



**CANADA-PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (LMDA)
ANNUAL PLAN 2014-15**

One Island Community



One Island Future



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Introduction

SkillsPEI, a division of the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning is responsible for the management and administration of labour market development programs. Within the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning there are three key partners who share broad responsibility for both economic and labour market development portfolios (Innovation PEI, Post Secondary and Continuing Education and SkillsPEI). This collaboration creates opportunities for strategies and tactics that more closely aligns the labour market development needs of Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward Island continues to transform its economy through a commitment to build economic strength in every sector. In order to achieve this, the province will continue to strive for continued economic expansion and diversification, enhanced income levels, greater self-reliance and continued population growth.

While the primary industries of agriculture, fisheries and tourism continue to contribute to positive economic growth, the provincial government has been actively encouraging the growth of economic opportunities. As noted in the Speech from the Throne, November 2013, the government of Prince Edward Island will continue to put an emphasis on manufacturing and small business development. The government will also continue to pursue business expansion in rural Prince Edward Island and provide assistance to our primary industries through loan programs and other incentives.

Prince Edward Island's economy expanded by 1.5 per cent in 2012. Prince Edward Island was the only province in the Atlantic region to post economic growth. Growth was primarily driven by a 3.7 per cent increase in exports.¹

The labour force on Prince Edward Island was approximately 83,700 in 2013 an increase of approximately 1700 individuals over 2012. Employment has averaged 74,100 persons through December 2013, an increase of 1.8 per cent over 2012. This is the third fastest expansion in the country behind Saskatchewan and Alberta. In 2013, full-time employment has increased by 1.2 per cent and part-time employment by 4.8 per cent over 2012. The unemployment rate has averaged 11.5 per cent over this time frame, up by 0.2 from one year ago.²

¹ Prince Edward Island Fall Economic Update 2013 (Economics, Statistics & Federal Fiscal Relations)

² Prince Edward Island Labour Force Survey 2013 Annual Report (Economics, Statistics & Federal Fiscal Relations)

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Reforms to the Employment Insurance (EI) program announced in the Federal Government's 2012 budget and the recent administrative changes are expected to affect the way in which labour market programs are developed and delivered across the province over time.

Although the economy and employment has expanded, the demographics of PEI's population and labour force continue to shift. An aging workforce, a decline in immigration and inter provincial out-migration presents a major challenge to the province's future economic growth.

In 2012, there was an interprovincial outmigration of approximately 4153 individuals from Prince Edward Island, of which 50% were working age population under the age of 35³ and approximately 46% of the labour force in Prince Edward Island is 45 or older.⁴ With this weaker demographic outlook and a growing demand for skilled labour to meet new opportunities, there is a potential for a skills mismatch in the labour market.

Business owners together with their employees are essential in moving Prince Edward Island's economy forward. As a large proportion of Prince Edward Island's private sector is comprised of small and medium sized businesses, it is critical for programs and services to remain flexible in order to maximize opportunities for Island workers while strengthening our industries.

In order to meet labour market demands and achieve sustainable labor market growth, it is essential that stakeholders including employers, industry, educational institutions and governments continue to work together. This collaborative effort will enable Islanders to gain relevant educational and work experience to successfully transition into the labour market.

