

ECONOMIC & LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PROJECT

CANADA ○ ALBERTA ○ MEDICINE HAT & AREA

Report No. 9

April 2011

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This report provides labour market and economic information prepared for use by the Economic Development Alliance of Southeast Alberta, Alberta Employment and Immigration, City of Medicine Hat, The Community Foundation of Medicine Hat & South-eastern Alberta, and Medicine Hat District Chamber of Commerce. The report aims to provide economic and labour market information pertaining to Medicine Hat and area in specific, as well as provincial and national information, relevant to the area.

In addition to the economic overview and labour market trends, the Quarterly report also includes a survey of local employers to cast light on their recruitment and retention practices, together with the documentation of other economic or labour market concerns they may have.

The information herein covers trends of data available for the month of April 2011.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This quarterly report has a few individuals and organizations to thank, whose input and insights have undoubtedly added value to the content of this report.

The participants of the employer survey are thanked profoundly for contributing to their community.

The professional experts at Natural Resources Canada, the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, and the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors are thanked profusely for graciously sharing their insights to be included in this report.

ECONOMY

In a dynamic economy, actions and activities at national and provincial levels have most certain effects at local and regional levels. This section provides information for economic activity at the national, provincial and local levels, for the month of April 2011.

C A N A D A

NATIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT INCREASES BY **3.3 %** IN 2010.

2010 GDP GROWTH: 3.1%

OVERNIGHT INTEREST RATE: **1.00%.**

OUTPUT GAP TO CLOSE BY 2012 END (revised from end of 2011).

Real gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter of 2011 grew 3.9%, after expanding 3.1% in the final quarter of 2010. Business and inventory investment contributed largely to growth. With the Canadian dollar as strong as it has been, businesses have largely been responsible for economic growth – a role that was previously played by consumption and government spending. Elevated debt levels, coupled with the prospects of a rising interest rate will play down the growth of consumption as a driving force

OVERNIGHT INTEREST RATE:

The Bank of Canada kept the overnight rate unchanged at 1.00% at its April 12, 2011 meeting. The last hike of 25 basis points was introduced in September 2010. The rate still remains historically low and is seen to be conducive to provide stimulus to the economy. Although there are signs of prospering times, the Bank is cautious and will not likely be increasing the rate anytime before the manifestation of such a time. Economists expect that not to come before the third quarter of 2011.

The overnight rate, and any subsequent changes to it, affects interest rates for products such as variable rate mortgages. An increase in this rate, by extension, would translate into reduced consumer spending, and business investment.

Bank of Canada reports that household debt has risen 148% of disposable income, as of summer 2010, due to low interest rates encouraging households to indulge in acquiring luxuries on credit. The Bank of Canada calculates that the dollar amount represented by home-equity lines of credit and loans has risen by as much as 170 percent. If the interest rates go up, or employment goes down, Canadians will find themselves in a dire situation. The probability of an adverse labour market shock materializing is assumed to have edged higher in recent months, largely due to the recent revisions to the outlook for the global and Canadian economy.

NATIONAL INFLATION: **3.3%.**

CORE RATE: **1.6%**

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX:

Consumer prices rose to 3.3% in April 2011, matching the previous month's pace of 3.3%, which constituted the largest year over year increase since September 2008. On a monthly basis, the consumer prices rose 0.3% in April 2011, following a gain of 0.8% in the previous month.

This is translated to the Canadian inflation being reported at 3.3%. Inflation rate refers to a general rise in prices measured against a standard level of purchasing power. The most well known measures of Inflation are the CPI which measures consumer prices, and the GDP deflator, which measures inflation in the whole of the domestic economy.

Energy prices rose 17.1% during the 12 months to April 2011, following a 12.8% increase in March 2011. Gasoline prices increased 26.4%. Excluding energy, the CPI rose 2.0% in the 12 months to April, whereas excluding gasoline, the CPI rose 2.2% in the 12 months to April. Prices increased in seven of the eight major components of the CPI in April. The only exception was clothing and footwear

Prices for natural gas fell 4.8% in the 12 months to April 2011.

The core rate, which strips out volatile-priced items such as food and energy, and which the Bank of Canada uses to assess the impact of inflation on the economy rose to 1.6% in the 12 months to April 2011. Although it is a decline from the previous month, the core rate remains higher than the Bank of Canada`s schedule 1.4% average for second quarter of 2011 (expected to be 1.7% in third quarter). On a month-to-month basis, the seasonally adjusted monthly core index rose 0.2% in April 2011 following a rise of 0.2% in March 2011.

Headline inflation is expected to be around 3% by the second quarter of 2011 on the back of rising commodity prices, although this jump is expected to be temporary.

Inflation in Canada averaged 1.8% in 2010.

HOUSING:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's *Preliminary Housing Start Data*, for April 2011, reports that Canadian housing starts in urban centers dropped 3.1% to 179,000 annualized units. Although on a monthly basis it is a decline, this figure is close to the average during the first four months of the year (178,500 units). Although single urban starts grew by 3.4%, multiple starts decreased by 5.1%, making overall urban starts fall by 1.9% to 160,100 units. Rural starts were 18,900 units in April.

NATIONAL HOUSING STARTS: **-3.1%.**

New Housing Price Index[1]: Statistics Canada's New Housing Price Index remained unchanged in March 2011 from February, when it had increased 0.4%, on a month-over-month basis. Year over year, the index was up 1.9% in March following a 2.1% increase in February.

According to RBC`s report on Housing Trends and Affordability, housing affordability, which quantifies the affordability of home ownership, has eroded slightly in the first quarter of 2011, after two consecutive quarterly improvements. Mortgage rates, whose low levels largely contributed to the enhanced affordability, were essentially muted during the first three months of the year. Furthermore, the Bank of Canada's campaign to normalize its interest rate policy this year would have the opposite effect and set affordability on a deteriorating track.

A L B E R T A

ALBERTA CPI: **3.0%.**

ALBERTA GDP 2010: **3.8%**

This section provides information on the Provincial economy.

ECONOMY:

Alberta`s GDP increased 3.8% in 2010, following a contraction of 4.8% in 2009. Mining and oil and gas extraction strengthened, with the strong energy prices, increasing 0.7%. Additionally, manufacturing and agriculture also advanced.

In Alberta, prices rose 3.0% in April 2011, following a 2.0% increase in March. The faster increase in April was primarily the result of a 59.6% gain in electricity prices. The large year-over-year increase in electricity costs in the province is partly explained by the fact that electricity prices in April 2010 were among the lowest recorded since 2005. Additionally, the recent closing of two power generation plants resulted in a significant reduction of electricity supply. Gasoline prices in Alberta rose by 24.0%. These trends contributed in making Alberta experience the highest rate of *monthly* inflationary growth among the provinces for April 2011, where the CPI increased by 1.2%.

RBC, in its Provincial Outlook of March 2011, paints a promising picture for the Albertan economy, asserting that capital investments will flow towards the province`s oilsands, fostering both central and peripheral economic activity. Furthermore, it forecasts the province to achieve real GDP growth of 4.3% in 2011, promoting Alberta to secure a spot among the top three provinces.

The average number of rigs drilling in Alberta was 123 in April 2011, down from 366 in March 2011. Drilling activity was 98.4% more than the numbers from April 2010. For the period January-April, activity was 41% higher than the same period last year.

[1] New Housing Price Index is designed to measure the changes in the selling prices of new houses where detailed specifications pertaining to each house remain the same between two consecutive periods. The prices collected from builders and included in the index are market selling prices less value added taxes, such as the Federal Goods and Services Tax or the Harmonized Sales Tax.

Petroleum Services Association of Canada updated its 2011 drilling activity forecast for Canada, reporting that Alberta would increase drilling by 7.5% - upto 8,732 wells. This higher revision is promising compared to the earlier forecast of 8,390 wells. The bulk of increase will be coming from surging crude prices. Association president for the Canadian association of oilwell drilling contractors reported that 530 rigs were in operation during the first three months of 2011, which, although 100 more than forecast, could have been more, *if there was not a lack of skilled labour.*

The Conference Board states that the energy industry will keep the goods-producing sector growing at a quick enough pace to offset another year of modest performance among services industries. The province is anticipating a creation of some 60,000 jobs in 2011, and some 66,000 in 2012. *The positive forecasts may also translate into higher migration into the province*. Real GDP for 2012 is predicted to advance 4.1%, and is being attributed to a probable strong service sector and a growing goods producing sector, complemented by an energized energy sector.

Natural gas prices are not expected to rebound in the imminent future. Although energy industry province wide had a good recovery in 2011, it was the year where oil drilling had exceeded natural gas. For 2011 Canadian association of oilwell drilling contractors anticipate an average of 356 drilling rigs, a utilization rate of 45 percent. Number of operating days is forecast to be 128,600 – an increase of 8 percent. [See Sector in focus below]

A study by the Fraser Institute, *Measuring Labour Markets in Canada and the United States: 2010 Edition*, employing an index of Labour market performance[2] identified the province of Alberta topping the list of North American labour market performance over the period of 2005-2009. Although that is reassuring, what is important is the finding that the *province has not fared well in terms of labour market flexibility,* based on indicators pertaining to level of public sector employment, level of minimum wages, degree of unionization, and labour relations laws.

The study finds that public sector employment in Canadian provinces, including Alberta, is relatively higher, which, the report asserts, tends to result in higher costs, lower average quality, and lower productivity. The report further goes on to say that lower productivity is particularly a concern since public sector workers tend to receive a wage premium. Additionally, a senior economist at the institute states that, "high minimum wages have been shown to reduce employment opportunities for young and low skilled workers and result in fewer fringe benefits and less on-the-job training."

HOUSING:

Alberta's April 2011 housing starts in urban centers, reported by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's *Preliminary Housing Start Data*, remained unchanged from the previous month's

[2] Labour market performance is a composite measure of labour market performance based on five equally weighted indicators: average total employment growth, average private sector employment growth, average unemployment rates, average duration of unemployment, and average labour productivity. The average was taken over the period of 2005-2009.

level, following a monthly decline of 8.1% in March 2011. Year over year, April`s housing starts decreased 25% from April 2010. Starts have likely been held back by the massive amount of supply put up in the heated days of 2006 and 2007, when starts averaged about 50,000 units.

Both sale of existing homes and construction of new ones have been muted thus far in the year. Stable and at times, declining prices kept affordability in check during the first quarter. For the first quarter of 2011, RBC Measures stood below their long-term average in all housing categories, indicating that there is *little stress in these markets*. Market conditions remained quite weak in the first quarter, making it a buyer's market.

According to RBC's housing report, homeownership in Alberta is among the more affordable in Canada both in absolute terms and relative to its historical averages. Such a high degree of affordability bodes well for a strengthening in housing demand, once the provincial job market sustains more substantial gains.

