other than pay increases were negotiated. The median wage at the Bedford processing plant on Hammonds Plains Road was \$20.71 an hour prior to the dispute. Ten to twelve workers will still be laid off, but the union president is hopeful they will be re-hired as workers retire.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 21)

RKO Steel (www.rkosteel.com) of Dartmouth, is the first recipient of the province's new manufacturing and processing investment credit, with its \$450,000 purchase of a new saw and drill line. The credit, which provides a 10 percent rebate on purchases up to \$1 million, became effective January 1, 2010. Sawing and drilling structural steel has been the bottleneck in the RKO manufacturing process. The new equipment has eliminated the problem and enabled the company to hire about 30 more people to work with the 50 already employed at its 5,000-square-foot plant in Burnside Park. The company already employs about 200 people and has another facility on MacDonald Avenue in Dartmouth.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 14)

Dartmouth windmill manufacturer, **Seaforth Energy Inc.** (<http://seaforthenergy.ca>), bought the assets of a troubled Prince Edward Island competitor that went bankrupt last year. Seaforth currently builds turbines at its 10,000-square-foot Woodside facility, but hopes to expand production to build as many as 50 to 70 turbines a year.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 06)

Trade

Two Halifax DJs have opened a clothing shop at 5181 Sackville Street in Halifax, called **24 twenty eight** (www.24twentyeight.com). The store sells streetwear and casual wear and plan to market their fashions by offering DJ services for advertising.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 31)

Loblaw Companies Ltd. is closing its Halifax Distribution Centre in Lakeside and consolidating its distribution operations at the company's larger Lakeside Distribution Centre located nearby. The Halifax Distribution Centre is expected to close by October 9, potentially putting about 115 people out of work. The grocery chain has indicated they will try to find positions for those being displaced. The decision to streamline operations was due to a distribution over-capacity in the region.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 13)

Divers World Ltd (www.diversworld.ns.ca), a Halifax diving supply company, has won a contract supplying spare parts for the navy's diving helmets. The two-year standing offer could be worth as much as \$650,000, with options to extend for a third and fourth year.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 04)

The **Carroll Pontiac Buick GMC Hummer** dealership in Halifax has closed its doors after more than 20 years in business. Located at 44 Bedford Highway, as many as 60 workers will lose their jobs as a result of the closure. According to staff at the dealership, business has been slow and a deal to get a Chevrolet franchise recently fell through. GM announced last year that it would eliminate more than one-third of its Canadian dealerships by October.
(Chronicle-Herald, August 27)

The first **Bath & Body Works** (www.bathandbodyworks.com) store in Atlantic Canada opened at Mic Mac Mall in Dartmouth this month. This is the brand's 41st Canadian

retail store, which specializes in luxurious products, world-class fragrances and gifts for every occasion. (Chronicle-Herald, August 11)

Transportation and Warehousing

Jazz Air (www.flyjazz.ca) will launch winter service to the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America on behalf of Thomas Cook Canada. The airline has begun to hire more pilots for at least six Boeing 757-200 aircraft that will serve southern destinations through to April. Flight crew training will begin in September. (Chronicle-Herald, August 05)

Halifax Port Authority (www.portofhalifax.ca) expects up to 250,000 visitors on 130 vessels before the cruise ship season winds down in October, compared to 228,000 visitors and 118 vessels last year. The fall is the peak season in the region and accounts for approximately 65 percent of total cruise ship visits. According to the manager of cruise development at the port, about 95 percent of passengers disembark while in port, which benefits the retail, service and hospitality sectors. (Chronicle-Herald, August 12)

Finance and Insurance

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (www.cibc.com) will close its bank at Wyse Road on November 19, with existing accounts being transferred to either Dartmouth Crossing or the Portland Street branch. A full-service automated banking machine will be installed nearby at a Save-Easy grocery store and all staff will be redeployed to existing branches. (Chronicle-Herald, August 26)

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Romor Atlantic Ltd. (www.romor.ca) in Dartmouth was awarded an order to anchor 50 seabed mooring devices to the seabed for Dalhousie University's Ocean Tracking Network, using their own mooring technology. Another 400 to 800 of these moorings will eventually be required across Canada, which monitor movements of various ocean species.