³ Statistics Canada Table 051-0012

⁴ Statistics Canada Table 282-0002

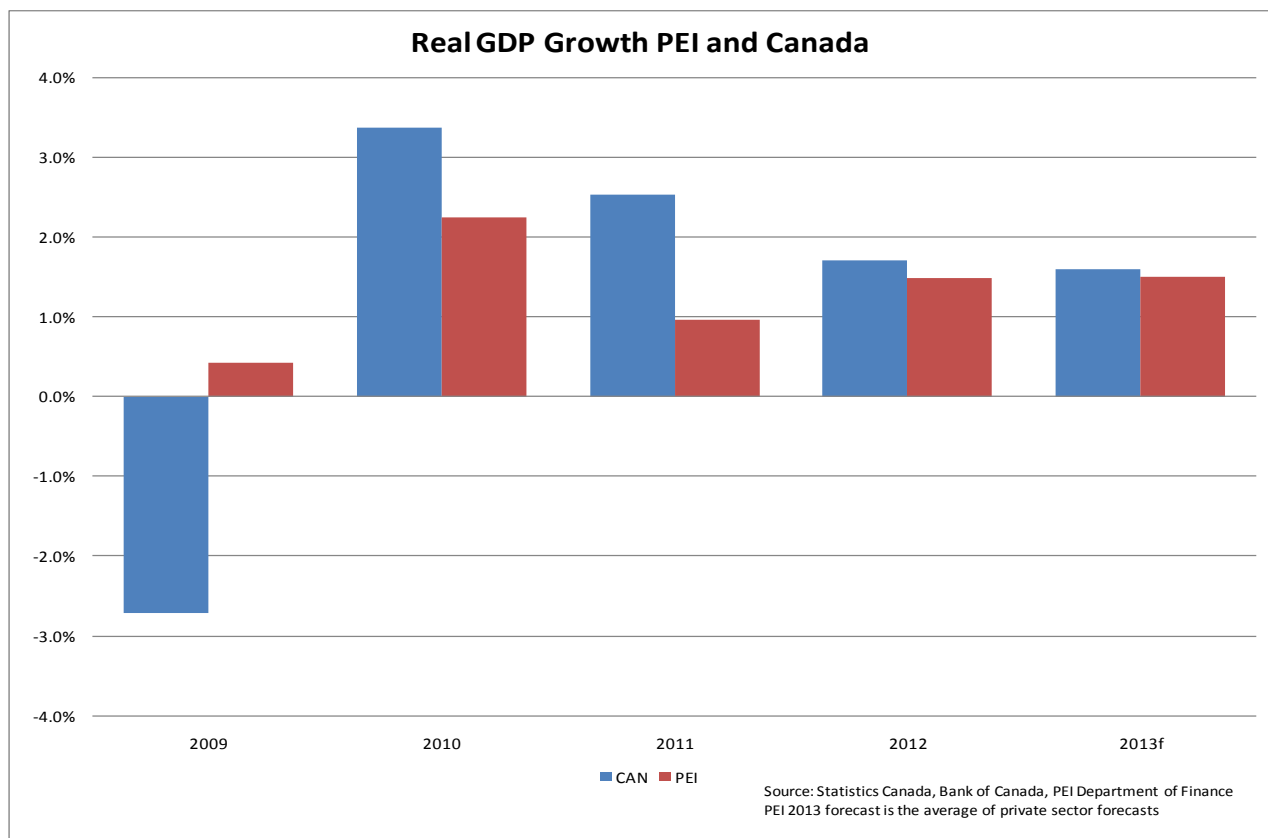
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Environmental Scan ⁵

Provincial Economy

Prince Edward Island's economy expanded by 1.5 per cent in 2012. Prince Edward Island was the only province in the Atlantic region to post economic growth, and along with Quebec, posted the fastest economic growth east of Manitoba. Growth was driven primarily by a 3.7 per cent increase in exports, a notable exception to most other provinces. Final domestic demand decreased 0.6 per cent after two years of growth, while household consumption expenditures increased 1.0 per cent. Government gross fixed capital formation declined 15 per cent as several major projects were completed, while business investment increased 1.9 per cent. Imports increased 2.7 per cent. Private sector forecasts place 2013 real GDP growth in a range between 1.2 and 1.5 per cent.