Based on the Housing Affordability measures produced by RBC, Alberta fared the highest (defined by a low numerical value of the measure) in all the categories of dwellings: detached, standard two storey and standard condominium.

New house prices in Alberta declined 0.1% in March. Compared to a year ago, new house prices in Alberta were 0.5% higher. Nationally, new house prices were 1.9% higher than a year ago. The housing component will most likely not be the contributor towards economic growth that it had been during much of 2009-2010.

The province's housing starts in urban centers, seasonally adjusted at annual rates[3], stood at 19,200.

BUILDING PERMITS

In March 2011, the value of Alberta's building permits decreased by 41.5% from the previous month to just over $800 million. This was more of coming back to a norm, than a disappointing drop, since the spike in February was entirely due to one project- the terminal at the Calgary International Airport.

Nationally, the value of building permits increased by 17.2% from the previous month, to just under $6.8 billion. Both nationally, and in Alberta, the residential segment posted an increase of 33.9% and 27.5% respectively.

[3] Monthly figures adjusted to remove normal seasonal variation and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels. By removing seasonal ups and downs, seasonal adjustment makes it possible to highlight the fundamental trends of a series. Reporting monthly figures at annual rates indicates the annual level of starts that would be obtained if the monthly pace was maintained for 12 months

TABLE 1: VALUE OF BUILDING PERMITS - CANADA & ALBERTA

	MARCH 2011	FEB 2011	MARCH-FEBRUARY	FEB - JAN	JAN-DEC	DEC-NOV	NOV-OCT	OCT-SEPT
	thousands of dollars		percentage change					
CANADA								
Total	6,797,993	5,801,726	17.2	9.8	-6.6	2.6	-11.2	-3.8
Residential	3,988,128	2,979,492	33.9	-18.3	-2.5	19.6	-8.5	-9.2
Non – residential	2,809,865	2,822,234	-0.4	72.7	-14.5	-19.7	-14.6	3.7
ALBERTA								
Total	867,902	1,483,164	-41.5	112.7	-19.6	0.0	1.2	1.5
Residential	560,395	439,365	27.5	-4.1	-1.9	4.9	-8.8	1.5
Non – residential	307,507	1,043,799	-70.5	337.0	-40.2	-5.1	14.5	1.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Building Permits, May 2011. Tables 1,2,3.

TABLE 2: BUILDING PERMITS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 2011 – CANADA AND ALBERTA

	Number of dwelling units			Estimated value of construction		
	Singles	Multiple	Total dwellings	Residential	Non-residential	Total
	Units			thousands of dollars		
CANADA						
February	6,798	6,731	13,529	2,979,492	2,822,234	5,801,726
March	6,672	10,469	17,141	3,988,128	2,809,865	6,797,993
Cumulative Jan. to Mar. 2010	26,939	25,982	52,921	11,496,712	5,749,010	17,245,722
Cumulative Jan. to Mar. 2011	20,803	27,755	48,558	10,616,326	7,266,588	17,882,914
Monthly percentage change	-1.85%	55.53%	26.70%	33.85%	-0.44%	17.17%
Yearly Jan-Mar %age change	-22.78%	6.82%	-8.24%	-7.66%	26.40%	3.69%
ALBERTA						
February	1,115	560	1,675	439,365	1,043,799	1,483,164
March	1,257	1,168	2,425	560,395	307,507	867,902
Cumulative Jan. to Mar. 2010	5,168	1,525	6,693	1,860,688	1,018,619	2,879,307
Cumulative Jan. to Mar. 2011	3,635	2,128	5,763	1,458,067	1,590,146	3,048,213
Monthly percentage change	12.74%	108.57%	44.78%	27.55%	-70.54%	-41.48%
Yearly Jan-Mar %age change	-29.66%	39.54%	-13.90%	-21.64%	56.11%	5.87%

Source: Statistics Canada, Building Permits, May 2011. Table 5.

Market rankings for trades and occupations in Alberta, published by the construction sector council's *Construction looking forward*, *Alberta (2009-2017)* indicate that there will be limited availability of workers for predominantly all construction related trades and occupations and the publication asserts that employers will need to compete to attract additional and appropriate labour.

POPULATION:

In the fourth quarter of 2010, Alberta had a net interprovincial migration gain of 2,510 people. This was up from the gain of 1,155 in the third quarter. The province had lost 2,200 since 2009. Interprovincial migration occurs primarily due to economic and social conditions. In Canada, interprovincial migration principally occurs due to job prospects. Hence, an increase in this number may rightly so be interpreted as an improvement as well as the perception of improvement in the economic dimension of the destination province.

As of January 1, 2011, Alberta's population was estimated at 3,742,753 representing growth of 1.4% from a year earlier. While this was the slowest annual growth rate since 1995 for Alberta, it was still above the national average of 1.1%.

A Pricewaterhouse-Coopers report, prepared for the government in June 2010, warned that Alberta lags other provinces in measurements of access to venture capital, innovation, productivity growth and university graduates.

M E D I C I N E   H A T   A N D   A R E A

ECONOMY:

Business licenses issued in April 2011 nudged up to 42. Compared to last year, the business licences issued during the first four months of 2011 have been lower than those issued during the same time last year. It should be noted that these numbers are not reflective of 'active' business, but merely licences issued.

TABLE 3: MEDICINE HAT BUSINESS LICENSES

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
January	34	36	53	34	49	33	46	44	54	47	34	33
February	32	26	34	30	36	31	41	38	38	31	34	25
March	45	34	32	45	45	44	60	46	45	72	52	41
April	37	25	45	45	54	52	57	48	64	64	45	42
May	40	29	37	44	35	55	87	67	49	55	56	...
June	34	32	31	48	42	56	54	64	54	45	41	...
July	40	33	35	30	36	49	27	34	40	42	34	...
August	40	45	31	39	36	57	46	61	29	35	47	...
September	27	20	45	40	45	43	35	41	46	44	30	...
October	42	40	43	29	39	39	31	39	63	34	39	...
November	25	38	31	25	45	30	59	35	38	27	39	...
December	16	18	37	34	34	22	23	27	18	32	42	...
Total	412	376	454	443	496	511	566	544	538	528	493	141

Source: Month end statistics, Business Support Office, City of Medicine Hat – for April 2011

HOUSING:

The housing market, after proving to be a powerful economic driver in the previous years, will most likely not serve as strong a function as it had in the past. April 2011's numbers for both starts and completions are down year to year by double digits. However, dwelling starts in Medicine Hat increased substantially from the previous month – 140%. That may well be attributed to construction waiting for the weather to be more conducive to construction activity. Dwelling starts for the first 4 months has dropped by almost 60% from the same time last year. Alternatively, the figure for newly completed and unabsorbed units has dropped, signalling that compared to last year, more units are being occupied upon completion. However, its the multiple component that is doing relatively better than the singles component in terms of being completed and occupied. This decreasing trend may largely be attributed to the gas sector's low activity and the sector being such an integral part of the local economy.

The average price for those newly completed, and yet unoccupied (single) dwellings has progressively gone down on a monthly basis, although on a year over year basis, the average price has gone up.

TABLE 4: DWELLING START, COMPLETIONS AND NEWLY COMPLETED AND UNABSORBED UNITS, MEDICINE HAT

			DWELLING STARTS	COMPLETIONS	NEWLY COMPLETED AND UNABSORBED UNITS
APRIL	2010	Single detached / Semi	36	21	65
		Row. Apart and other	-	-	83
		TOTAL	36	21	148
	2011	Single detached / Semi	21	17	63
		Row. Apart and other	-	-	78
		TOTAL	21	17	141
	Annual change		-41.67%	-19.05%	-4.73%
JANUARY – APRIL	2010	Single detached/Semi	88		
		Row. Apart and other	4		
		TOTAL	92		
	2011	Single detached/semi	35		
		Row. Apart and other	4		
		TOTAL	39		
	Year to date change		-57.61%		

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Monthly Housing Statistics for April 2011

TABLE 5:MARKET ABSORPTION SURVEY: AVERAGE UNIT SELLING PRICES OF ALL NEWLY COMPLETED AND UNABSORBED SINGLE DETACHED AND SEMI DETACHED DWELLINGS, MEDICINE HAT

	FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
UNITS	76	62	74	66	65	63
AVERAGE PRICE ($)	323,120	347,438	327,041	345,595	329,232	344,705

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Monthly Housing Statistics for April 2011

Table 6 and 7 below state the 2011 second quarter forecast of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The forecasts for both 2011 and 2012 housing starts have been *downwards revised* since the first quarter forecasts, for both the single detached and multiples component (165 from 235 and 75 from 100 respectively for 2011 and from 250 to 200 and 100 from 125 for 2012 respectively). MLS sales for 2011 have also been downwards revised from 1,200 to1,125, with not much expected in average price.

Table 6: Medicine Hat Housing Forecast - New Construction

Housing Starts	2010	2011(F*)	% chg 2010/2011	2012(F*)	% chg 2011/2012	YTD 2011	YTD 2010	% chg 2010/2011
Single-Detached	247	165	-33.2	200	21.2	12	48	-75.0
Multiple	87	75	-13.8	100	33.3	6	8	-25.0
Total	334	240	-28.1	300	25.0	18	56	-67.9

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Housing Market Outlook – Prairie Region Highlights, second quarter, 2011

Table 7: Medicine Hat Housing Forecast - Resale Market

	2010	2011(F*)	% chg '10/'11	2012(F*)	% chg '11/'12	YTD 2011	YTD 2010	% chg '10/'11
MLS sales	1,212	1,125	-7.2	1,160	3.1	250	317	-21.1
MLS ave. price	249,536	248,500	-0.4	250,500	0.8	243,856	253,972	-4.0

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Housing Market Outlook – Prairie Region Highlights, second quarter, 2011

The number of sales and the dollar value associated with those sales dropped from the previous year, but picked up considerably on a monthly basis (Table 8). This trend of yearly decrease and monthly increase is prevalent in all facets of sales, volume, and listings.

There was an increase of almost 28% in the total listings placed in April 2011.

