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### Labour Force Statistics: October 2006

*All labour force statistics in this article are from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey. Data is seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated.*

- **BC's unemployment rate continued to fall between September (4.8%) and October (4.6%).** BC's unemployment rate has been decreasing almost steadily since February, 2005, when it reached 7.0%.
- Canada's unemployment rate also continued to decline. **Between September and October, Canada's unemployment rate declined from 6.4% to 6.2%.** At 6.2% in October 2006, Canada's unemployment rate is 0.4% less than it was one year ago.
- **BC currently has the fourth lowest unemployment rate of all the provinces,** with Alberta (3.0%), Saskatchewan (3.9%) and Manitoba (4.2%), as the only provinces with lower unemployment rates than BC.
- **Since October 2005, most regions of BC, with the exception of the Northeast and North Coast/Nechako regions, saw a decreased unemployment rate.** Currently, the highest unemployment rate is in the North Coast/Nechako (7.2%) and the lowest unemployment rate is in Abbotsford (4.0%)<sup>1</sup>.
- **The youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate increased slightly from 8.0% to 8.2% between September and October.** Over the same time period, the unemployment rate for those 25 years and older decreased from 4.2% to 3.9%.
- **BC's labour force increased by 9,900 persons over the last month.** Compared to one year ago, BC's labour force has increased by 57,300 persons. From September to October 2006, the number of unemployed in BC fell by 3,400 persons. As well, the number of unemployed has decreased by 8,000 persons as compared to one year ago.
- **An estimated 13,000 more workers were added to B.C.'s labour force in October, and total employment remained stable at a record 2.21 million.**
- **The participation rate of the labour force in BC increased to 65.8% in October from 65.6% in September.** Over the last year, the largest increase in participation was experienced by women aged 15-24. This group has seen an increase of 2.7% from October, 2005 (65.9%) to October, 2006 (68.6%).
- **In October, the provinces' employment rate (the ratio of the number of jobs available to the number of working age people) was improved at 62.7% compared to 62.4% in September.** October's employment rate of 62.7%, which matched the rate in March and April, 2006), is the highest rate since 2001.
- **BC's employment growth is improving.** Employment growth has increased to 0.6% in October, from 0.3% in September and -0.1% in August.
- Over the last month, **the Goods producing industries experienced a gain of 2,800 jobs** in October, with the highest growth in the Manufacturing (+4,300) sector.
- From September to October, **the Service producing industries experienced a gain of 10,500 jobs,** with highest growth in the Accommodation, Food and Beverage Industry (+5,400). On the other hand, the Retail and Wholesale Trade saw a loss of 5,100 jobs, with an annual loss of 17,300 jobs.

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<sup>1</sup> Actual data

Selected Statistics (seasonally adjusted)	October 2006	September 2006	October 2005
BC Unemployment Rate	4.6%	4.8%	5.1%
Canada Unemployment Rate	6.2%	6.4%	6.6%
BC Youth Unemployment Rate (ages 15-24)	8.2%	8.0%	8.2%
BC Ages 25+ Unemployment Rate	3.9%	4.2%	4.5%
BC Employment – Change from previous month	0.6%	0.3%	0.8%
BC Labour Force – Change from previous month	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
BC Labour Force Participation Rate	65.8%	65.6%	65.3%

### Feature: B.C. Unemployment Rates on Downward Trend

BC's unemployment rate has been declining since 2002, when it averaged 8.5%. In 2005, the province's average unemployment rate was significantly lower, at 5.9%.

As shown below, in 2002, the BC unemployment rate peaked in December, 2001, when it reached 10.0%. The unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing since that time, and the trend towards lower unemployment levels continues today. The current monthly unemployment rate is 4.6%.



Lower unemployment rates may be partially in response to a stronger economy. However, other factors, such as demography and migration are also key drivers that affect labour force participation and employment rates.

In upcoming years, population demographics will likely be the key to continuing low unemployment rates in BC. BC's population is getting older. In particular, the number of individuals set to retire (55-64 years) are expected to surpass the number of individuals entering the labour force (15-24 years)<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the new labour supply will not match those leaving the labour force. This trend is beginning to be felt now.

As a result, in future years, inter-provincial and international migration will play an important role in employment and unemployment rates, as these individuals will add to the size of the labour force and increase the number of individuals available to work.

<sup>2</sup> BC Stats