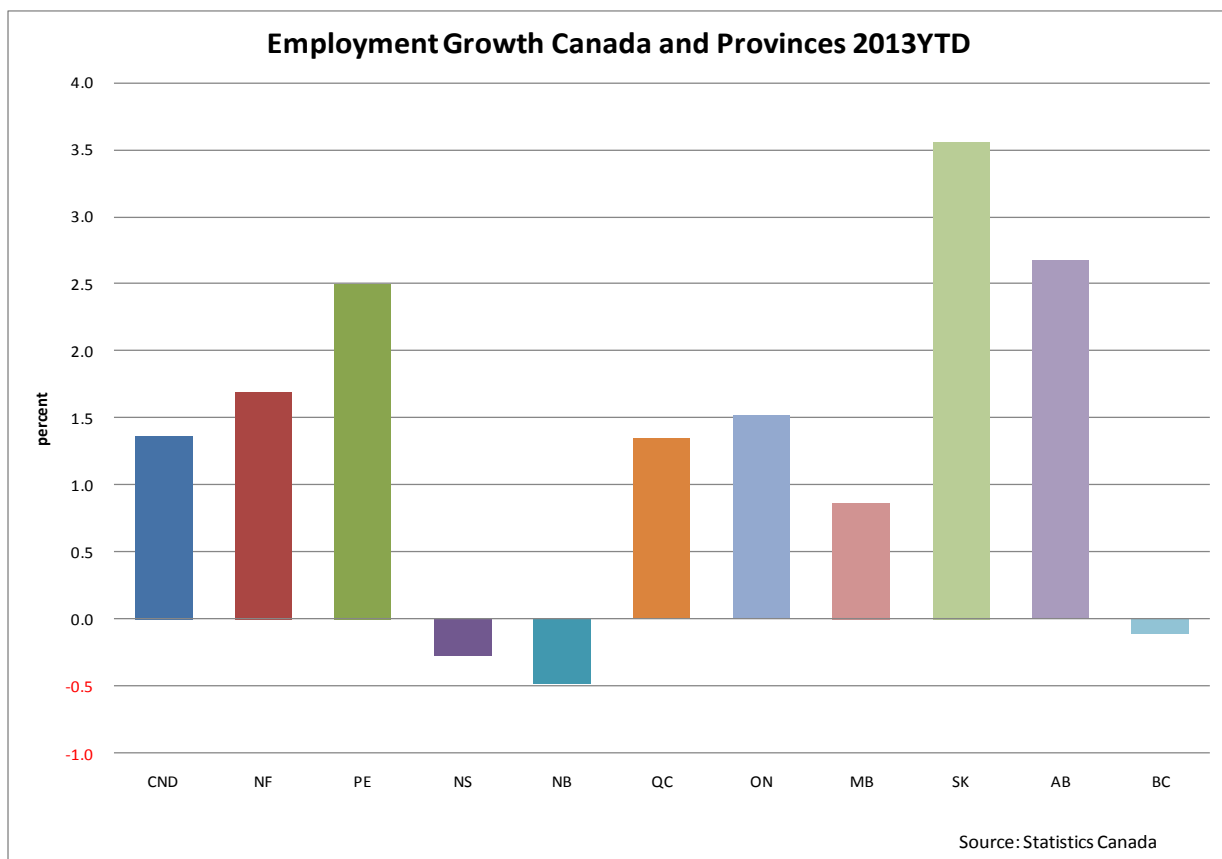
⁵ A combination of the Prince Edward Island 2013 Fall Economic Update and Statistics Canada Data.

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Employment

Employment has averaged 74,300 people through October of 2013, an increase of 2.5 per cent from the same period in 2012. Employment growth on the Island has been the third fastest in the country behind Saskatchewan, at 3.6 per cent, and Alberta at 2.7 per cent. Employment has increase in both full-time, up 1.6 per cent and part-time, up 6.7 per cent year-to-date. The unemployment rate has averaged 11.3 per cent over this time frame, down 0.1 percentage points from one year ago. Employment gains have occurred in the service producing industries, while there have been employment losses in the goods producing industries. Notable employment gains have been in trade, construction, educational services, and information, culture and recreation. Notable employment losses have occurred in other primary industries, professional, scientific and technical services, management, administration and other support services and transportation and warehousing.