Table 8: Medicine Hat Real Estate Volume

	April -10	March-11	April -11	Monthly change	Annual change
RESIDENTIAL					
Single family house	26,439,819	18,890,145	23,876,150	26.39%	-9.70%
Single family other	3,412,116	2,599,000	3,291,300	26.64%	-3.54%
Residential other	1,502,400	1,170,500	994,400	-15.04%	-33.81%
NON-RESIDENTIAL					
Farms	1,275,000	250,000	1,380,000		
Vacant land	443,345	125,000	239,000		
Other	351,640	1,150,000	1,749,455		
VOLUME - DOLLAR VALUE OF UNITS SOLD	33,424,320	24,184,645	31,530,305	30.37%	-5.67%
RESIDENTIAL					
Single family house	88	78	83		
Single family other	23	17	20		
Residential other	7	5	5		
NON-RESIDENTIAL					
Farms	4	1	2		
Vacant land	4	2	2		
Other	5	2	7		
SALES - NO. OF UNITS	131	105	119	13.33%	-9.16%

	April -10	March-11	April -11	Monthly change	Annual change
SOLD					
listings placed	387	269	342	27.14%	-11.63%
Active listings at month's end	1200	1017	1094		-8.83%
Year volume until	117,344,001	66,214,175	97,749,480		-16.70%
Year sales until	461	271	390		-15.40%
Year listings until	1352	734	1076		-20.41%

Source: Medicine Hat Real Estate Board, Monthly Statistical report, April 2010, March 2011, April 2011

TABLE 9: STARTS & COMPLETIONS BY DWELLING TYPE - MEDICINE HAT

	STARTS					COMPLETIONS				
	SINGLES	SEMIS	ROW	APT & OTHER	TOTAL	SINGLES	SEMIS	ROW	APT & OTHER	TOTAL
Apr-09	9	0	0	0	9	30	4	50	0	84
May-09	17	0	0	8	25	26	4	4	20	54
Jun-09	16	0	0	0	16	22	0	0	0	22
Jul-09	9	0	4	0	13	13	2	0	0	15
Aug-09	12	2	0	0	14	18	2	0	0	20
Sep-09	14	0	0	0	14	20	6	0	0	26
Oct-09	22	0	54	0	76	13	2	0	0	15
Nov-09	15	0	0	0	15	7	0	0	0	7
Dec-09	13	2	0	0	15	19	2	4	0	25
Jan-10	11	0	4	0	15	14	0	0	0	14
Feb-10	16	2	0	0	18	8	0	0	0	8
Mar-10	21	2	0	0	23	14	0	0	0	14
Apr-10	34	2	0	0	36	19	2	0	0	21
May-10	20	2	4	0	26	20	0	0	0	20
Jun-10	25	0	4	0	29	15	0	0	28	43
Jul-10	22	0	0	0	22	24	4	12	14	54
Aug-10	23	0	3	0	26	33	2	0	20	55
Sep-10	19	0	0	40	59	9	0	0	0	9
Oct-10	23	0	0	0	23	33	2	4	0	39
Nov-10	12	0	8	14	34	9	0	0	0	9
Dec-10	21	2	0	0	23	38	0	0	0	38
Jan-11	4	0	0	0	4	17	0	0	0	17
Feb-11	5	2	0	0	7	12	0	0	47	59
Mar-11	3	0	4	0	7	18	2	3	0	23

	UNDER CONSTRUCTION				
	SINGLES	SEMIS	ROW	APT & OTHER	TOTAL
Dec-10	95	2	11	101	209
Jan-11	82	2	11	101	196

	Starts					Completions				
	Singles	Semis	Row	Apt & other	TOTAL	Singles	Semis	Row	Apt & other	TOTAL
Feb-11	75		4		11			54		144
Mar-11	60		2		12			54		128

Source: CMHC Housing Information monthly, Table A4-2, A5-2, for; April 2009-March 2011

RENTAL:

The latest numbers on Medicine Hat rental market from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation`s Rental Market Report are those of Fall 2010 and state that the apartment vacancy rate in Alberta's urban centres was 4.6 per cent in October 2010, down from 5.5 per cent in October 2009.

The total average rent in Alberta was $943 in October 2010, down from $949 reported in the October 2009.

The lowest average two-bedroom rent was observed in the Medicine Hat CA. In October this year, the average rent in Medicine Hat was $691 per month, increasing from $687 in October 2009.

Table 10: Medicine Hat Apartment vacancy rate

Private Apartment Vacancy Rate (%)										
	Bachelor		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom		3 Bedroom +		Total	
	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10
Alberta	4.3	4.8	4.9	3.9	6.2	5.1	6.2	5.1	5.5	4.6
Medicine Hat	7.5	15.6	5.1	5.8	11.8	11.9	8.3	13.4	9.3	10.1

Source: Rental Market Report-Alberta Highlights, Fall 2010 – table 1.1.1.

Table 11: Medicine Hat Apartment Average Rent

Private Apartment Average Rent ($)										
	Bachelor		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom		3 Bedroom +		Total	
	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10	Oct 09	Oct 10
Alberta	699	702	867	861	1044	1036	1155	1137	949	943
Medicine Hat	556	538	586	586	687	691	786	775	655	657

Source: Rental Market Report-Alberta Highlights, Fall 2010 – table 1.1.2.

BUILDING PERMITS

Building permits issued in April 2011 has increased both in volume and dollar amount from the previous month, although year over year, the level is below both in volume and dollar amount. Additionally, the building permits issued over the past 4 months of 2011 are substantially lower than the same time last year.

Permits issued now are indicative of activity in the future.

TABLE 12: MEDICINE HAT ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS

	April -10		April -11		March -11		Current year to date		Previous year to date	
RESIDENTIAL	No	Amount	No	Amount	No	Amount	No	Amount	No	Amount
Houses	19	5,047,000	16	3,264,000	8	1,628,000	31	6,345,000	69	16,792,000
Duplexes					2	341,000	3	342,000	2	366,000
Tri & fourplexes	1	615,000							2	1,302,000
Apartments										
Manufactured homes							2	309,000	3	256,000
RESIDENTIAL ALTERATIONS										
Garages	9	104,000	4	66,000			7	73,000	18	216,000
Alterations – apartments			2	55,000			3	56,000		
Alterations – other	50	807,000	46	694,000	33	461,000	127	1,956,000	179	2,851,000
NON- RESIDENTIAL NEW BUILDINGS										
Commercial			2	166,000	1	516,000	4	1,642,000	4	6,694,000
Industrial										
Institutional	2	1,067,000							2	1,067,000
NON-RESIDENTIAL ALTERATIONS										
Commercial	4	63,000	7	209,000	6	264,000	23	1,067,000	33	1,359,000
Industrial							1	30,000		
Institutional			2	1,046,000	2	864,000	6	1,973,000	3	2,405,000
MISCELLANEOUS										
TOTAL	85	7,703,000	79	5,500,000	52	4,704,000	207	13,793,000	315	33,308,000

Source: Month end statistics, Planning, building & development services department, City of Medicine Hat –April 2010, March 2011- April 2011

LABOUR MARKET TRENDS, BASED ON LFS[4] AND STATISTICS CANADA DATA

*Statistics Canada has **re-benchmarked** the Labour Force Survey to reflect the 2006 census rather than the 2001 distribution that was previously used. The process has resulted in changes in the level of employment such that a total of 428,000 jobs were lost during the recession, and the number of jobs created, nationally, since the recovery began, as a result of the re-benchmarking stands at 398,000.*

[4] The LFS is a household survey whose main objective is to divide the working-age population into three mutually exclusive classifications - the employed (including the self- employed), unemployed and not in the labour force. This survey is the official source for the unemployment rate and collects data on the socio-demographic characteristics of all those in the labour market.

C A N A D A

Employment at the national level experienced an increase of 58,300 jobs in April 2011, translating into a monthly increase of 0.3%. Overall, it had risen by 1.7% (+283,100) in the 12 months to April 2011. The increase was primarily in part time employment.

The national ***unemployment*** rate nudged down 0.1 percentage points to 7.6%. The number of employees rose in both the private and public sectors in April.

Over the past 12 months, employment in the public sector has grown by 2.8% compared with 1.6% in the private sector, while self-employment was little changed. Over the past 12 months, full-time employment grew by 1.9% compared with 0.8% in part time. On a monthly basis, employment in part time increased by 41,000 in April, while only edging up in full time.

The ***labourforce*** expanded by 47,400.

The number of employees rose in both the private and public sectors in April. Over the past 12 months, employment in the public sector has grown by 2.8% compared with 1.6% in the private sector, while self-employment was little changed.

Table 13: Labour force Survey Statistics – CANADA – Seasonally adjusted

CANADA	March 2011	April 2011	Monthly change	Annual change	Monthly percent change	Annual percent change
in thousands (except rates)						
15 years and over, both sexes						
Population	27,889.20	**27,914.80**	25.6	336.2	0.1	1.2
Labour force	18,663.10	**18,710.50**	47.4	211.9	0.3	1.1
Employment	17,228.10	**17,286.40**	58.3	283.1	0.3	1.7
Employment full-time	13,933.70	**13,950.90**	17.2	256.3	0.1	1.9
Employment part-time	3,294.40	**3,335.50**	41.1	26.8	1.2	0.8
Unemployment	1,435.00	**1,424.10**	-10.9	-71.2	-0.8	-4.8
Participation rate	66.9	**67**	0.1	-0.1	...	...
Unemployment rate	7.7	**7.6**	-0.1	-0.5	...	...
Employment rate	61.8	**61.9**	0.1	0.2	...	...
Part-time rate	19.1	**19.3**	0.2	-0.2	...	...
15 to 24, both sexes						
Population	4,458.60	**4,458.40**	-0.2	-1.4	0	0
Labour force	2,873.50	**2,878.20**	4.7	-26.8	0.2	-0.9
Employment	2,459.20	**2,467.30**	8.1	2.4	0.3	0.1
Employment full-time	1,298.80	**1,289.90**	-8.9	23.5	-0.7	1.9
Employment part-time	1,160.40	**1,177.40**	17	-21.1	1.5	-1.8
Unemployment	414.3	**411**	-3.3	-29.1	-0.8	-6.6
Participation rate	64.4	**64.6**	0.2	-0.5	...	...
Unemployment rate	14.4	**14.3**	-0.1	-0.8	...	...
Employment rate	55.2	**55.3**	0.1	0	...	...
Part-time rate	47.2	**47.7**	0.5	-0.9	...	...

CANADA	March 2011	April 2011	Monthly change	Annual change	Monthly percent change	Annual percent change
25 to 54, both sexes						
Population	14,518.50	**14,523.20**	4.7	57.7	0	0.4
Labour force	12,549.30	**12,547.70**	-1.6	34.3	0	0.3
Employment	11,743.80	**11,757.50**	13.7	111.2	0.1	1
Unemployment	805.5	**790.3**	-15.2	-76.8	-1.9	-8.9
Participation rate	86.4	**86.4**	0	-0.1	...	...
Unemployment rate	6.4	**6.3**	-0.1	-0.6	...	...
Employment rate	80.9	**81**	0.1	0.5	...	...
55 years and over, both sexes						
Population	8,912.10	**8,933.10**	21	279.8	0.2	3.2
Labour force	3,240.30	**3,284.50**	44.2	204.3	1.4	6.6
Employment	3,025.10	**3,061.70**	36.6	169.6	1.2	5.9
Unemployment	215.2	**222.8**	7.6	34.7	3.5	18.4
Participation rate	36.4	**36.8**	0.4	1.2	...	...
Unemployment rate	6.6	**6.8**	0.2	0.7	...	...
Employment rate	33.9	**34.3**	0.4	0.9	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates, Table 1, May 2011

Based on research conducted by the Manpower group, the number of companies facing talent shortages in Canada has risen 8 percentage points to 29% since 2010. The country is bracing itself for the imminent retirement of baby boomers. However, Canada has made a concerted effort and continues to invest its energies in attracting foreign workers with desirable and transferable skills and experience. Nonetheless, the skills shortages that were in evidence prior to the global recession are beginning to resurface as the economy recovers.

