



Labour Market Bulletin

Saskatchewan

January 2020



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Saskatchewan, including Regina-Moose Mountain, Swift Current-Moose Jaw, Saskatoon-Biggar, Yorkton-Melville and Prince Albert and Northern economic regions.

OVERVIEW

Employment in Saskatchewan stood at 580,200 in January, after adding 1,200 positions (+0.2%) over the month. Year over year, employment increased 3,500 (+0.6%). January's monthly employment gains were concentrated in part-time employment (+1,800), while full-time employment fell by 700 positions.

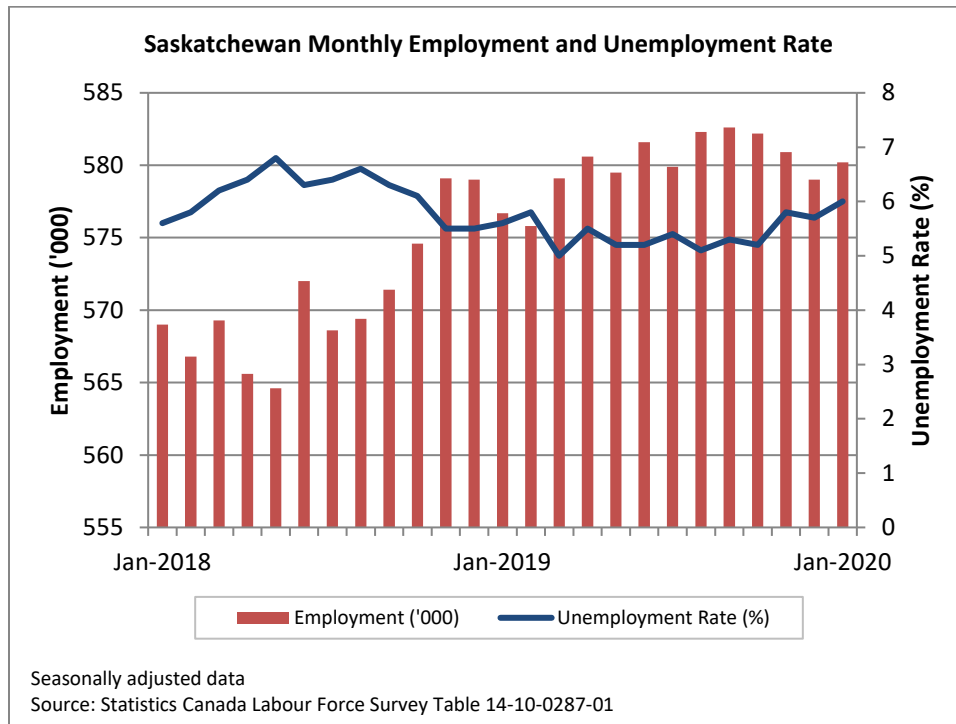
Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	January 2020	December 2019	January 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	893.1	893.1	887.5	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.6
Labour Force ('000)	617.5	614.2	610.9	3.3	0.5	6.6	1.1
Employment ('000)	580.2	579.0	576.7	1.2	0.2	3.5	0.6
Full-Time ('000)	477.0	477.7	472.0	-0.7	-0.1	5.0	1.1
Part-Time ('000)	103.2	101.4	104.8	1.8	1.8	-1.6	-1.5
Unemployment ('000)	37.3	35.2	34.1	2.1	6.0	3.2	9.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.0	5.7	5.6	0.3	-	0.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	69.1	68.8	68.8	0.3	-	0.3	-
Employment Rate (%)	65.0	64.8	65.0	0.2	-	0.0	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287-01, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

Self-employment and public sector employment decreased on a monthly basis – falling by 2,500 and 200, respectively. Meanwhile, the private sector added 3,900 positions in January.



According to the Conference Board of Canada, Saskatchewan’s real GDP is expected to grow a modest 1.0% in 2020. The provincial economy slipped into a mild recession in 2019 as strained relations with China impacted agriculture exports, potash and uranium mining slowed due to softening demand, and capital spending dropped as major construction projects wound down.¹

The provincial unemployment rate increased 0.3 percentage points in January. It stands at 6.0%, the highest it has been since November 2018. Overall, Saskatchewan’s unemployment rate edged above the national average of 5.5% for the second consecutive month.²