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According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the labour force on the Island also continues to expand, up 2.5 per cent on a year-to-date basis through October, to average 83,800 persons. The participation rate has averaged 69.4 per cent, up 1.5 percentage points from the same period in 2012, where it averaged 67.9 per cent. Prince Edward Island had the third highest participation rate amongst provinces behind Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Wage growth has not grown as fast as employment growth on the Island, as average weekly wages have expanded 1.6 per cent on a year-to-date basis through August. Average weekly wages have grown 2.6 per cent in the service sector, while wages have fallen 2.7 per cent in the goods sector. For Canada, as a whole, average weekly wages have increased 2.0 per cent over this time period, with wages in the goods sector growing at 2.3 per cent and wages in the service sector growing at 1.9 per cent.

Retail Sales and Motor Vehicle Sales

The total value of seasonally adjusted retail sales increased 1.2 per cent on a year-to-date basis through August. On an unadjusted basis, Prince Edward Island has seen increased sales at gasoline stations, furniture stores, home furnishing stores, and health and personal care stores, while sales have declined at building centre and garden stores, supermarkets and electronic and appliance stores. Within the region, retail sales in Newfoundland and Labrador have grown 4.6 per cent, while sales in Nova Scotia have grown 1.6 per cent. Sales have declined 0.4 per cent in New Brunswick. Nationally retail sales have increased 2.1 per cent.

The sale of new motor vehicles increased 13.3 per cent on a year-to-date basis through September. During the same time, the value of new motor vehicles sold increased 16.1 per cent. Nationally, the sale of new motor vehicles increased 3.0 per cent, while the value of those vehicles increased 6.1 per cent.

Consumer Prices

The all-items consumer price index has increased 1.8 per cent year-to-date through September. Food costs have increased 0.9 per cent, while energy costs have increased 4.2 per cent. Shelter costs have increased 2.0 per cent over this period. Core inflation (the measure of inflation excluding volatile components such as food and energy) on the Island is 1.7 per cent year-to-date.

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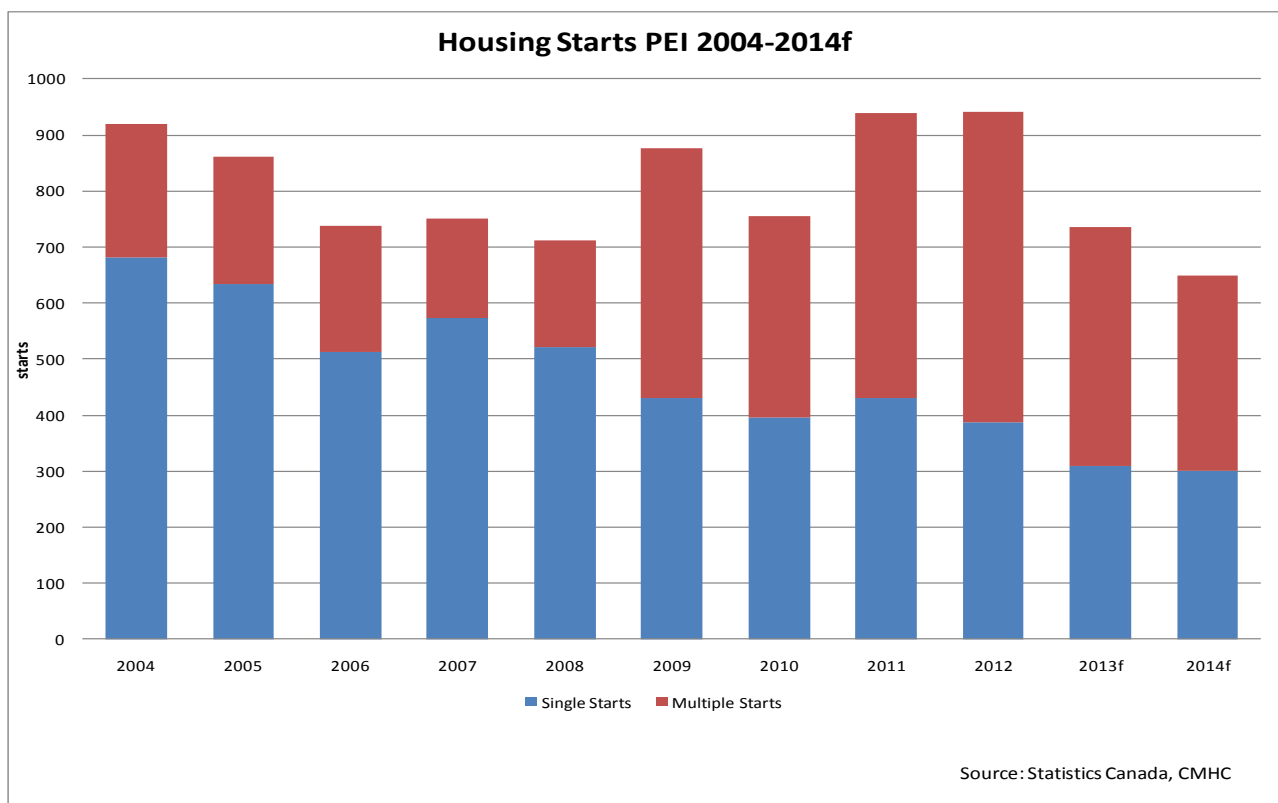
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Construction and Housing