A L B E R T A

Alberta`s economy is one that is promising and has been showing signs of strength as it comes out of an economic downturn. Having started the year on a positive note employment wise, April witnessed a drop in employment for the second month in a row. There was a drop of 4,200 in employment in April 2011, which followed a previous drop of 3,200 in March 2011.

Alberta's **employment** dropped 0.2% on a monthly basis in April 2011, losing 4,200 jobs over the previous month. The **labour force** expanded by 0.1%, with 1,900 entering the workforce, and subsequently rising the unemployment rate to 5.9%.

Alberta's manufacturing sector experienced job losses amounting 8,500, whereas trade experienced similar losses of 8,600. Finance, insurance, and real estate posted gains of 7,800, whereas public service saw gains of 6,400.

On an annual basis, total gains over the previous 12 months stand at 2.9% with 58,600 jobs being created since April 2010. Fulltime employment grew by 9,100, while part time contracted by 13,300.

Although the unemployment rate for Alberta has dropped, the **duration of unemployment** still remains in the high range, remaining at 16.8 weeks in Q1 2011. Pre recession level was at 8 weeks. Although this was abnormally low, the environment facilitated that number. Employers now look and wait for the right skill set. Long term unemployment leads to other social problems. The solution for that is retraining, or further education.

TABLE 14: LABOUR FORCE SURVEY STATISTICS – ALBERTA- SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

ALBERTA	March 2011	April 2011	Monthly change	Annual change	Monthly percent change	Annual percent change
	in thousands (except rates)				In percentages	
15 years and over, both sexes						
Population	2,990.10	**2,994.00**	3.9	42.5	0.1	1.4
Labour force	2,188.50	**2,190.40**	1.9	25.1	0.1	1.2
Employment	2,064.30	**2,060.10**	-4.2	58.6	-0.2	2.9
Employment full-time	1,698.00	**1,707.10**	9.1	57.7	0.5	3.5
Employment part-time	366.30	**353.00**	-13.3	0.8	-3.6	0.2
Unemployment	124.20	**130.30**	6.1	-33.4	4.9	-20.4
Participation rate	73.20	**73.20**	0	-0.2	...	...
Unemployment rate	5.70	**5.90**	0.2	-1.7	...	...
Employment rate	69.00	**68.80**	-0.2	1	...	...
Part-time rate	17.7	**17.1**	-0.6	-0.5	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates Table 3, 4-9, May 2011.

According to the quarterly Manpower Employment Outlook Survey, firms in the Western Canada were more **inclined towards additional hiring**, compared to Central and Atlantic. According to the survey, nationally, employers in all industries anticipate an increase in staffing levels, with the mining industry anticipating the biggest of the increases.

A report by the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada in June 2010 warned of an impending **labour shortage** manifesting as early as next year and said the industry could require 100,000 new workers by 2020. A combination of higher activity and demographic shifts will see thousands of skilled workers retiring over the next decade will contribute to the crunch, the report said.

A report released by the province, Aging Population Policy Framework, presages the social and economic impacts of a **retiring population**, where by 2031, one in five Albertans will be retired.

“It is abundantly obvious that we will be suffering from a shortage of workers from the least skilled to the most skilled for many years to come,” Minister of Employment and Immigration said in meeting convened by members of the business community calling for changes to the temporary foreign workers program.

According to the Conference Board's projections, Alberta's labour force will expand by just 1.5 per cent a year between 2011 and 2015, and barely one per cent a year between 2016 and 2020. That compares with average growth of more than three per cent between 2006 and 2010

A combination of provincial royalty incentives and economic growth has translated into higher rig counts. It shows drilling activity has increased, which is already fuelling renewed fears of job shortages in the energy sector.

Canadian federation of independent businesses (CFIB) asserts that the province of Alberta has not reduced red tape for business and has asked Edmonton to launch and undertake initiatives to cut the burden of red tape on small businesses.

As of February 2011, **Alberta has recaptured 78% of the jobs lost** in the recession. Alberta's emphasis on oil and oilsands will continue to create jobs in the north and central Alberta, whereas due to the slowdown in natural gas, the south will lag behind.

Effective April 2011, the ***Temporary Foreign Worker Program***, will see the maximum term for foreigners to be in Canada set at 4 years, with a 4 year waiting period before reapplying. However, the industry, under the optional trades, can now directly apply under the Alberta immigrant nominee program, so that the best employees can stay behind, without the employers who are heavily reliant on foreign workers having to deal with the insecurity of the workforce gaps.

M E D I C I N E H A T A N D A R E A

The natural gas sector is an integral part of the Medicine Hat economy. Gas prices are expected to remain around the $4.10 per 1000 cubic feet in much of 2011, and a projected $4.50 per 1000 cubic feet for 2012. Natural gas has been pushed out of its main market, the US, due to the high Canadian Dollar, coupled with a supply glut south of the border, as well as a consequence of some of the US economic recovery measures. Conventional gas producers need prices of $6.50, which seems unlikely. The situation is further going to deteriorate in the face of two new natural gas pipelines from Wyoming coming to service.

Energy budget revises its forecast revenue from an estimated 64.9 million to 1.69 million.

Council in January approved to *ramp up the City's drilling program*. The council approved $102.3 million capital plan aimed at increasing reserves and ramping up production. It not only marks a significant increase from the originally budgeted $77.2 million capital program for 2011, but also represents the most money the city has allotted for a single year. The city currently has $185.5 million. The annual dividend paid out to the City depends on the profits the gas business makes. The current dividend policy requires the gas utility to pay out a dividend pegged at 6.25 percent of total equity. $24.5 million goes towards keeping property taxes low. The remainder go into community capital fund, which would be utilized for future major capital projects.

The City of Medicine Hat has been, for the sixth consecutive year, *chosen among the province's top 50 employers*. The criteria for selection are: workplace, atmosphere, benefits, vacation time, communications, performance, training, and community involvement. Of the top 50 employers, Medicine Hat was the sole municipality to make the list, and highlights the success of the city's corporate initiatives.

The City has signed a 5 year lease with Air Canada Jazz.

City of Medicine Hat has rebranded the Flats neighbourhood as River Flats, together with an approval of the River Flats Area Redevelopment Plan for the very area. The plan sets to create distinct neighbourhoods, with each boasting its distinct commercial nodes. In addition, to preserve the feel of the neighbourhood, certain aesthetic restrictions will be in place for builders to abide by. Builders are apprehensive that this may limit prospective homebuyers.

The 60 year old west bound South Saskatchewan River Bridge will be replaced at the cost of approximately $20 million. The process of dismantling and construction will begin in August-September 2011, and will not be completed until fall 2012.

City's proposed $25 million wind farm has been put on hold indefinitely. The cost of construction was deemed too high, in the face of the current uncertainty of the energy division's financial state.

Whereas the city's gas production sales were $87.3 million below budget in 2010 due to gas prices being so much lower than expected, it is forecasted by the city that the city could make $25million in 2011 from the sale of electricity. This forecast comes in the city making major profits in the electrical generation. In a typical year, the figure is closer to $7 million. COO energy division asserts that electric generation may well surpass what was budgeted for the year.

The city of MH has declined the MHC request to assume control of the cultural center that would have accommodated the college's growing visual communications program. There is a need for expanded facilities, the absence of which may just give impetus to prospective students to pursue their programs elsewhere.

An $11.7 million upgrade of South Ridge Drive, coupled with a three meter wide section of trail has been approved. South Ridge drive will become a four lane road from Trans Canada highway to Strachan road. Construction will begin in summer 2011.

Effective March 28, commercial traffic will be able to cross for extended hours throughout the week at the wild horse crossing on both sides of the border. The extended hours will remain in effect until October 31, 2011. During this time, the commercial processing fee of $25 will be waived. Efforts continue to be underway for making the crossing a 24 hour one.

Flea market that kicked off first Saturday of April 2011 had a promising turnout and vendors are optimistic for the future. Additionally, the event has brought people to downtown.

Executive director of tourism Medicine Hat anticipates tourist numbers to rise, despite higher Canadian dollar and rising gasoline prices. The organization will be hiring five additional staff to accommodate the anticipated hike in numbers.

CP rail commits to hire 70 local positions. Economists are projecting a busy time ahead for the resource sector – food, fuel and fertilizers and that translates into a busier time for railroad. Locally, Methanex plant has plans to fill 5,400 tanker cars per year with methanol.

Avonlea homes, serving Medicine Hat since 2002 and having built 300 homes is moving its operations to Lethbridge, after completing the 15 homes in process.

YMCA Youthworks closes down after 13 years: linking youths with employment, is set to bring operations to stop on June 17. Albert`s 2011 budget eliminated the program province wide. Five of the employees will be out of work.

Medicine Hat and area continued to report monthly drops on multiple fronts: employment, unemployment, labour force and population. However, at the annual level, the numbers are impressive. Unemployment dropped by 35% compared to a year ago. Both the labour force and the participation rate increased over the year, bringing the unemployment rate down from 7.3% to 4.1%. The population increased by 15% in the 12 months to April 2011.

TABLE 15: LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS, UNADJUSTED, MEDICINE HAT AND AREA

MEDICINE HAT*	April 2010	March 2011	April 2011	Monthly Change	Annual change	Monthly change	Annual change
	in thousands (except rates)					In percentages	
Population	56.8	66.5	65.2	-1.3	8.4	-1.95%	15%
Labour force	35.4	41.8	41.6	-0.2	6.2	-0.48%	18%
Employment	32.7	40	39.9	-0.1	7.2	-0.25%	22%
Unemployment	2.6	1.8	1.7	-0.1	-0.9	-5.56%	-35%
Not in labour force	21.4	24.7	23.7	-1	2.3	-4.05%	11%
Participation rate	62.3	62.9	63.8	0.9	1.5	...	...
Unemployment rate	7.3	4.3	4.1	-0.2	-3.2	...	...
Employment rate	57.6	60.2	61.2	1	3.6	...	...

- Includes City of Medicine Hat, Cypress County Municipal District, and Town of Redcliff

Source: Statistics Canada, labour force survey, Table 20 May 2011

Participation rate is one of the main economic indicators, indicating the level of active labour force participants. That level has risen both on a monthly and an annual level.

