



London Labour Market Monitor

~December 2009~

The Labour Market Monitor is an overview of the **London Economic Region** including Oxford, Elgin and Middlesex counties. This monthly report is produced by the local area Labour Market Information Analyst. For further information, contact: mary.fox@servicecanada.gc.ca

Labour Force Trends/Survey

From December 2008 to December 2009, the London economic region saw its labour force decrease slightly by 1,400 as fewer people were working or searching for work. Net employment in the London economic region fell by 4,600. All job losses came from full-time employment (-9,500) partially offset by part-time employment gains (+4,800). Declining employment caused the employment rate to drop by 1.5 percentage points to 61.4%. The number of unemployed people increased by 3,100 since December 2008, causing the unemployment rate to rise from 7.2% to 8.1%. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate rose from 6.4% to 8.3%. For more information, please visit the Statistics Canada website at: <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfss05d-eng.htm>

Labour Market News by Industry

Accommodations and Food Services

The Metro Hotel opened in London. More than \$4-million in renovations converted the former retail space into a new boutique hotel.

The Little Red Roaster opened its sixth location in London at Masonville Place mall. A seventh location is scheduled to open in February 2010 in the new Renaissance residential building.

The Exhale Lounge opened in London.

Braise Food and Wine, a fine dining restaurant, opened on Dundas Street in London.

Business Building and Other Support Services

Over 55 (London) Inc., a member-based job-finding service for older workers will receive

\$168,460 in federal and provincial funding. The money will be used to hire five older workers to create a marketing plan for the agency.

Construction

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports there were 146 housing starts in the London and St. Thomas area in November compared to 111 starts in November 2008.

Building permits in London are expected to increase during the last few months of 2009. In January, the city will raise development charges on new homes to \$22,921 from \$17,005 and as such, builders are applying for more permits before the end of 2009. While the city has a large inventory of newer homes on the resale market, improved sales are expected in 2010.

Goodwill Industries in London received \$7.8-million in federal and provincial infrastructure funding. The money will be used to build an \$11.7-million regional headquarters. The new centre will include a store, training and employment counselling facilities and meeting space. The project will create numerous construction jobs and about 100 permanent jobs at the agency.

The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) Museum in London received a \$1.5-million federal grant to renovate and expand their facility beginning in April 2010. The new funding helped the museum reach its \$2.3-million goal.

Two non-profit agencies in Oxford County will share more than \$1.5-million in funding from the federal government Infrastructure Fund and the Ontario provincial 2009 budget. The Alzheimer Society of Oxford will receive \$1.0-million to build a new office and the Woodstock Agricultural Society will receive almost \$560,000 for upgrades to the Oxford Auditorium. Both agencies must raise additional funds to cover the cost of their projects.

The North America Railway Hall of Fame in St. Thomas will receive almost \$1.1-million under the federal-provincial Economic Action Plan for

building restoration upgrades. The Hall of Fame must raise \$546,400 to qualify for the grants.

Construction has started on two six-unit affordable-housing complexes in St. Thomas. The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing program funded the building project.

Several London agencies received federal and provincial funding for construction projects including: Ronald McDonald House, the Grand Theatre, Easter Seals, Youth Opportunities Unlimited and Hutton House.

Educational Services

Fanshawe College received \$2.3-million from the Government of Canada's College and Community Innovation (CCI) Program to fund green energy research. The funding will be used for ongoing projects studying solar power, wind energy and bio-mass and bio-fuel. Research is also being done on applying green energy to business and industries.

The college will also receive \$2.5-million from the provincial government for new equipment and upgrades. The money will purchase a variety of medical machines and technical equipment.

Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing

Home sales in the London-St. Thomas area increased 56.0% in December compared to a year earlier. Nearly 440 homes sold during the month compared to 281 in December 2008. Overall home sales in 2009 fell 3.4% to 8,070 units. The London St. Thomas Association of Realtors (LSTAR) forecasts housing sales to remain strong in the first months of 2010.

Health Care and Social Services

Renovations are underway to transform a former TD Canada Trust bank into the interim home of the new Woodstock and area Community Health Centre. Renovations are expected to be completed by the end of January 2010. The new centre will employ physicians, nurses, community workers and dieticians offering a variety of health programs and services.

Four agencies serving seniors will share \$94,400 in grants from the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program. The groups include: the Alzheimer Society of Oxford, Oxford County Elder Abuse Network, the Women's

Employment Resource Centre and the Norwich Township recreation and fellowship program.