Capital expenditure intentions in 2013 are forecast to increase by 7.1 per cent over 2012 levels to reach \$1.06 billion. Increases in capital expenditure intentions are a result of increases in both construction, up 5 per cent, and machinery and equipment, up 11.7 per cent. The increase in capital expenditure intentions are largely the result of increased public spending, notably on the 30MW Hermanville-Clear Springs wind farm.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of non-residential investment has decreased 14.5 per cent through the first three quarters of 2013 as compared to the same period in 2012. All components of non-residential construction recorded declines, with commercial investment down 3.7 per cent, industrial investment down 52 per cent and government and institutional investment down 7.3 per cent. National growth in non-residential construction has increased 2.0 per cent over the same period.

Residential housing starts are down 24.9 per cent through three quarters of 2013, as compared to the same period in 2012. Starts are down across all categories of housing with single starts down 19.2 per cent, semi-detached homes down 8.3 per cent, apartments down 19.8 per cent, and row houses down 73.2 per cent.



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The recent strong performance in housing starts was due to multiple unit construction primarily destined for the rental market. With the new supply of rental accommodations now entering the market, the October 2013 vacancy rate for the Charlottetown area as forecast by Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) was 9.0 per cent. As can be seen in the chart above, multiple starts are forecast to decline from the elevated levels seen in 2011 and 2012, but will continue to account for more than half of all new starts on the Island in 2013 and 2014. Canada Mortgage and Housing's forecast for 2013 starts is 735 units.

According to CMHC, existing home sales are projected to decline 11.7 per cent in 2013 from 1,614 units to 1,425 units, while the average price of resale homes is projected to increase by 1.8 per cent to \$155,000. New housing prices continue to increase on Prince Edward Island, up 0.3 per cent year to date through August.

Manufacturing Shipments and Exports

The value of manufacturing shipments from Prince Edward Island has increase 7.6 per cent on a year to date basis through September, continuing the recovery in shipments that began in 2011. The value of international exports from Prince Edward Island has increased 0.4 per cent on a year-to-date basis through September. The increase in exports is being largely driven by a 5.4 per cent increase in frozen food manufacturing, the Island's largest export industry. After a boat tie-up at the beginning of the lobster season resulted in a decrease in production of fish products, exports of seafood product preparation and packaging have begun to recover, expanding by 0.4 per cent year-to-date. Declines in exports were primarily in the aerospace sector, with aerospace products and parts manufacturing down 10 per cent, and engine, turbine and power transmission equipment manufacturing down 16.8 per cent year-to-date.