To compare the characteristics of the economy from the federal to the local level, with provincial and regional in between, it is interesting to note how each respective tier of the economy is faring.
Table 16 and 17 give the numerical figures and the monthly and annual rate of change respectively.

- Medicine Hat and area's **participation rate** is below the national average, provincial, and regional level.
- Year over year, Medicine Hat and area's **employment** has been growing at a faster rate than both its population and labour force. However, on a monthly basis, a contracting population, labourforce, and declining participation rate has given it a low **unemployment** rate, but that may not hold much meaning.
- Although month over month unemployment at the CD level of Lethbridge-Medicine Hat has gone up, it has declined at the local level of Medicine Hat and area.

TABLE 16: LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS – A COMPARISON - UNADJUSTED, 3 MONTH MOVING AVERAGE

	Population	Labour force			P rate*	U rate*	E rate*
		Labour force	Employment	Unemployment			
	in thousands (except rates)						
CANADA							
April-10	27,551.30	18,254.90	16,685.00	1,569.90	66.3	8.6	60.6
March-11	27,865.50	18,413.30	16,917.40	1,495.90	66.1	8.1	60.7
April-11	***27,890.20***	***18,476.60***	***16,988.00***	***1,488.60***	***66.2***	***8.1***	***60.9***
ALBERTA							
April-10	2,947.10	2,136.70	1,978.20	158.4	72.5	7.4	67.1
March-11	2,986.90	2,170.20	2,042.30	127.9	72.7	5.9	68.4
April-11	***2,990.40***	***2,171.80***	***2,044.10***	***127.7***	***72.6***	***5.9***	***68.4***
LETHBRIDGE-MEDICINE HAT (CD1,2,3)							
April-10	216.6	142.4	131.7	10.6	65.7	7.4	60.8
March-11	218.3	142.6	134.6	8.1	65.3	5.7	61.7
April-11	***218.4***	***145.6***	***135.9***	***9.6***	***66.7***	***6.6***	***62.2***
MEDICINE HAT							
April-10	56.8	35.4	32.7	2.6	62.3	7.3	57.6
March-11	66.5	41.8	40	1.8	62.9	4.3	60.2
April-11	***65.2***	***41.6***	***39.9***	***1.7***	***63.8***	***4.1***	***61.2***

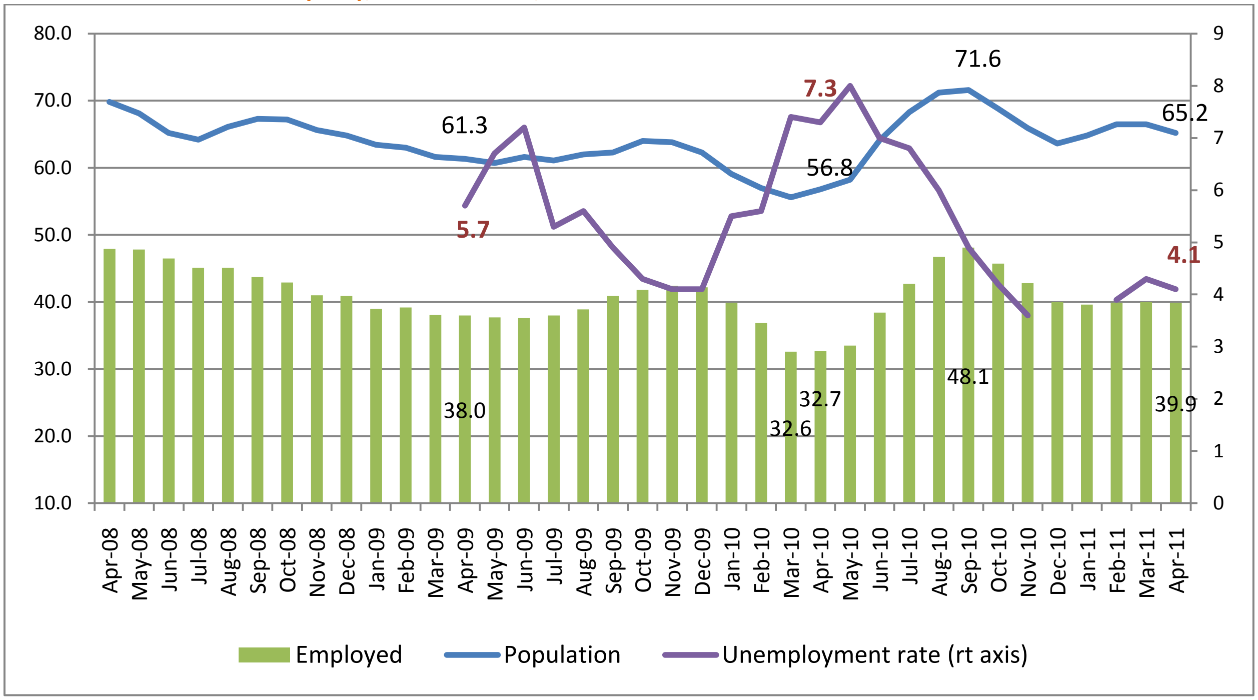
- P rate: Participation rate | U rate: Unemployment rate | E rate: Employment rate

Source: Statistics Canada, labour force survey, Table 6-1, Table 20, February 2011

TABLE 17:LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS – A COMPARISON - RATE OF CHANGE

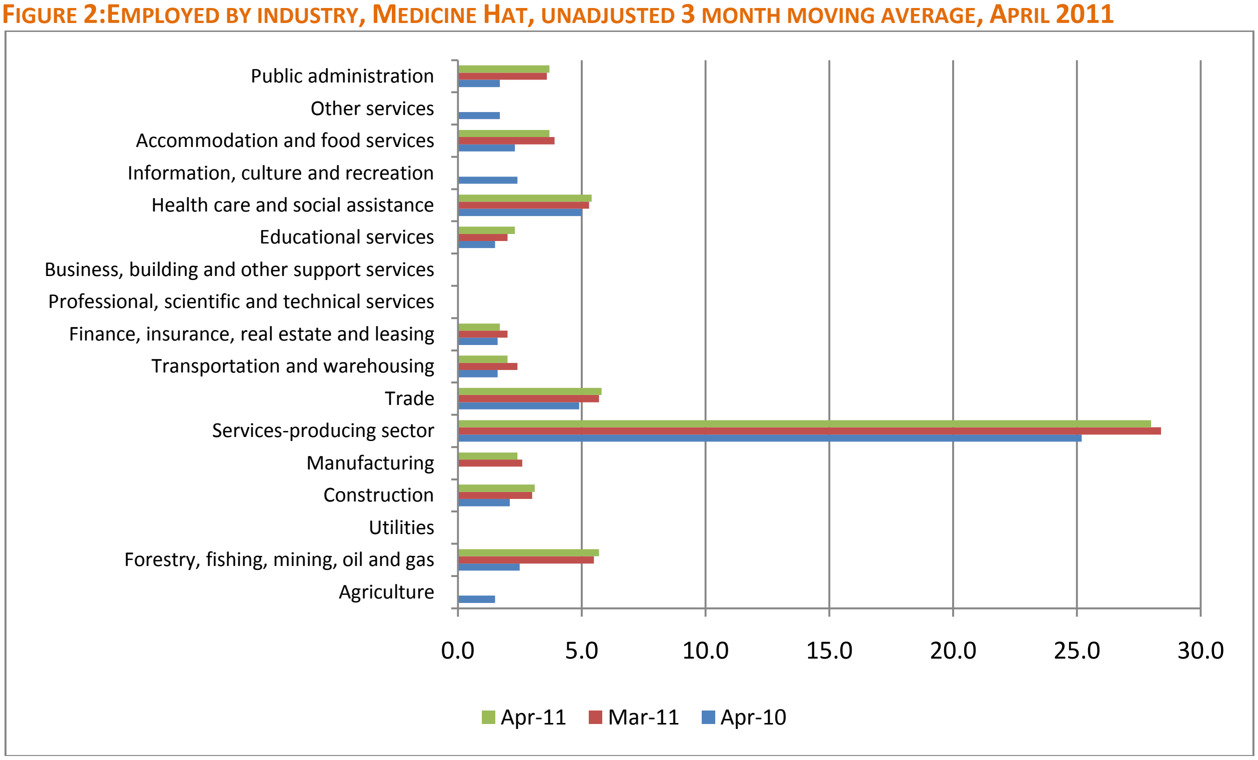
	Population	Labour force		
		Labour force	Employment	Unemployment
	percentages			
CANADA				
Monthly (March-April 2011)	0.09%	0.34%	0.42%	-0.49%
Annual (April 2010-april 2011)	1.23%	1.21%	1.82%	-5.18%
ALBERTA				
Monthly (March-April 2011)	0.12%	0.07%	0.09%	-0.16%
Annual (April 2010-april 2011)	1.47%	1.64%	3.33%	-19.38%
LETHBRIDGE-MEDICINE HAT				
Monthly (March-April 2011)	0.05%	2.10%	0.97%	18.52%
Annual (April 2010-april 2011)	0.83%	2.25%	3.19%	-9.43%
MEDICINE HAT				
Monthly (March-April 2011)	-1.95%	-0.48%	-0.25%	-5.56%
Annual (April 2010-april 2011)	14.79%	17.51%	22.02%	-34.62%

FIGURE 1: TOTAL EMPLOYED (000), MEDICINE HAT, UNADJUSTED 3-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom tabulation, May 2011

FIGURE 2:EMPLOYED BY INDUSTRY, MEDICINE HAT, UNADJUSTED 3 MONTH MOVING AVERAGE, APRIL 2011



[Note: data absent for values below 1500]
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom tabulation, May 2011

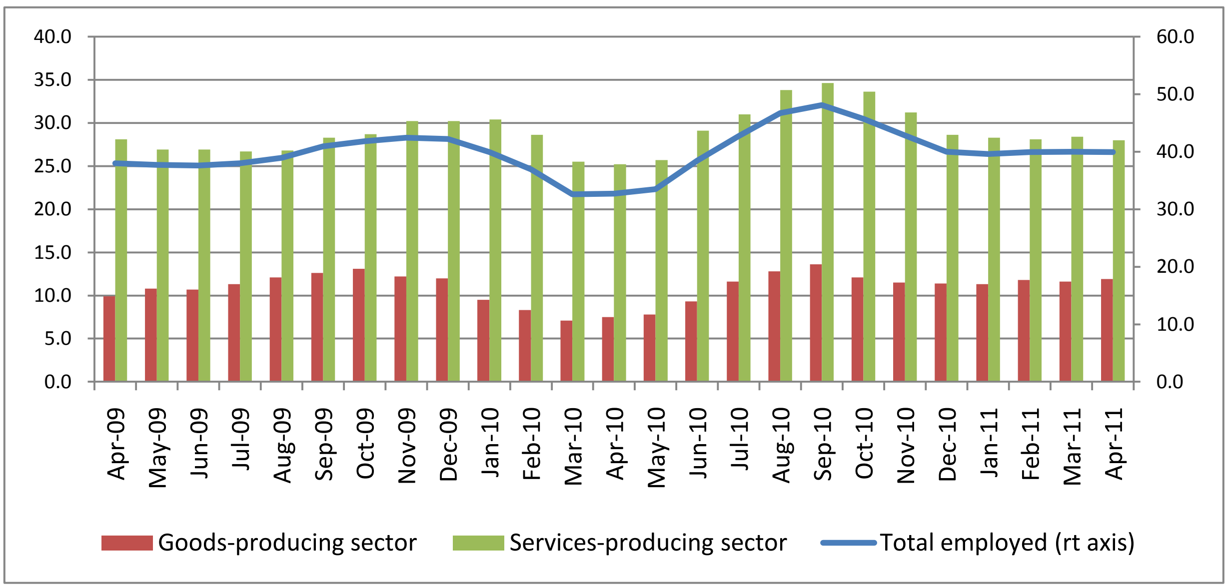
April 2011 saw a drop in the Medicine Hat and area's **service producing sector**, while month over month, the goods producing sector grew by 2.59%. Year over year, the **goods producing sector** grew by almost 60%.