Romor has about eight people working on the order. (Chronicle-Herald, August 14)

Business Building and Other Support Services

Service Employees International Union announced that it is trying to organize **Securitas** (www.securitas.com/ca/) guards in the Halifax area. Local workers claim that poor wages and lack of training has created a lot of turnover in the industry. According to a Securitas guard, the average pay for Halifax guards with the company is \$10 to \$13 an hour, although it is rare for guards to earn \$13 an hour. It is estimated that Securitas has 175 guards in the Halifax area and 8,000 employees nationwide. (Chronicle-Herald, August 27)

Convergys Corp. (www.convergys.com) of Dartmouth is hiring another 100 employees to provide customer service support for a client in the telecommunications industry. Convergys said it offers employee training, medical and dental benefits, tuition reimbursement, as well as eight weeks of paid training. Pay starts at \$9.25 an hour and potential employees should have strong computer and keyboard skills, and be able to work flexible hours. The company has other Nova Scotia call centres in New Glasgow and Cornwallis, and will close its Truro location in September 2010. (Chronicle-Herald, August 06)

Health Care and Social Assistance

The **Canadian Union of Public Employees** (<http://cupe.ca/nova-scotia>), which represents 80 employees at Parkland at the Lakes in Dartmouth and 55 employees at Bissett Court in Cole Harbour, have filed for a conciliator to break a deadlock in negotiations with **Shannex Inc** (www.shannex.com). This is the first contract between the two parties, although the union represents workers in 37 facilities in Nova Scotia. (Chronicle-Herald, August 26)

Health Care and Social Assistance

Halifax-area psychiatrists have signed a new two-year contract with the **Nova Scotia Department of Health** (www.gov.ns.ca/health). The new contract focuses on hours of service, for both clinical work and teaching. According to the director of physician services for the Health Department, the new agreement would cover up to 75 psychiatrists, a goal they hope to reach through recruitment and retention. With a shortage of psychiatrists across the country, psychiatrists here will now be at a more competitive rate compared to their national counterparts, which may provide some staffing stability. The ballpark salary for a psychiatrist is now about \$300,000. Psychiatrists included in the agreement work at the **Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre**, the **IWK Health Centre** and **Dalhousie University**. (Chronicle-Herald, August 28)

Arts and Recreation

Alpha Strike Laser Tag (www.alphastrike.ca) held their grand opening at 202 Brownlow Avenue on Labour Day weekend. The new facility occupies two units at Cambridge Centre in Burnside and will offer jungle-themed laser tag arena, an arcade, and several party rooms for birthdays and corporate events. (Chronicle-Herald, August 24)

Public Administration

According to the **Atlantic Provinces Economic Council** (www.apec-econ.ca), 2,000 federal government jobs left Nova Scotia in the last two decades and were moved to Ottawa. In 2009 there were 13,800 federal government employees working in Nova Scotia and 10,350 in the military, a net loss of about 13 percent since 1992. Any substantial reduction in federal employment in the region, would have potentially sizable impacts on income and household spending. A senior economist with the think-tank also had concerns that national programs will not respond to provincial economic needs if

Federal employees continue to be concentrated in Ottawa. (Chronicle-Herald, August 27)

Nova Scotia's 7,760-member **Civil Service** (www.gov.ns.ca/pssc/) has accepted a two-year contract with the **Government of Nova Scotia** that will provide one percent annual wage increases and improved job security. Under the new contract, permanent employees who are losing their jobs will be offered new jobs earning at least 90 per cent of their old salary, if they are qualified. The contract is retroactive to April 1, 2010 and runs through to March 31, 2012. Civil servants work in areas such as natural resources, transportation, food and inspection services, social services, the courts, community services, highway safety, occupational health and safety, and Access Nova Scotia offices. (Chronicle-Herald, August 25)

Note: In preparing this Labour Market Monitor, 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. Readers 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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