

Labour Market Notes

Weak start to 2020

Alberta

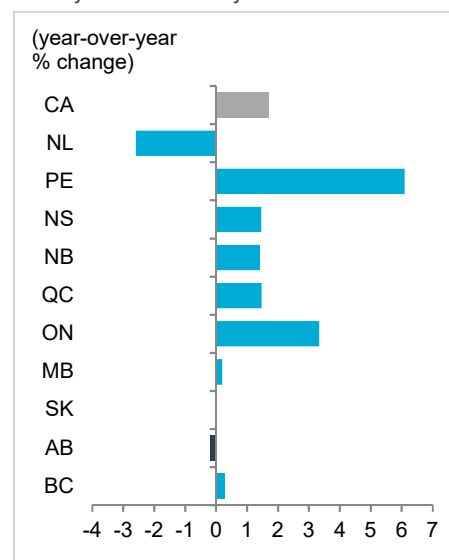
- **Alberta's labour market takes another step back.** With economic activity stagnating in the second half of 2019, employment fell for the third month in a row, declining by 18,800 in January.
- **Concentrated losses.** The losses were mostly in the services sector, including trade (-9,000), transportation and warehousing (-3,900), and business, building and other support services (-3,100). Employment in the goods sector was relatively unchanged as a decline in construction jobs was offset by gains in forestry, mining, oil and gas and manufacturing.
- **Private sector pulls back.** A large pullback in the private sector (-34,200) was cushioned by gains in self-employment (+10,700) and in the public sector (+4,500).
- **Reversal in part-time.** After a significant gain in December, part-time employment fell by 15,200. Full-time positions also declined for the third month in a row (-3,600) to a two-year low.
- **Unemployment rate moves up.** The unemployment rate more than reversed last month's decline. It increased 0.3 percentage points to 7.3%, even though the participation rate fell to 70.3%, the lowest level since August 1980.
- **Employment growth stalls.** Year-over-year (y/y) employment growth remained negative for the third consecutive month, due to ongoing weakness in the goods sector and slowing momentum in the services sector.
- **Private sector on pause.** After leading employment growth for much of 2019, employment in the private sector (-22,100 y/y) was lower than a year ago. Meanwhile, self-employment (+7,500 y/y) increased year-over-year for the first time in fourteen months, reflecting a large decline in January 2019 and employment in the public sector was up modestly (+5,100 y/y)
- **Divergence in the service sector.** Although the service sector lost 18,500 jobs in January, employment remained higher than a year ago. Large gains in professional, scientific and technical (+13,100 y/y), accommodation and food (+13,800), health care and social assistance (+16,200) and education (+8,900 y/y) services offset weakness in other industries
- **Earnings growth accelerates.** Average weekly earnings (AWE) increased \$12.71 in November to a record high of \$1,180. Compared to a year ago, earnings were up 2.6%.

Canada

- **Solid employment gain.** Employment in Canada rose 34,500 in January, fully recouping from the pullback in late 2019. Over the last twelve months, Canada has added 267,700 jobs led by significant gains in Ontario (+209,200 y/y) and solid gains in Quebec (+60,300 y/y).
- **Unemployment rate falls.** Nationally, the unemployment rate fell 0.1 percentage points to 5.5%, slightly above the 45-year low of 5.4%.
- **Canadian earnings continue to improve.** Canadian AWE decreased by \$3.11 to \$1,042 in November, with year-over-year growth of 3.1%.

Employment Growth by Province

January 2020 vs. January 2019



Source: Statistics Canada

Alberta Labour Market Indicators

Indicator	Latest*
Employment	2,318,500
month-over-month change	-18,900
year-over-year % change	-0.4%
Alberta Unemployment Rate (UR)	7.3%
Edmonton UR**	8.2%
Calgary UR**	7.2%
Participation Rate	70.3%
Average Weekly Earnings (AWE)	\$1,180.16
year-over-year % change	2.6%
Average Hourly Wage	\$31.80
year-over-year % change	1.6%
Job Vacancy Rate***	2.6%

Source: Statistics Canada

* All data is from the January 2020 Labour Force Survey, except AWE which is the November 2019 Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours, and the Job Vacancy Rate which is the third quarter 2019 Job Vacancy and Wage Survey.