TABLE 18: EMPLOYED BY SECTOR - GOODS AND SERVICES - MEDICINE HAT, UNADJUSTED 3 MONTH MOVING AVERAGE

Month	Total Employed	Goods producing sector	Services producing sector
April 2010	32.7	7.5	25.2
March 2011	40.0	11.6	28.4
April 2011	39.9	11.9	28.0
Change from previous month	-0.25%	2.59%	-1.41%
Change from previous year	22.02%	58.67%	11.11%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom tabulation, May 2011

FIGURE 3: EMPLOYED BY SECTOR - GOODS AND SERVICES - MEDICINE HAT, UNADJUSTED 3 MONTH MOVING AVERAGE



[Goods-producing industries – LEFT SIDE SCALE: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction, Utilities, Construction, Manufacturing, Services-producing Industries.

Services-producing Industries – LEFT SIDE SCALE: Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Information and Cultural Industries, Finance and Insurance, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services, Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services, Other Services - except Public Administration, Public Administration].

Total employed – RIGHT SIDE SCALE

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey January 2011, custom tabulation

MEDICINE HAT AND AREA: EMPLOYER SURVEY

For each quarter of 2010, and until July 2011, a survey will be conducted of organizations in Medicine Hat and area. The purpose of the survey is twofold: to gather information from employers on their human resources issues, so as to better understand the local recruitment and retention practices, in addition to other employment issues, and to understand how local companies are faring under the current economic environment, and whether they have issues at the local economic platform.

Disclaimer: Over 50 local companies from the following six sectors were contacted: construction, energy, manufacturing, non profit and voluntary, retail, and tourism and hospitality. However, only 11 participated. Hence, this section only reports findings from those 11 respondents, and acknowledges that it's much too small a sample to reflect the trends, or bigger concerns of the community.

PROFILE OF COMPANIES

Eleven (11) organizations (22% response rate), representing a total of 869 employees were surveyed for the third quarterly report. The following table summarizes the profile of the organizations that were surveyed. The breakdown is by industry and by the number of employees the particular industry represented, as well as the number of organizations falling in specific employment brackets.

TABLE 19: EMPLOYER SURVEY - PROFILE ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED

INDUSTRY	No. of organizations surveyed	Total employees represented by the industry
Construction	3	360
Retail	3	351
Manufacturing	2	54
Non -profit	2	92
Tourism and hospitality	1	12
Total	11	869

TABLE 20: EMPLOYER SURVEY - ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED: BRACKETS OF EMPLOYEES AND NO. OF ORGANIZATIONS

Number of Employees	No. of organizations
0-49	6
50-99	2
100-149	1
150-199	
200-500	2

BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Of the 11 organizations:

- 5 reported an increase in business activity in the previous 12 months;
- 4 reported a decrease in business activity in the previous 12 months;
- Of the 3 retail organizations, 2 reported a decline in activity, attributing it to increased competition;

All reported to have had no shift in the scope of operations in the previous 12 months.

TABLE 21: EMPLOYER SURVEY - DIRECTION OF ACTIVITY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

INDUSTRY	No. of organizations surveyed	Activity increased	Activity decreased	Activity remained same
Construction	3	1	1	1
Retail	3		2	1
Manufacturing	2	1	1	
Non -profit	2	2		
Tourism and hospitality	1	1		
Total	10	5	4	2

EMPLOYMENT: TRENDS AND FORECASTS,

The organizations were asked to comment on the hiring, termination, turnover trends and retention practices observed in the previous 3 months.

HIRING, TERMINATION, AND TURNOVER:

- None of the organizations surveyed reported to have had to lay off permanent employees;
- 4 reported to have had to hire new employees;
- 7 reported voluntary turnover – attributing it to the availability of better opportunities.

The following positions were identified to have a particularly high turnover rate:

TABLE 22: EMPLOYER SURVEY - OCCUPATIONS IDENTIFIED TO HAVE A HIGH TURNOVER

INDUSTRY	Occupations identified with high turnover
Construction	Finisher, project managers, general labourers, equipment operators
Retail	Maintenance, cashiers, clerks, front line, janitorial
Manufacturing	Operators and maintenance
Non -profit	Administration, casuals
Tourism and hospitality	-

TABLE 23: EMPLOYER SURVEY - NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS

INDUSTRY	No. of organizations surveyed	Layoff	Hires	New positions	Turnover	Vacant positions
Construction	3				6	10
Retail	3		11		9	4
Manufacturing	2		4		4	7
Non -profit	2		8	1	6	4
Tourism and hospitality	1	3				
Total	11	3	23	1	25	25

RETENTION:

When questioned on the retention programs in place for current employees:

- 8 of the 11 organizations surveyed reported to have such programs in place, acknowledging the need to do so as well.

Various aspects5 of retention programs were identified and asked to comment on. Whereas bonuses and delegation of responsibility was used by less than half of the organizations, salary and benefits were rated as the highest instrument of retention and motivation. Table 14 summarizes the results.

TABLE 24: EMPLOYER SURVEY - UTILIZATION OF RETENTION MECHANISM

	Positive work environment	Salary and benefits	Training	Delegation	Flexible work arrangements	Bonuses	Recognition
Construction (3)	1	2	2		1	2	2
Retail (3)	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
Manufacturing (2)							
Non -profit (2)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Tourism and hospitality (1)	1	1		1	1		1
Total	6	8	6	4	5	4	6

VACANCIES:

4 of the organizations surveyed reported to have current vacancies that need to be filled at the time of the survey being conducted. The following positions currently remain vacant:

[5] Instruments of retention were identified as: Positive work environment, salary and benefits, training, delegation, flexible work arrangements, bonuses, and recognition.

TABLE 25:EMPLOYER SURVEY - CURRENT VACANT POSITIONS

INDUSTRY	Vacant positions
Construction	Rock truck driver, flag person, loader operators, earthwork grading superintendent, EHS Advisor
Retail	Senior management
Manufacturing	Engineers, millwright, maintenance clerk, buyer, operators
Non -profit	Casuals, housekeepers
Tourism and hospitality	

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND STAFFING

Respondents were questioned on the current workforce challenges being faced by the respective organizations. Various aspects[6] of such challenges were identified and put forth for comment.

- Over 50% of the respondents identified struggling with finding relevant skilled employees, and only 2 of the 11 respondents felt that the issue wasn't with not being able to find the right skill set, but that there genuinely was a shortage of the required skills. *It was acknowledged that the skills are there, but to attract them, train and retain them was a struggle*;
- About 30% identified turnover as an issue;
- Over 30% identified retiring workforce an issue in the immediate (3-12 months) future;
- There was a desire to have a reliable workforce that stayed for a solid length of time.
- Over 60% stated the lack of compensation extended to employees as a concern;
- Lack of productivity was a concern only for the retail industry;
- The need to properly train employees was a concern for the construction industry;
- Retention was a concern exclusive to the non-profit industry.

The surveyed participants maintain an optimism towards their business activities, with all but one anticipating activities to increase up to 20% or remain same in the coming few months. The only exception to the list attributed the uncertainty to a volatile market that is behaving in an unprecedented manner. Those who anticipated an increase in activities also reported imminent creation of new positions.

From those surveys, the representatives of all sectors acknowledged a shortage of relevant skills, and the absence to compensate them adequately.

The surveyed respondents were optimistic about the recovering economy, yet wary at the same time, indicating that the recovery will open up competition on two fronts: business and workforce. One retailer acknowledged that there is fear that the recovery will create jobs that will be far more attractive and consequently, a loss in its workforce is a certainty.

[6] Aspects of workforce challenges were identified as: hiring, attraction, appropriate experience, skills, retiring workforce, turnover, retention, productivity, training, and compensation.

TABLE 26: EMPLOYER SURVEY - WORKFORCE ISSUES

	Hiring	Attraction	Training	Skill shortage	Retiring workforce	turnover	Compensation	productivity
Construction (3)	1	1	1	1	1		3	
Retail (3)				1	1	2	1	1
Manufacturing (2)	2	1		1		1	1	
Non -profit (2)	1	1		1	1		1	
Tourism and hospitality (1)				1			1	

Additional comments on other workforce issues:

- ***Hospitality***: The inability to match not-for-profit wages and salaries with municipal government wages is a serious issue. The lack of adequate pension and benefit plans for this sector is also of great concern.
- ***Non –profit***: It's hard to find people that want to work starting out on a casual basis. It is frustrating to lose trained employees to better permanent positions elsewhere.
- ***Non-profit***: a decrease in government funding decreases the ability to service clients.
- ***Construction***: a shortage of skilled workers, as the oil industry picks up more people will move into positions in the oil industry.

ECONOMY: IMPACT AND CONCERNS

As a final note to the survey, it was asked of the respondents to comment on their respective organization's performance in, and perception of the current economic conditions. When asked about how they would comment on faring in the current economic conditions, all were cautiously positive by stating that although operations and activities weren't at a level they would like, they were faring satisfactorily well, while still on shaky ground.

More than 50% aired their concerns about the local economy, particularly the low prices of natural gas. The construction industry voiced concern over weather and government red tapes. The only exception was the non-profit organization dealing with unemployed Albertans, which stated that the organization has been extremely busy.

