

Canadian Downsizing and Economic Trends

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Retail sales rose 1.0 percent to \$38.6 billion in October, a third consecutive monthly increase. Gains were reported in seven of 11 subsectors, representing 76 percent of retail sales. The increase was led by higher sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations.

Wholesale sales increased 0.9 percent to \$49.2 billion in October, with the growth concentrated in the western provinces.

Economic Indicators

National Statistics

The Conference Board of Canada's **Consumer Confidence Index** fell 6.5 points to 69.9 in December, its lowest point in more than two years. The index is down 11.1 points from where it stood in December 2010.

Consumer prices rose 2.9 percent in the 12 months prior to November, matching the increase in October. While the 12-month change in gasoline prices continued to ease, the year-over-year increase in food prices remained high.

Manufacturing sales fell 0.8 percent in October to \$48.7 billion after rising in each of the three previous months. Despite the decline, October's sales were the second highest of any month in 2011, surpassed only by September. The decrease in October largely reflected lower sales in the petroleum and coal product, and the aerospace product and parts industries. These declines were partially offset by advances in the motor vehicle parts, computer and electronic product, and wood product industries.

Human Resource & Labour Trends

More employers plan to add full-time employees in 2012, survey finds

For the third year in a row, an increased number of employers plan to add full-time, permanent employees with a continued emphasis on hiring in technology and revenue-producing fields, according to a survey by CareerBuilder.

More than one-third (34 percent) of employers plan to hire full-time, permanent employees in 2012, up from 32 percent in 2011 and 29 percent in 2010, found the survey. Ten percent plan to decrease headcount, on par with 11 percent in 2011. Nearly one-half (48 percent) anticipate no change in their staff levels, while 8 percent are unsure.

Eighteen percent of employers expect to hire part-time employees in the next 12 months, on par with 20 percent in 2011 and 18 percent in

2010, found the survey. Nine percent plan to decrease part-time help, up slightly from 7 percent for 2011. Sixty-one percent anticipate no change in their staff levels, while 12 percent are unsure.

Employers will be relying on interim solutions to help shoulder growing workloads. Two-thirds (66 percent) of hiring managers reported

they will hire contract or temporary workers to supplement leaner staffs in 2012, up slightly from 51 percent in 2011. Seventeen percent expect to add more than last year. Of those hiring contract or temporary workers, half expect to extend job offers for permanent placement in their companies, up from 42 percent in 2011, found the survey.

Downsizing Announcements

The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ottawa, ON, sent layoff notices to about 400 employees as the department rolls out reductions from a 2010 strategic review. The written notices are going to employees who work in the seven regions where the department operates. More than 200 of those receiving notices are biologists and other scientists, and the vast majority work outside the capital in areas of ocean management, fish habitat management, hydrography and aquaculture. Another 39 positions are being cut from the Coast Guard following a re-organization. It's unclear how many of those affected will end up losing their jobs. Officials from one of the unions representing workers say they are braced for between 150 and 280 jobs to permanently disappear.

Ottawa Citizen, December 12, 2011

Transat A.T. Inc., Montreal, QB, with CEO and co-founder Jean-Marc Eustache firmly at the controls of the holiday travel business, is undergoing more cost cutting to tighten up operations and hit the path of sustained profitability in fiscal 2012. It means 143 job losses and optimization of its IT systems and its Airbus wide-body fleet. The lower fourth

quarter was hit by rising competition, the economic slowdown in Europe and sky-high fuel prices.

The Gazette (Montreal), December 16, 2011