Saskatchewan Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	January 2020 (%)	December 2019 (%)	January 2019 (%)	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
				(% points)	(% points)
Total	6.0	5.7	5.6	0.3	0.4
25 years and over	4.5	4.4	4.8	0.1	-0.3
Men - 25 years and over	5.1	4.5	4.7	0.6	0.4
Women - 25 years and over	3.9	4.3	4.9	-0.4	-1.0
15 to 24 years	15.1	13.7	10.4	1.4	4.7
Men - 15 to 24 years	17.8	17.1	9.4	0.7	8.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	12.2	9.7	11.3	2.5	0.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

Unemployment by Major Demographic Group

Saskatchewan's youth (15 to 24 years) unemployment rate of 15.1% was more than three times the rate of those aged 25 years and over (4.5%) in January. While young women continued to fare better than their male counterparts, the gap between them narrowed in the past month. The unemployment rate for young women increased 2.5 percentage points to 12.2% in January while the rate for young men edged up 0.7 percentage points to 17.8%.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Saskatchewan's services-producing sector added 1,100 positions in January, with gains occurring in all but three industries. Meanwhile, employment was virtually unchanged in the goods-producing sector. On an annual basis, there was strong employment growth in the services-producing sector (+8,700), while employment in the goods-producing sector fell 5,200.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	January 2020	December 2019	January 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	580.2	579.0	576.7	1.2	0.2	3.5	0.6
Goods-producing sector	141.9	141.9	147.1	0.0	0.0	-5.2	-3.5
Agriculture	39.9	39.4	39.3	0.5	1.3	0.6	1.5
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	20.5	20.7	22.2	-0.2	-1.0	-1.7	-7.7
Utilities	5.7	5.6	6.9	0.1	1.8	-1.2	-17.4
Construction	42.9	44.8	48.9	-1.9	-4.2	-6.0	-12.3
Manufacturing	32.8	31.4	29.8	1.4	4.5	3.0	10.1
Services-producing sector	438.3	437.2	429.6	1.1	0.3	8.7	2.0
Trade	83.4	83.9	86.9	-0.5	-0.6	-3.5	-4.0
Transportation and warehousing	26.0	25.9	27.3	0.1	0.4	-1.3	-4.8
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	30.9	30.7	29.9	0.2	0.7	1.0	3.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	27.9	27.1	27.0	0.8	3.0	0.9	3.3
Business, building and other support services	15.6	15.6	16.4	0.0	0.0	-0.8	-4.9
Educational services	46.9	47.0	44.4	-0.1	-0.2	2.5	5.6
Health care and social assistance	80.5	80.0	81.0	0.5	0.6	-0.5	-0.6
Information, culture and recreation	23.5	23.0	19.9	0.5	2.2	3.6	18.1
Accommodation and food services	40.8	41.8	39.6	-1.0	-2.4	1.2	3.0
Other services	29.2	28.8	26.7	0.4	1.4	2.5	9.4
Public administration	33.6	33.4	30.4	0.2	0.6	3.2	10.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355, formerly CANSIM 282-0088

Within the goods-producing sector, the number of people working in **construction** fell 1,900 in January. The industry saw the largest yearly drop in employment across all industries, shedding 6,000 positions since January 2019. The completion of a number of large multi-year projects, combined with sluggish residential construction activity across Saskatchewan, may be driving the decline.

Saskatchewan's resource extraction industry (**forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**) shed 200 positions in January but remained relatively stable year-over-year, despite ongoing global uncertainties. Saskatchewan potash companies continue to adjust operations in response to weak market conditions caused by excess inventory, surplus production capacity, and decreased global demand. Mosaic Company announced it was extending the shutdown at its Colonsay mine indefinitely.³ In contrast, Nutrien will resume production at its Vanscoy mine in March.⁴ The company responded to its own overcapacity issues by idling operations for varying lengths of time at its Allan, Lanigan and Rocanville mines over the past six months.

Saskatchewan's **agriculture** industry saw moderate employment gains (+500) in January, even though farmers continue to face trade and weather challenges. Industry stakeholders and government are pursuing new initiatives to ensure producers and agri-businesses remain competitive. For example, higher exports to European countries have compensated for the loss of Chinese markets blocked by China's ban on Canadian canola seed imports.⁵ On the research front, Corteva Agriscience, Bunge Canada, and Botaneco received \$27.6 million through the federal and industry funded Protein Industries Canada supercluster.⁶ The companies' hope to breed high-protein canola using gene-editing technology that will result in greater economic benefits across the entire Canadian value chain.

In the services-producing sector, the **accommodation and food services** industry saw the largest monthly decline in employment (-1000), followed by the **trade** industry (-500). The trade industry continues to be impacted by trade uncertainties with China and was hindered by a recent strike at Canadian National Railway that halted all commodity shipments to the coast.