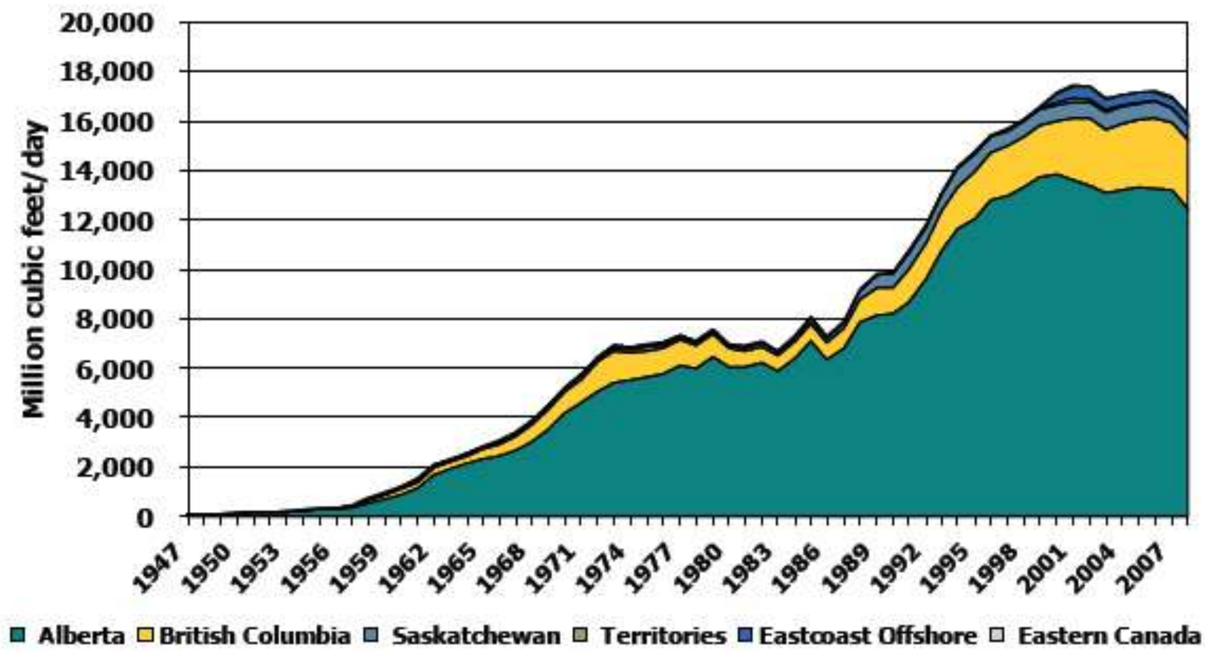
The dissatisfaction was voiced over the lack of contractors in the region.
Almost all hoped for a bullish economy, higher levels of entrepreneurship, and more active local government facilitating whatever it may for businesses.

IN FOCUS: THE ENERGY INDUSTRY-SOUTHEAST ALBERTA'S NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is one of the cleanest, cheapest, efficient and reliable sources of energy and burning fossil fuels. Not only does Alberta account for over 75% of the national production of natural gas, it also has one of the most extensive natural gas systems in the world, with 392,000 kilometres of energy related pipelines.

In the 2009/2010 fiscal year, Alberta received approximately $6.8 billion in non-renewable resource revenue. The natural gas and by product revenue for the same period accounted $1.53 billion, constituting around 4% of government revenue. Alberta's share of the national natural gas production is depicted in figure 4.

FIGURE 4: HISTORICAL NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION BY PROVINCE



SOURCE: NATURAL GAS IN CANADA - A ROBUST RESOURCE, 2011

Whereas 20% of the natural gas consumed within the province goes towards the heating of residences and businesses, 80% of it is used by the industrial sectors, electricity generation, transportation and other sectors. Additionally, natural gas is an important raw material in the Alberta's oil sands and electric power generation industries. It is believed that Alberta produces enough natural gas annually to heat every home in the province for at least 30 years. Data from 2009 states that there were 5,616 successful natural gas well connections in Alberta.

The south-eastern part of Alberta that also houses the City of Medicine Hat and area possesses abundant energy resources such as oil, coal and natural gas. The economic benefits and the economic importance of this sector cannot be overestimated. It is an essential sector in the region, at times the lifeline of the economy. It is estimated that one in every six workers in Alberta is either directly, or indirectly employed by the energy sector. The oil and gas sector of the region employs a substantial number of residents, in addition to providing economic benefits to support industries and otherwise, such as employment and the economy generated through manufacturing, retail.

The first natural gas well was drilled in this area, in 1883, in a field neat Medicine Hat. From then, some 93,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled in the region. Currently, there are some

65,000 producing oil and gas wells in the region. Oil and gas production is not only vital to this region, but is expected to remain a significant industry for the foreseeable future.

Just as it remains a plain fact that gas is an essential component of the regional and provincial economy, another fact is that gas is just plain volatile. The price of natural gas is in the middle of a tug of war. The recession which began in 2008 caused a sharp drop in natural gas demand, particularly in industrial uses. Coupled with increased overall supply in the U.S., the gas market was considered to be oversupplied. Canadian gas prices have fluctuated widely over the past few years, from a high of $9.84 in July of 2008, to a low of $2.48 in September 2009.

A recovery in crude oil prices is directly and wholly dependent on OPEC balancing world crude markets by reducing OPEC supply. The North American natural gas market is different. The economic recession and demand destruction, such as the closing of industrial plants, is causing a decline in consumption. Other factors have included the rise of the Canadian dollar, which devalues the Canadian wellhead price; and weak U.S. gas prices in 2007 and early 2008. In the absence of a supply response, an economic recovery would be needed to balance the market.

However, recently economic projections have grown more optimistic, and while gas demand may remain lower in the short term, the upward trend projected for demand has returned a measure of confidence to the industry. That being said, lately other concerns have been aired that may make the road ahead a bumpy ride – labour.

In its March 2011 analysis, The Decade Ahead: Labour Market Projections and Analysis for Canada's Oil and Gas Industry to 2020 the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada has warned that the country's oil and gas industry will struggle to find the required number of workers over the next 10 years, making the projected labour shortages to be more severe than those of the 2007. The Council identifies certain occupations[7] that are even now facing chronic shortages. It forewarns that the industry is bound to be facing a labour shortage, regardless of the degree of prosperity the future determines for it. The primary reason given for this is the fact that the industry is currently driven by an aging workforce and that over 30% of the industry's core workforce is due to retire in the next ten years. The Council estimates that even in a scenario of low activity, the industry still will be expected to face a labour shortage of over 39,000. That number, obviously, goes upto 130,000 under promising conditions of high activity and prices.

The low prices of gas and its economic impact, the impending labour shortage and the possibilities of innovation with natural gas to boost supply, all in the backdrop of the vital importance of this sector regionally, provincially, and nationally are some of the issues that give basis of speculation for the future of this sector. To get a better field perspective, experts in the

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[7] Occupations identified by the Council to be at a great risk of facing labour shortages in the coming ten years are: oil and gas drilling and services field workers; supervisors, oil and gas drilling and services; trades: heavy-duty equipment mechanics; industrial electricians; instrumentation technicians; and millwrights and machinists; engineers from all disciplines; operators particularly 2nd and 3rd class steam-ticketed operators; geologists and geophysicists; production accountants; drilling coordinators/production managers; and landmen/purchasing agents.

industry were requested to cast a light on the said issues. Natural Resources Canada (NRC), Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors (CAODC), and the Petroleum Services Association of Canada (PSAC) contributed to the discussion.

Natural gas prices set in the integrated North American market suggests that it could be at least three years of low gas prices. In an ARC Financial Corp publication *Turmoil and Renewal*, April 2011, the authors' sensitivity analysis reports that production/sales for natural gas in Alberta may well be anticipated to spiral downwards well into 2015, securing 15% of revenue, with prices anticipated to rise modestly to $4.8/Mcf by 2015. In pure economic terms, that forecast doesn't translate well for gas drillers in Alberta. Although it has affected gas drillers throughout the province, how much and to what degree has this detrimentally affected those in Southeast Alberta, specifically in Medicine Hat and area? Furthermore, how much is it going to *continue* to affect them?

Both the PSAC and CAODC asserted that rig contractors have opted to shift their business focus in light of the low natural gas prices and rising oil prices, and are going after services and drilling associated with oil instead. That although there may not be as many rigs operating around the Medicine Hat area, that does not mean that rigs are not working. With the gas prices low, the gas prone areas of the province are quieter, but not completely out of work, since rigs have moved to oil prone plays and remain "very busy".

CAODC affirmed that presently there is a seismic shift away from gas to oil and the focus is more often on upgrading equipment to take advantage of technological advancements. Such investments would not only be necessary, but essential for survival in the present day environment, and would call for both monetary, and well as intellectual investment. PSAC, which represents some 250 companies, informed that in times like these, companies have to make the decision to shift focus from gas to oil, which many are doing. Yet there are some that are struggling, and unable to have made that shift in focus. When asked to elaborate on the hindrances that have prevented this shift in operations, PSAC attributed it to a lack of experience, knowledge, labour, and pure geography. Although not much can be done to deal with the factor of geography, the other factors may have been addressed in better times to plan a contingency.

The economics are there to fully incorporate natural gas in fields such as transport and electricity generation. The need has been recognized and the economics are present due to the competition with coal. How and when do you anticipate for natural gas to take *at least* half of the coal fired generation demand in Alberta, Canada, and North America. Can a complete takeover of the demand be anticipated? What are the cost benefit analysis for such a takeover that could potentially result in a tremendous boon to the natural gas industry.

As the economy improves, there is increasing industrial demand and use for electricity generation. In his speech of June 23 2010, Canada shows leadership and on climate and the environment, the Minister of Environment has stated:

Going forward, all new coal-fired electricity units-as well as units reaching the end of their economic life-will have to meet a stringent performance standard. That standard will be based on parity with the emissions performance of high-efficiency natural gas generation, and will represent an improvement in emissions of about 60 per cent per gigawatt hour generated.

Although this announcement does not attempt to replace coal fired plants, the quest to meet certain emission standards may see natural gas being employed in new plants. However, that being said, PSAC highlighted the dominance and importance of coal in the province, and that although retrofitting may be done, both the resources are vital for the economy of the province. Acknowledging that the environmental benefit is there, PSAC indicated that this scenario may only be in the distant future.

NRC added to the discussion giving a measure to the implications of a wholesale changeover from coal to natural gas at the continental level as being 'enormous'; estimates suggesting that the size of the North American natural gas market would increase from about 75 Billion cubic feet/day to about 115 Billion cubic feet/day, if all coal fired generation were replaced by natural gas.

With prices of natural gas as low as they have been for the past few months, many would say that there is light at the end of the tunnel. What, in your opinion, would that 'light' translate into, and how much of this tunnel is yet remaining? How much demand should be present for there to be a shift in the supply and demand balance to drive up the prices?

PSAC remains a believer that the prices of gas will go up sooner than later. However, as industry analysts have forecasted, PSAC also stated that prices will remain low for some time. However, to raise demand, innovative initiatives need to be implemented – be it in technology, or the use of natural gas.