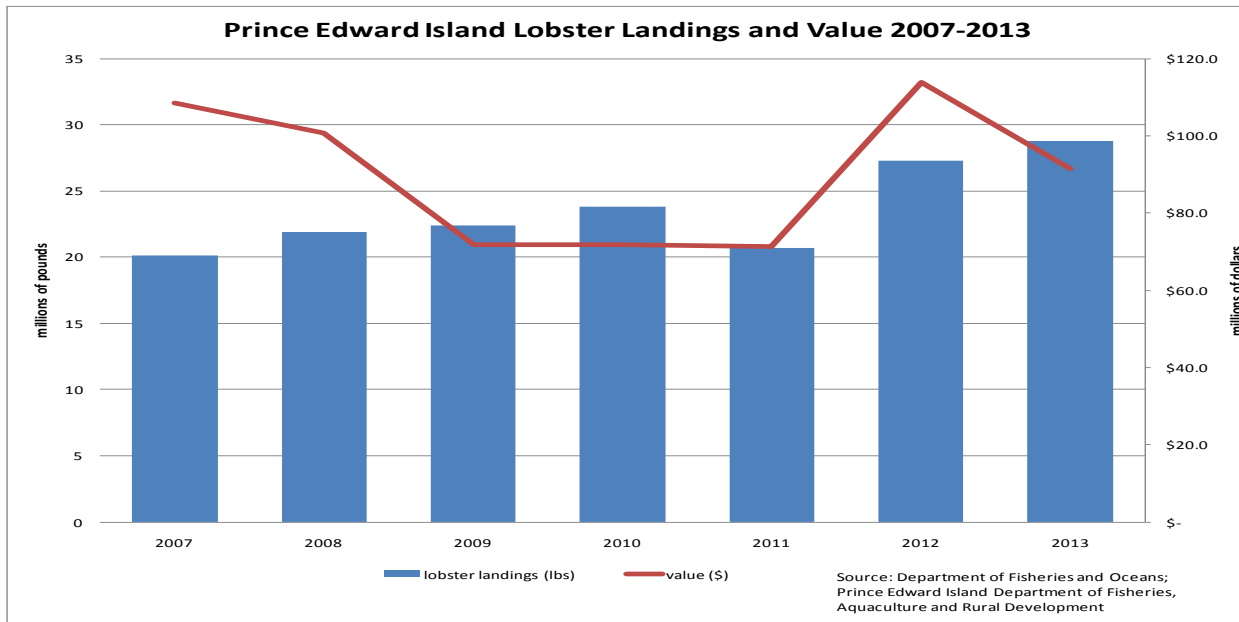
Primary Industries

Fishing

The lobster fishery landed 28.8 million pounds of lobster in 2013, an increase of 5.6 per cent from 2012 levels, and a new all-time high. The value of the lobster catch decreased by \$22 million from 113.8 million in 2012 to \$91.4 million in 2013 due to low prices. Lobster accounts for approximately sixty per cent of the landed value of the fishery on Prince Edward Island

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Farming

Overall, farming saw a successful season on Prince Edward Island in 2013. Good harvest conditions benefitted the potato and soybean industries, while the apple and blueberry industries have seen strong sales this year. Strawberry growers suffered from virus problems with their crop, resulting in smaller yields, while yields for raspberry producers were also smaller this year.

There were 89,000 acres of potatoes planted on Prince Edward Island in 2013, a decrease of 500 acres from 2012. Excellent harvesting conditions meant that the majority of the potato crop was harvested and in storage before the end of October. The quality of this year's potato crop is very good, and the size of the crop is close to the ten-year average.

The price of average commercial potatoes declined 7.7 per cent on a year-to-date basis through September, while the price of seed potatoes has increased 1.9 per cent over the same time period. The price of soybeans, the second largest crop by seeded area and value on the Island, increased by 5.6 per cent year-to-date through September. There are now approximately 60,000 acres of soybeans planted on Prince Edward Island. The price of slaughter cattle has increased 1.1 per cent over this time period, while the price of feeder cattle has declined 9.3 per cent. The prices for chicken and eggs have increased 5.4 and 5.5 per cent respectively, while the price of hogs has increased 6.1 per cent over this time period.