Meanwhile, Saskatchewan's public sector industries saw mixed results in a monthly basis; **educational services** shed 100 positions, while **healthcare and social assistance**, and **public administration** added 500 and 200 positions, respectively.

The welfare of Indigenous youth is one area of focus for the public sector. Indigenous Services Canada increased funding towards mental health services for Indigenous children and youth to \$34.5 million following several incidents of self-harm in northern Saskatchewan communities. The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations will use the funding to develop a suicide prevention strategy and to provide culture-based programs, services and activities to promote youth empowerment, health and healing.⁷

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment is up in four of Saskatchewan's five economic regions on an annual basis. On a percentage basis, Swift Current-Moose Jaw led the province in job growth (+5.5%), followed by Prince Albert and Northern (+3.4%).

Year-over-year employment in **Regina-Moose Mountain** is down (-6,200) due to significant losses in the trade (-2,600), agriculture (-2,500), and accommodation and food services (-1,900) industries. An ongoing labour dispute at the Regina Co-op Refinery Complex is contributing to the local downturn. The city's retail sector is also seeing the impact of several previously announced departures as Bentley, Eddie Bauer and Volcom closed their doors following the holiday season. Overall, the regional unemployment rate increased 1.8 percentage points to 6.1% over the past year.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	January 2020 ('000)	January 2019 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	January 2020 (%)	January 2019 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Saskatchewan	577.9	572.9	0.9	5.7	5.4	0.3
Economic Regions						
Regina - Moose Mountain	179.7	185.9	-3.3	6.1	4.3	1.8
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	53.4	50.6	5.5	4.3	4.7	-0.4
Saskatoon - Biggar	207.8	203.9	1.9	5.5	5.6	-0.1
Yorkton - Melville	37.6	36.4	3.3	5.5	4.0	1.5
Prince Albert and Northern	99.4	96.1	3.4	6.0	7.8	-1.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0293, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

The **Swift Current-Moose Jaw** region continues to have the province's lowest unemployment rate at 4.3%. Employment in the region is up year-over-year, with 2,800 new positions added primarily in the services-producing sector. Opportunities in the goods-producing sector may improve in the coming year as North American Helium and Weil Group Resources revisit the commercial viability of their Saskatchewan helium properties. The Weil Group recently drilled a new well to restore output for its Mankota processing plant, while North American Helium has tentative plans to open its own helium processing plant by mid-2020.⁸

Saskatoon-Biggar's labour market posted strong results over the past year as it continued to lead the province in employment growth (+3,900). The region's growing reputation as a technology hub continues to attract new businesses, reflected by the 2,400 new jobs added in the information, culture and recreation industry over the past year.

The number of people working in **Prince Albert and Northern** increased 3,300 an annual basis. A number of construction projects are underway or scheduled to begin in 2020 that could stimulate employment growth in the region. Among these is a new 72-bed long-term care home in Meadow Lake that replaces the 55-bed Northland Pioneers Lodge.

Note: In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information 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 this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.

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For information on the Labour Force Survey, please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: www.statcan.gc.ca

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¹ The Conference Board of Canada – Provincial Outlook Economic Forecast: Saskatchewan – Autumn 2019; January 10, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=10568>

² Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01 Labour force characteristics, monthly, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle, last 5 months. Accessed on February 7, 2020 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410028701>

³ Mosaic, Mosaic Announces Indefinite Idling of the Colonsay Mine and Related Changes in the Fourth Quarter of 2019; January 28, 2020. Retrieved from: <http://investors.mosaicco.com/file/Index?KeyFile=402477795>

⁴ Global News, Nutrien to resume operations at Vanscoy, Sask potash mine; January 30, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/6485871/nutrien-operations-vanscoy-saskatchewan-potash-mine/>

⁵ Statistics Canada, Canadian international merchandise trade, November 2019; January 7, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200107/dq200107a-eng.htm>

⁶ Government of Canada, Supercluster launches project to breed high-protein canola; January 15, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2020/01/supercluster-launches-project-to-breed-high-protein-canola.html>

⁷ Government of Canada, Youth Empowerment and Healing and Wellness Investment for First Nations Communities; December 19, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/12/youth-empowerment-and-healing-and-wellness-investment-for-first-nations-communities.html>

⁸ CBC News, Sask Helium drilling could provide new prospects for struggling oilpatch; January 6, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/sask-helium-drilling-oilpatch-1.5415930>