

# Alberta Economy

## Indicators at a Glance

### Economic Activity

The Alberta Activity Index (AAX) was up 2.5% year-over-year (y/y) in February, due mainly to improvements in the labour market. Alberta's real GDP by industry grew by 4.9% in 2017, the largest gain among the provinces.

### Population

Alberta's population was 4,318,772 as of January 1, 2018, an increase of 1.4% from the year prior. Canada's population grew 1.3% from a year ago.

### Migration

Net migration to Alberta was 5,599 in the fourth quarter of 2017. During this time, Alberta welcomed 5,297 net international migrants, while there was a net inflow of interprovincial migrants (+302) for the second consecutive quarter after eight quarters of outflows.

### Employment<sup>1</sup>

The economy lost 1,800 jobs in April as declines in part-time positions offset gains in full-time. Employment rose 1.6% y/y, reflecting employment gains in the private sector (+1.4% y/y) and full-time work (+2.6% y/y).

### Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>

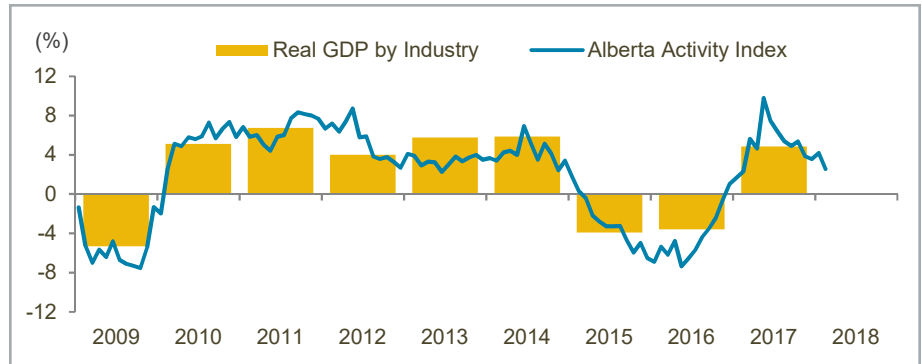
Alberta's unemployment rate increase by 0.4 percentage point to 6.7% in April. Canada's unemployment rate stood unchanged at 5.8%.

### Rigs Drilling

The number of active rigs in Alberta averaged 80 in April, down 5.3% y/y. The average rig utilization rate was 19%, unchanged from a year ago.

### Economic Activity

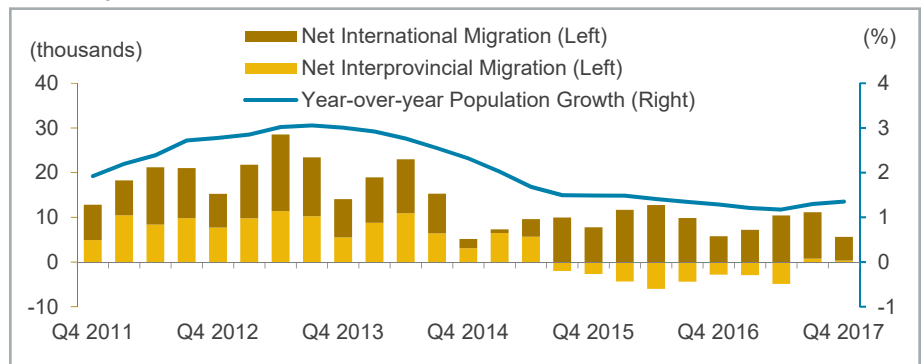
Year-over-year % change



Sources: Statistics Canada and Alberta Treasury Board and Finance

### Demographics

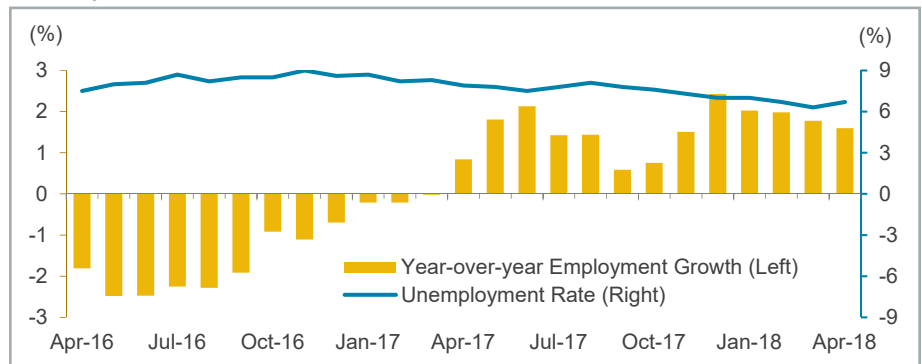
Quarterly



Source: Statistics Canada

### Labour Market

Monthly



Source: Statistics Canada

### Inflation

The inflation rate in Alberta held steady at 2.3% y/y in April, slightly above the national average. Inflation excluding food and energy also held firm at 1.3% y/y.

### Average Weekly Earnings<sup>1</sup>

Average weekly earnings (AWE) in Alberta increased 1.1% m/m in February to \$1,158. Earnings have improved 4.3% y/y driven by gains in both the goods and services sectors.

### Retail Sales<sup>1</sup>

Alberta retail sales increased 0.3% m/m to \$6.8 billion in March. Retail sales were up 2.5% y/y, the sixteenth consecutive month of year-over-year gains.

### Housing Starts<sup>1</sup>

Alberta housing starts rose by 10% m/m in April to 29,695 units (annualized). They were down 5.2% y/y, with both single-family (-6.5% y/y) and multi-family (-7.5% y/y) housing starts lower than the elevated levels from a year ago.

### New Housing Price Index

In March, Alberta's New Housing Price Index (NHPI) ticked down 0.4% y/y. The house-only component fell (-0.9% y/y) while land prices were up (+0.6% y/y).

### Building Permits<sup>1</sup>

Alberta building permits were up 9.3% y/y in March to \$1.3 billion, as an increase in residential permits (+21% y/y) more than offset a decline in non-residential permits (-7.4% y/y).

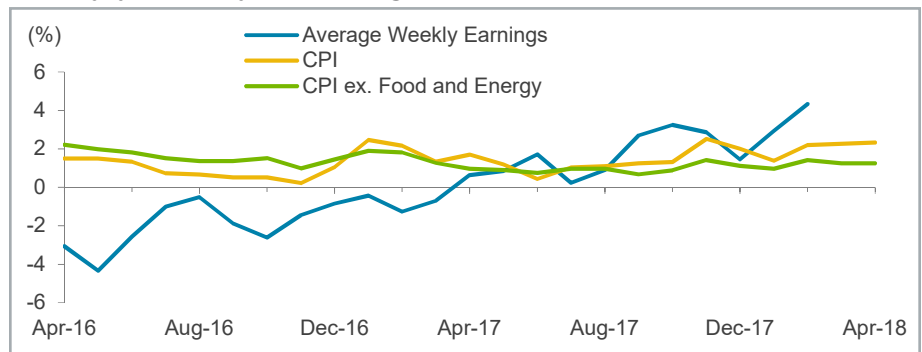
<sup>1</sup> Seasonally adjusted

### Contact

[Robert Van Blyderveen](#) 780.638.5628

### Inflation and Earnings

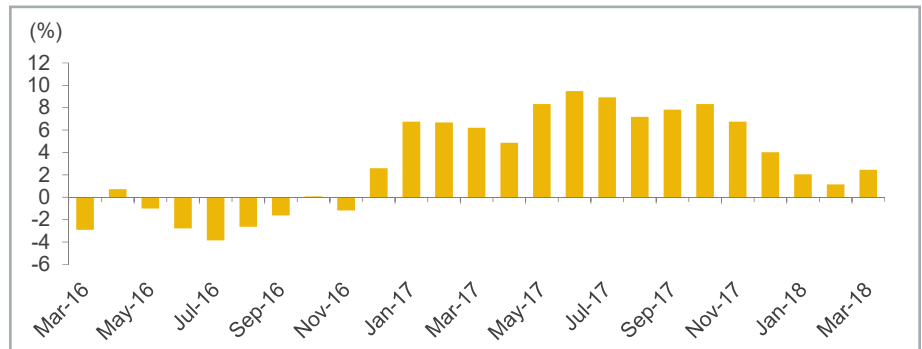
Monthly, year-over-year % change



Source: Statistics Canada

### Retail Sales

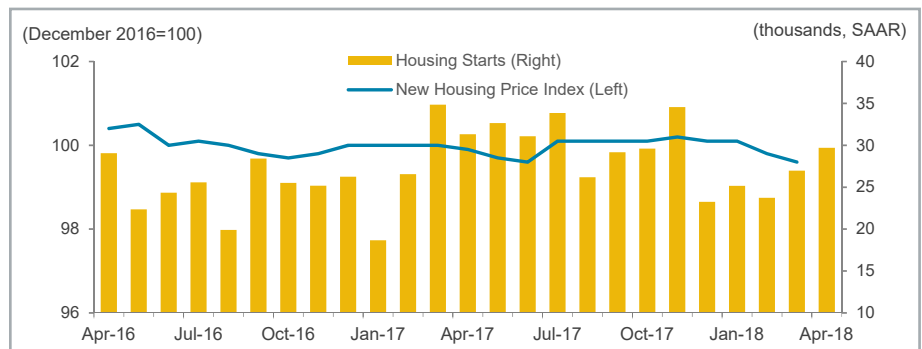
Monthly, year-over-year % change



Source: Statistics Canada

### Housing Market

Monthly



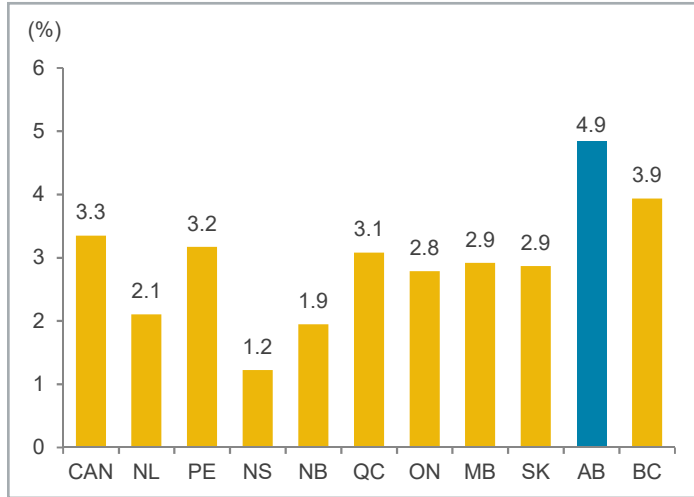
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

	Canadian Dollar (US¢/\$CAN)	WTI Oil (\$US/bbl)	NYMEX Natural Gas (\$US/MMBtu)	Alberta Reference Price (\$¢/GJ)
<b>Latest (May 24, 2018)</b>	77.57	70.71	2.94	1.54 (March)
<b>Fiscal year-to-date</b>	78.23	68.27	2.76	1.82 (2017-18)

Please see the [Weekly Economic Review](#) for current analysis on the Alberta economy.

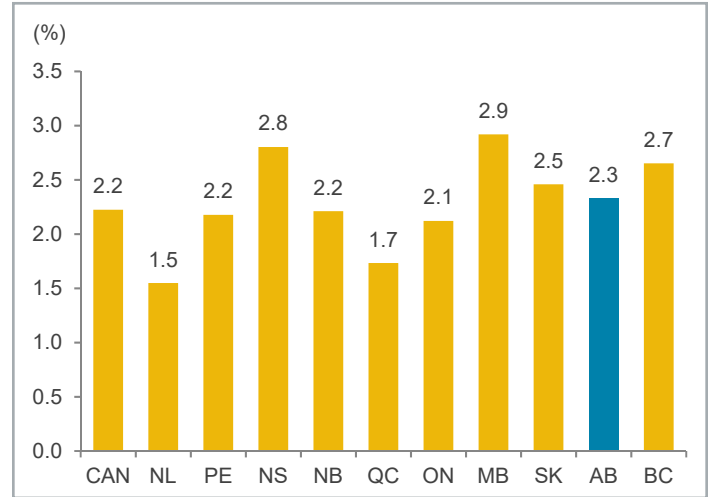
**Real GDP by Industry**

(2017, year-over-year growth)



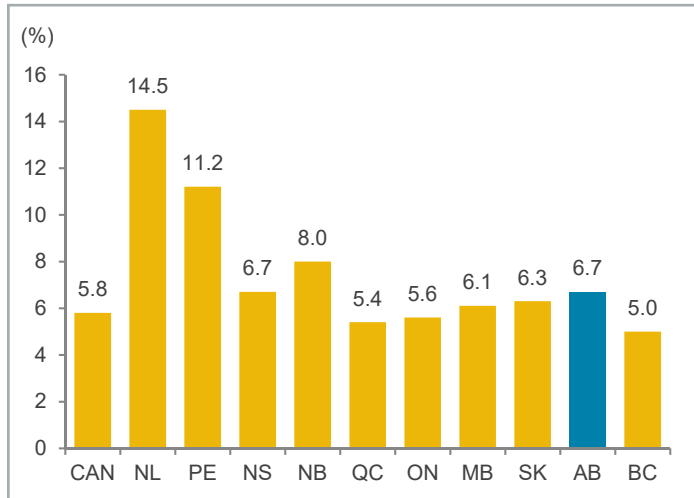
**CPI Inflation**

(April 2018, year-over-year growth)