St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital announced that 20 transitional care beds in its Continuing Care Centre (CCC) will close in February 2010. The hospital plans to re-open 17 other beds removed from service during the summer. With retirements and attrition, no more than two layoffs are expected at the CCC.

Manufacturing - Automotive

The Toyota plant in Woodstock is adding a second shift in March 2010. About 800 new production workers are being hired, boosting production to 150,000 RAV4s annually. The increased production will create spinoff jobs for the 54 area parts suppliers. Some estimates suggest that every major assembly job creates up to six other positions in spinoff businesses. About 2,000 people will work at the Toyota plant when full production begins in the spring.

Due to the General Motors (GM) buyout of Suzuki at the CAMI Automotive plant in Ingersoll, up to 300 salaried positions may be eliminated. About 450 salaried employees currently work at the plant that is returning to full production. With full ownership by GM, there are duplicate administration departments in Oshawa and Ingersoll.

Manufacturing - General

General Dynamics Land Systems Canada advertised for more than 200 engineers and technologists at their London facility. A variety of positions are available in the plant's engineering department which currently employs 461 people. The new staff will work in various areas including: System Engineering, Design Engineering, Human Factors Engineering, Design Services, Technical Writing, Technical Illustration and Diagnostic Engineering. With the new hires, more than 700 people will work in the engineering department at the plant.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Amos Photography opened in Woodstock.

Transportation and Warehousing

London Transit workers ended their month-long strike by ratifying an agreement that provides a 13.2% increase in wages and benefits. By the end of the contract, hourly wages for drivers will

rise to \$26.00 from \$23.08. Wages for mechanics and other skill-trades workers will increase to \$30.29 from \$28.81.

Utilities

Rumble Energy of Toronto is installing solar panels on rooftops in London. Building owners will receive up to \$22,000 annually for 20 years for a 40,000 square foot roof. London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) believes this will attract businesses to the city.

Wholesale and Retail Trade

Nicole Harriot Fashions and Accessories opened in London.

A new Shoppers Drug Mart opened in Dorchester. The expanded store employs 35 people, almost double the number who worked at the smaller location.

Rodak's Acoustic Boutique opened in Woodstock offering a variety of guitars and accessories.

R-Safety Sales recently opened in St. Thomas selling a variety of work clothing, safety equipment and tools.

Other Labour Market News

Under the Government of Canada's Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) program, the federal and Ontario governments will spend a combined \$58.5-million to help retrain older workers who have lost their jobs. The federal government will contribute \$49.1-million and the provincial government \$9.4-million over three years to provide 5,000 older workers with income support and skills training.

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (Fed Dev Ontario) is accepting applications under the second phase of the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF). The projects must be located in a southern Ontario community with a population of less than 250,000 people. The second phase provides \$127.8-million in funding for the 2010-2011 period. Applications will be accepted until January 18, 2010. Additional funding information can be found at southernontario.gc.ca.

The provincial government has updated its online Ontario Job Futures publication. The new

edition offers current trends and future outlooks to 2013 for 190 occupations. The publication is available at www.tcu.gov.on.ca.

Future Demand for Workers

A new report by the Information Communications Technology Council (ICIC) suggests there may be a demand for close to 12,000 IT-related jobs with health-specific skill sets within the next five years. The study, *Health Informatics and Health Information Management*, also sets out the skill requirements needed for people working with electronic health records. Additional information about the report is available at www.itworldcanada.com.

A new survey from Robert Half Technology shows that 44% of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) questioned in Canada believe that retaining existing IT staff will be their top priority in 2010. Survey responses suggested ways to retain experienced staff including offering more training and professional development, career advancement opportunities, recognizing excellence, providing project support, better communications, team-building activities and promoting work-life balance. Additional survey information is available at [Robert Half Technology](http://RobertHalfTechnology.com).

The *2010 Canadian Hiring Forecast* published by CareerBuilder.ca shows that almost 30% of surveyed employers plan to hire full-time, permanent workers in 2010, more than the 18% reported for 2009. A further 48% expect no change in their hiring practices and 9% plan to decrease staffing levels. The online survey found that the top priority for more than half of employers is filling technology positions. Other staffing priorities include hiring business development, marketing and sales workers. More information on the report is available at www.newswire.ca.

Note: In preparing this bulletin, Service Canada has taken care to provide clients with labour market information from reliable sources that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since the bulletin was published. Readers are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this bulletin does not necessarily reflect official policies of Service Canada.