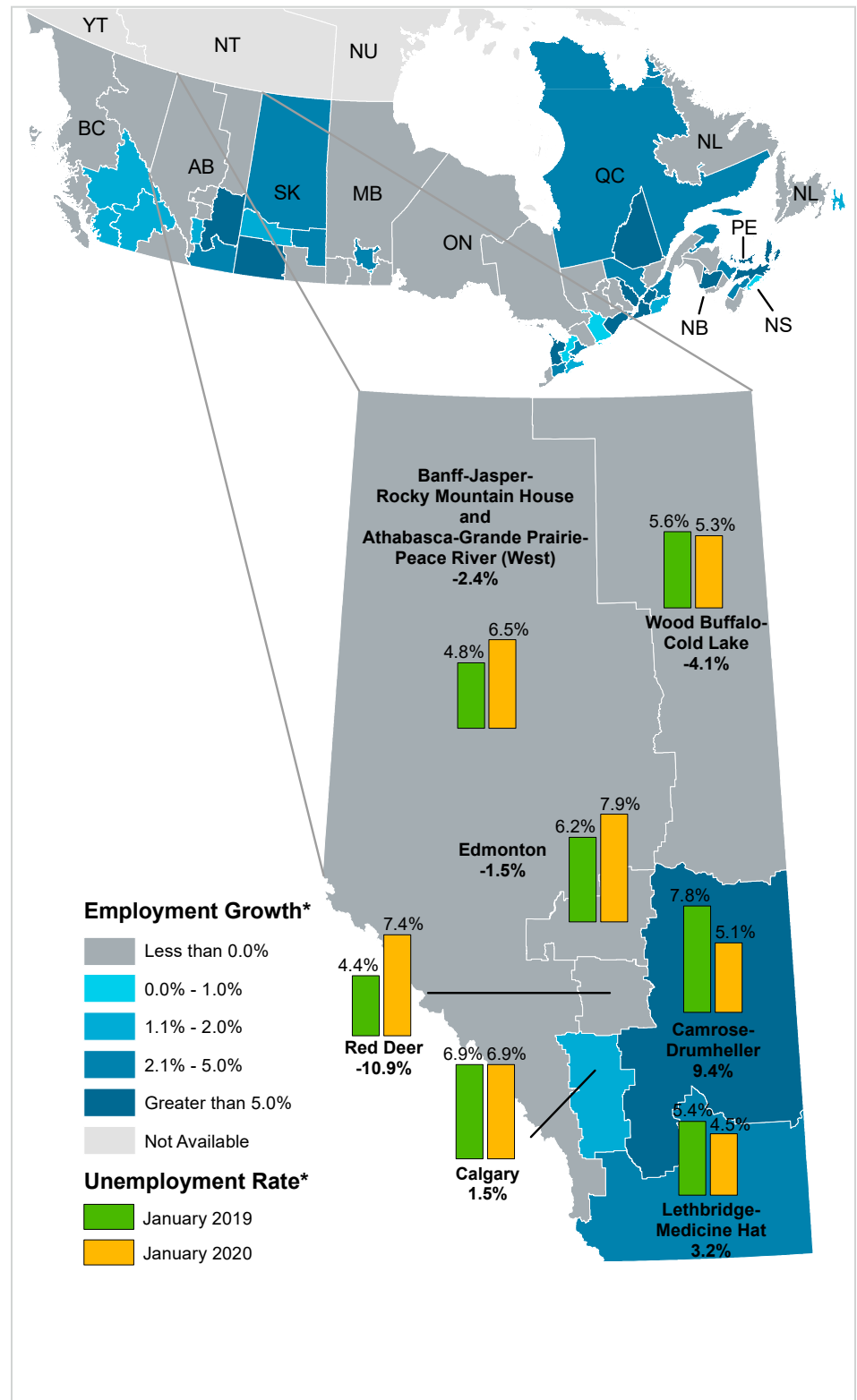
** This indicator is calculated as a three month moving average and is seasonally adjusted.

*** This indicator is reported quarterly.

Regional labour market indicators

	2017	2019	2020 YTD
Alberta			
Population	1.2	1.6	1.7
Labour Force	0.5	0.9	0.4
Employment	1.9	0.5	-0.3
Unemployment Rate	6.6	6.9	7.0
Calgary			
Population	1.8	2.3	2.4
Labour Force	0.0	2.5	1.5
Employment	0.9	3.0	1.5
Unemployment Rate	7.6	7.1	6.9
Edmonton			
Population	1.8	2.1	2.2
Labour Force	0.7	1.7	0.3
Employment	2.6	0.7	-1.5
Unemployment Rate	6.4	7.3	7.9
West			
Population	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3
Labour Force	2.9	-1.2	-0.8
Employment	3.9	-1.1	-2.4
Unemployment Rate	5.6	5.5	6.5
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat			
Population	0.4	1.0	1.0
Labour Force	-0.6	0.1	2.2
Employment	0.0	-0.8	3.2
Unemployment Rate	5.1	6.0	4.5
Red Deer			
Population	0.6	0.9	0.9
Labour Force	3.1	-4.8	-8.1
Employment	4.8	-6.2	-10.9
Unemployment Rate	5.5	6.7	7.4
Camrose - Drumheller			
Population	-0.6	-0.3	-0.2
Labour Force	-0.2	-7.1	6.4
Employment	2.8	-8.4	9.4
Unemployment Rate	5.1	6.5	5.1
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake			
Population	-2.1	-2.3	-2.2
Labour Force	-2.0	-0.9	-4.3
Employment	-0.2	-0.6	-4.1
Unemployment Rate	5.9	5.6	5.3

Employment growth by economic region Per cent change in year-over-year employment



Source: Statistics Canada
All number are percent growth, except unemployment rates.

*Based on three-month moving averages.

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Have a question? Send us an [email](#)