**Unemployment Rate**

(April 2018)



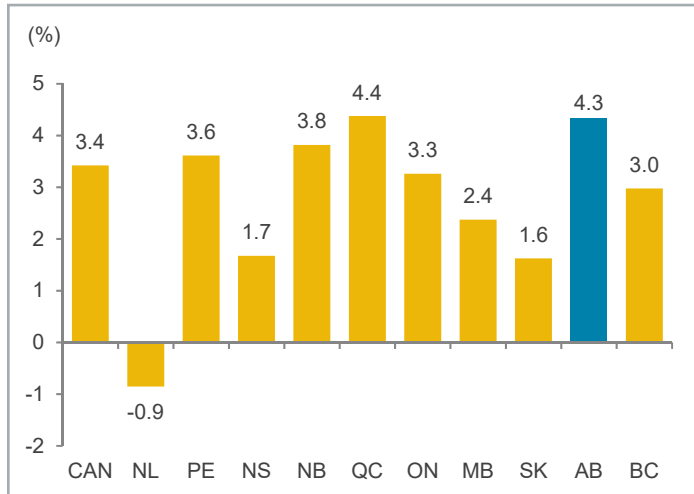
**Employment**

(April 2018, year-over-year growth)



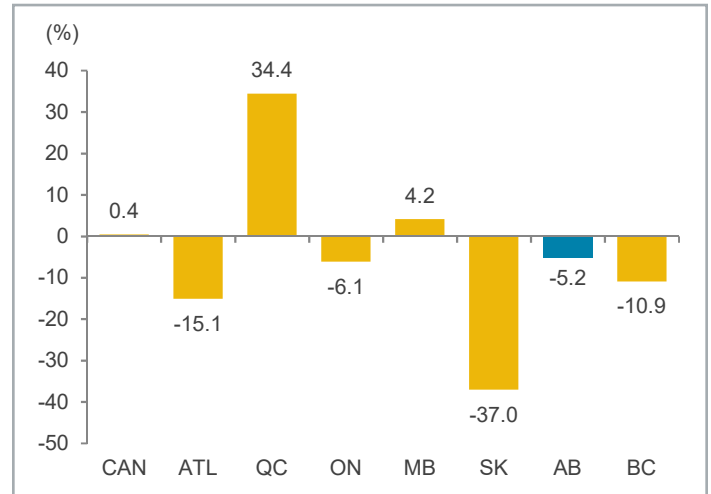
**Average Weekly Earnings**

(February 2018, year-over-year growth)



**Housing Starts**

(April 2018, SAAR, year-over-year growth)



# Alberta Economic Indicators

	2016	2017	2018YTD	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18
Alberta Activity Index (y/y % change)	-4.4	5.1	3.4	3.9	3.6	4.2	2.5		
<b>Population<sup>1</sup></b>									
Population (thousands)	4,236	4,286	4,319			4,319			
y/y % change	1.4	1.2	1.4			1.4			
Net Interprovincial Migration	-15,108	-15,131	1,045			302			
Net International Migration	42,102	33,210	15,660			5,297			
<b>Labour Market</b>									
Employment (thousands, SA)	2,264	2,287	2,320	2,300	2,320	2,315	2,317	2,325	2,323
m/m change (thousands)				7.1	20.4	-5.9	2.3	8.3	-1.8
y/y % change	-1.6	1.0	1.8	1.5	2.4	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.6
Unemployment Rate (% , SA)	8.1	7.8	6.7	7.3	7.0	7.0	6.7	6.3	6.7
Participation Rate (% , SA)	72.5	72.4	72.0	72.1	72.4	72.2	71.9	71.9	72.0
Average Weekly Earnings (\$ , SA)	1,119	1,130	1,152	1,147	1,149	1,145	1,158		
y/y % change	-2.4	1.0	3.6	2.9	1.5	2.9	4.3		
<b>Household Sector</b>									
Retail Sales (\$ million, SA)	74,997	80,318	20,220	6,749	6,678	6,736	6,733	6,751	
y/y % change	-1.1	7.1	1.9	6.8	4.0	2.0	1.2	2.5	
New Vehicle Sales (units, thousands)	224	249	53	19	16	16	15	21	
y/y % change	-7.6	11.3	-2.9	-0.6	0.5	7.5	-8.3	-5.9	
Consumer Price Index (y/y % change)	1.1	1.6	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.4	2.2	2.3	2.3
Excluding Food & Energy	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.3
Housing Starts (SAAR, 000's)	24.5	29.5	26.4	34.6	23.2	25.2	23.7	27.0	29.7
y/y % change	-34.2	20.1	-5.2	37.3	-11.4	34.8	-10.7	-22.6	-5.2
New Housing Price Index (y/y % change)	-0.5	-0.2	-0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1	-0.2	-0.4	
Resale Home Sales	54,848	57,220	17,972	4,755	5,678	5,003	4,512	4,265	4,192
y/y % change	-7.6	4.3	-7.7	11.5	17.8	3.9	-11.1	-11.1	-12.3
Sales to New Listing Ratio	0.50	0.50	0.47	0.50	0.58	0.54	0.49	0.43	0.42
MLS Average Resale Prices (\$ thousands)	397	398	391	387	386	395	396	387	384
y/y % change	0.3	0.4	-2.1	-3.2	-4.6	-0.9	0.2	-3.6	-4.0
Consumer Bankruptcies (level)	5,427	5,008	767	403	350	383	384		
y/y % change	26.8	-7.7	-6.1	-13.3	-12.7	-2.0	-9.9		
<b>Business Sector</b>									
Goods Exports (customs based,\$ million)	79,213	100,167	27,019	8,490	9,032	10,044	7,832	9,144	
y/y % change	-14.3	26.5	4.2	8.1	13.9	18.2	-4.0	-1.4	
Energy Products (\$ million)	51,594	69,526	19,120	5,867	6,456	7,434	5,496	6,190	
y/y% change	-17.5	34.8	3.1	6.2	16.5	20.7	-8.5	-3.0	
Agricultural Products (\$ million)	6,284	7,316	1,789	654	607	667	450	672	
y/y % change	-2.9	16.4	-3.0	7.1	9.6	6.3	-14.8	-2.5	
Rigs Drilling	79	131	158	143	155	197	211	142	80
y/y% change	-34.0	66.0	1.8	32.4	2.9	-0.9	12.4	-4.0	-5.3
Manufacturing Shipments (\$ million, SA)	62,597	70,940	18,462	6,126	6,198	6,199	6,105	6,159	
y/y% change	-8.1	13.3	7.5	11.6	11.8	10.6	6.9	5.2	
<b>NEW</b> Wholesale Trade (\$ million, SA)	71,442	78,032	20,235	6,610	6,637	6,700	6,790	6,744	
y/y% change	-9.8	9.2	8.5	11.7	8.0	10.0	10.0	5.6	
Building Permits (\$ million, SA)	14,200	14,245	3,701	1,288	1,130	1,106	1,286	1,310	
y/y% change	-15.2	0.3	3.2	18.1	35.4	-12.2	14.1	9.3	
Residential Permits (\$ million, SA)	7,930	8,400	2,390	715	760	689	851	850	
y/y % change	-19.7	5.9	18.6	12.6	69.7	7.0	27.0	21.2	
Non-Residential Permits (\$ million, SA)	6,270	5,845	1,311	574	371	417	435	460	
y/y% change	-8.8	-6.8	-16.4	25.7	-4.3	-32.4	-4.8	-7.4	
<b>NEW</b> Non-Res. Building Cons. Price Index <sup>2</sup> (y/y % change)	-2.8	1.0	1.3		1.6			1.3	

<sup>1</sup> Population data presented on a census year basis (July 1– June 30).  
The current census year 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Quarterly, average of Calgary and Edmonton

**YTD** YTD (year-to-date). "SA" denotes seasonally adjusted. "SAAR" denotes seasonally adjusted at annual rate. All annual data is unadjusted.

**Sources:** All data is from Statistics Canada except the Alberta Activity Index (Alberta Treasury Board and Finance), Housing Starts (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), MLS Average Resale Prices (Canadian Real Estate Association), Rigs Drilling (Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors) and Bankruptcies (Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada). All historical data are subject to revision