In line with that argument, NRC attested that the industry is actively trying to boost demand for natural gas and exploring other market opportunities including exporting liquefied natural gas to Asia, employing gas to liquid technologies and trying to stimulate demand in the transportation sector. Although all these initiatives are aimed at raising the demand for natural gas, and by extension, its price, these initiatives may take a considerable time to be effective.

In closing, how optimistic are you for the industry to pick up in a timely fashion? When it will, will the industry have an adequate workforce?

In terms of the industry picking up, PSAC and CAODC confirmed that it has already 'picked up', as the 2010 numbers were very strong as compared to those of 2009, and the first quarter of 2011 demonstrated an industry in full recovery. CAODC supported its optimistic future with its release of forecasts for the rest of 2011 indicating to significant increases and heralding a 'very very busy year'.

Responding to the forecasts from the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada warning a labour crunch in the coming years, both PSAC and CAODC stated in unison that the industry is 'already' in the midst of a crunch - a significant manpower shortage. CAODC maintained that there were many rigs that sat idle the past winter due to lack of personnel and the same is feared to repeat in the coming months.

Rig contractors, according to CAODC, and the industry in general are working tirelessly to promote careers within the industry.

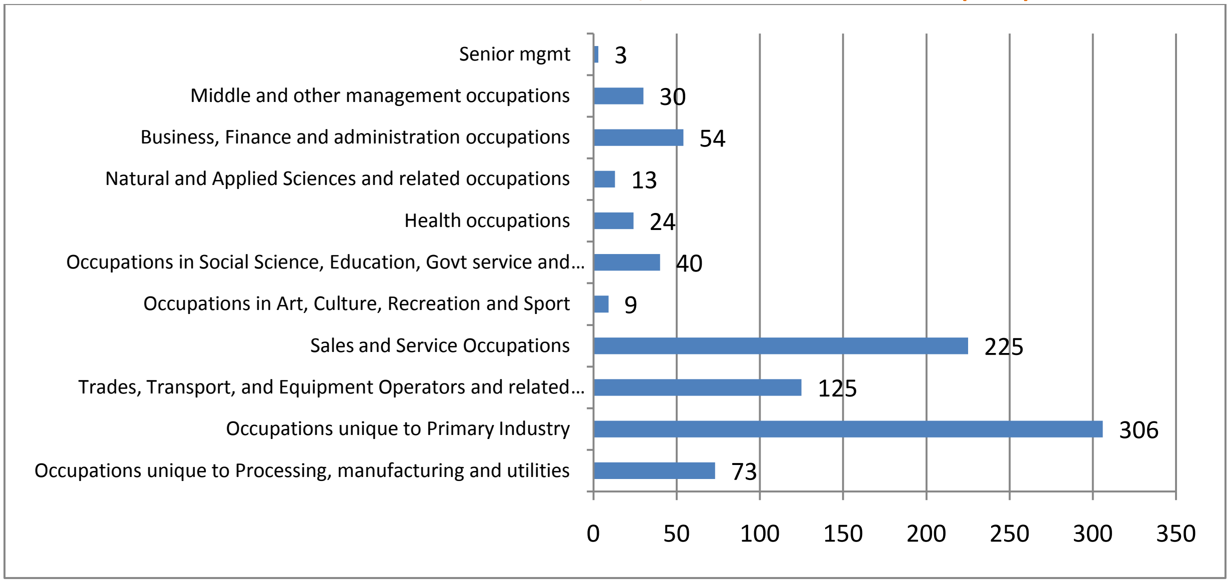
JOB BANK ANALYSIS

For employment analysis, and for consistency in the analysis, Job Bank listings are used to get an estimate of the nature of labour demand in the Medicine Hat and area. It is appreciated that there are other media that advertise vacant positions and that not all vacancies see it to the job bank database. However, for consistency sake and for referencing with NOC coding, only data available through the Job bank is utilized.

For Medicine Hat and area, there were a total of 902 positions listed on the Job Bank in the month of April 2011, accounting for 362 job listings. 70% of the positions were among the top 20 advertisements. 51% of the jobs advertised were for the top 20 occupations listed in table 24.

Occupations unique to the primary industry (major group 82, NOC) dominated in the Job bank, accounting for 40% of the positions listed.

FIGURE 5: JOB BANK POSTINGS FOR MEDICINE HAT AND AREA, APRIL 2011 BY OCCUPATION (NOC): N= 902



Source: Job Bank analysis, for April 2011

24.8% of the positions listed on the Job bank for April 2011 accounted for harvesting labourers (NOC 8611). Retail Salespersons and sales clerks (NOC 6421), which usually is an occupation in demand in Job Bank analysis accounted for almost 4% of the positions advertised for April 2011.

TABLE 27: JOB BANK TOP 20 POSITIONS FOR APRIL 2011. N=902

Occupation	NOC	POSITIONS
Harvesting Labourers	8611	224
Labourers in Food, Beverage and Tobacco Processing	9617	62
Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and Related Occupations	6641	53
Nursery and Greenhouse Workers	8432	45
Retail Salespersons and Sales Clerks	6421	35
Community and Social Service Workers	4212	34
Food and Beverage Servers	6453	19
Heavy-Duty Equipment Mechanics	7312	18
Retail Trade Managers	621	17
Oil and Gas Well Drilling Workers and Services Operators	8412	15
Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers	7611	13
Cashiers	6611	12
Food Service Supervisors	6212	12
Material Handlers	7452	11
Customer Service, Information and Related Clerks	1453	11
Truck Drivers	7411	10
Oil and Gas Drilling, Servicing and Related Labourers	8615	10
Survey Interviewers and Statistical Clerks	1454	10
Cooks	6242	9
Receptionists and Switchboard Operators	1414	9

Source: Job Bank analysis, for April 2011.

The following occupations were listed most at job Bank for the month of April 2011.

TABLE 28: JOB BANK 20 MOST ADVERTISED OCCUPATIONS FOR JANUARY 2011. N=362

Occupation	NOC	FREQUENCY
Retail Salespersons and Sales Clerks	6421	24
Retail Trade Managers	621	16
Oil and Gas Well Drilling Workers and Services Operators	8412	15
Community and Social Service Workers	4212	14
Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and Related Occupations	6641	13
Heavy-Duty Equipment Mechanics	7312	12
Food and Beverage Servers	6453	10
Material Handlers	7452	8
Customer Service, Information and Related Clerks	1453	7
Cooks	6242	7
Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers	7611	7
Nursery and Greenhouse Workers	8432	7

Occupation	NOC	FREQUENCY
Receptionists and Switchboard Operators	1414	6
Light Duty Cleaners	6661	6
Carpenters	7271	6
Truck Drivers	7411	6
Construction Managers	711	5
General Office Clerks	1411	5
Storekeepers and Parts Clerks	1472	5
Cashiers	6611	5

Source: Job Bank analysis, for April 2011.

APPENDIX A: INVENTORY OF MAJOR ALBERTA PROJECTS (for Medicine Hat and area)

PROJECT SECTOR/ COMPANY NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT LOCATION	COST IN MILLIONS	CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE	REMARKS
CHEMICALS AND PETROCHEMICALS					
Methanex Corporation	Plant Infrastructure upgrade/Re-opening	Medicine Hat	$40.0	2010-2011	Completed
INFRASTRUCTURE					
Alberta Transportation	Highway Twinning Project (North South Trade Corridor)	across Alberta	$1,900.0	1998-2012	Under construction. 500km across Alberta
Alberta Transportation	HIGHWAY 61 GRADE, BASE AND PAVE	County of Forty Mile	$7.9	2011	Announced. South Rock.
City of Medicine Hat	Water treatment plant discharge treatment facility	Medicine Hat	$30.0		Proposed, planned completion 2014
City of Medicine Hat	Alterations to Existing Building (future location of Environmental Utilities Dept)	Medicine Hat	$6.0		Proposed. Tender call expected late May / early June.
City of Medicine Hat	Fire Station South ridge	Medicine Hat	$7.5		Proposed, planned completion 2014
City of Medicine Hat	SOUTH RIDGE DRIVE UPGRADE TO FOUR LANES FROM HIGHWAY 1 (TCH) TO STRACHAN ROAD	Medicine Hat	$11.7		Proposed
Cypress county	Eagle Butte Road grade, Base and Pave	Cypress County	$6.0		Proposed for 2011
Defence Construction Canada	Fire Hall, CFB Suffield	Cypress County (Ralston)	$6.0		Proposed for 2011. Tender closes April 14. Proposed for 2010-2011
OTHER INDUSTRIAL					
Defence Construction Canada	Range control facility, CFB Suffield	Cypress County	$5.1	2011-2012	Proposed. Under construction. Wahl Construction

Project Sector/ Company Name	Project Description	Project Location	Cost in Millions	Construction Schedule	Remarks
Pipelines					
Highway 3 Water Committee	Regional Water System Bow Island/ Grassy Lake / Burdett	Cty of Forty Mile / MD of Taber	$8.5	2010	Proposed
Institutional					
Alberta Infrastructure / Alberta Health and Wellness	Medicine Hat Hospital renovations phase I	Medicine Hat	$200.0	2011-2015	Announced. Site work in 2011.
Alberta Infrastructure	Bow Island Health Centre Renovations	Bow Island	$5.0	2011-2012	Announced. Planned construction start August.
Power					
City of Medicine Hat	Concentrating solar thermal energy demonstration project	Medicine Hat	$9.0		Proposed for 2010-2012
Naturener Energy Canada	East Palliser Transmission Line	Cypress County	$100.0		Proposed
Naturener Energy Canada	'Wild Rose' Wind Farm (200MW) Phase 1	Cypress County (S of Irvine)	$400.0		Proposed. AUC approval October 2010. Dependent on approval of East Palliser Transmission Line.
Naturener Energy Canada	'Wild Rose' Wind Farm Phase 2 (162 MW)	Cypress County (S of Medicine Hat)	$410.0		Proposed. Planned to be in service in 2012
Tourism / Recreation					
City of Medicine Hat	Regional Event Centre , Box Springs business park	Medicine Hat	$89.8		On hold.
Mayfield Hospitality	Hotel and Convention centre	Medicine Hat	$25.0		Proposed. Contingent on Regional Event Centre
The Friends of Medalta Society	Medalta site restoration, Historic Clay District	Medicine Hat	$7.5	2009-2011	Under construction
Source: Inventory of Major Alberta Projects, Alberta Finance and Enterprise, March 2011					

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Collection and research methodology: Information sources for this report has included data from Statistics Canada, business associations, industry associations, labour associations, government sources, national and provincial banking sectors, Industry Canada, national and local newspapers, Canada sector councils, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Medicine Hat real Estate Board, and Job bank.
RBC: housing trends and affordability, May 2011

Sponsored by: