



Private sector powers April job gains

THE ECONOMY in Canada shifted into high gear in April, adding an extraordinary 108,700 jobs during the month, Statistics Canada says.

The gain reported Friday was the biggest ever recorded by Statistics Canada in number terms, and the biggest in percentage terms since August 2002.

"[It] blew past expectations by a few galaxies," BMO economist Doug Porter said, noting it was well ahead of the 17,900 gain in March and the consensus expectation of 24,000 net new jobs.

The Canadian dollar got a boost from the report, which indicated that private-sector em-

ployers had begun to hire again last month — a sign of economic recovery.

The loonie had been at about 95.6 cents US just before the 7 a.m. ET release and gained about half a cent just after the announcement, reducing some of the currency's losses from Thursday when the loonie dropped about two cents.

Statistics Canada said the country added 44,000 full-time jobs last month and all were in the private sector. There were also 65,000 part-time jobs added. The average hourly salary increased by two percent during the month, a rate of growth similar to those observed since January 2010.

Employment increased across all age groups, and among both men and women. But because more Canadians went looking for work in April, the unemployment rate only dropped one-tenth of a point to 8.1 percent.

RECOVERY SINCE JULY 2009

"The gain in April was of a similar magnitude to some of the monthly losses observed in the most recent employment downturn, which began in the fall of 2008," Statistics Canada noted.

Since July 2009, when the recovery appears to have begun on the jobs front, the Canadian economy has added 285,000 jobs. That compares to 387,000 jobs lost during the recession overall.

Some economists had expected that the end of Olympic activities in March would show up in the employment data for April. But the post-Olympic swoon was minimal, with only a 13,600 loss in the food services and accommodation sector.

"There is simply no denying that Canada's job market is in full-fledged recovery mode," Porter said.

Manufacturing lost 21,000 positions, and agriculture shed 10,000 jobs. All provinces were in the plus column, with Ontario leading the way with a 40,500 increase.

The data is consistent with other data showing the Canadian economy is leaping forward from last year's recession. The final quarter of 2009 saw a five percent increase in output, and the just-past first quarter is believed to have advanced by about six percent.

The strong jobs report increases the likelihood that the Bank of Canada will opt to hike interest rates at its next policy decision in June.

Companies recognized for workplace health, safety performance

Awards celebrate innovation, leadership and improvement

THE Occupational Health and Safety Council has recognized eight Alberta companies for their workplace health and safety performance. The award winners were chosen from nominations submitted from across Alberta.

"Maintaining safe workplaces is about teamwork," said Thomas Lukaszuk, Minister of Employment and Immigration. "Success comes from the employer and workers accepting responsibility and following through."

As part of the Work Safe Alberta initiative, the Occupational Health and Safety Council sponsors three workplace health and safety awards. The purpose of these awards is to

recognize the excellent work being done in the field of health and safety by organizations and individuals in the province, and to encourage others to follow these examples.

"One of our most important functions in occupational health and safety is recognizing innovations and methods that improve safety and reduce the potential of injury," said Tim Bennett, Occupational Health and Safety Council Chair. "These companies are definitely worthy of recognition."

Information on the 2010 Workplace Health and Safety Awards, including the application process, can be found at www.employment.alberta.ca/whs-awards or by calling toll free anywhere in Alberta 1-866-415-8690 (780-415-8690 in Edmonton and area).

Source: The Government of Alberta

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