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Tourism

The 2013 cruise ship season was the largest the Island has ever seen. There were 69 ships and 93,000 passengers who visited the Island this cruise season, a 35 per cent increase in the number of ships, and a 38 per cent increase in the number of passengers. Motor coach traffic also saw a large increase in 2013, and has increased 30.7 per cent year-to-date through September. Other forms of traffic to the Island all recorded declines year-to-date through September, with bridge traffic down 3.0 per cent, air traffic down 0.9 per cent, while ferry traffic to the Island has decreased 1.7 per cent.

Accommodation data supplied by the Department of Tourism and Culture show that total overnight stays are up 1.9 per cent year-to-date through September. Camping has fared well this year, likely due to the long stretches of clear weather experienced throughout the main tourism season. Site night's sold have increased 5.9 per cent. Stays at fixed roof accommodations were flat year-to-date through September.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, sales at food services and drinking places increased 2.7 per cent on a year-to-date basis through August. Nationally, sales at food services and drinking places advanced 4.7 per cent over this time period.

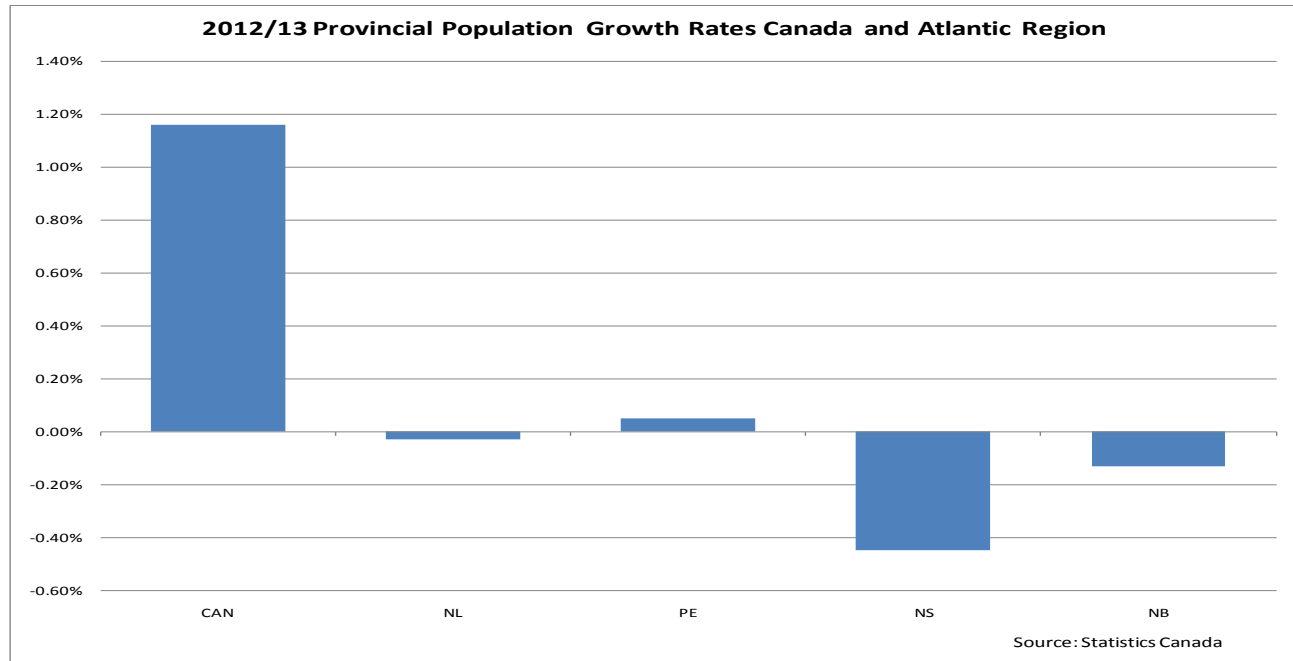
Population

As of July 1, 2013, Prince Edward Island's population is estimated to be 145,273. This represents a yearly increase of 72 persons and a 0.05 per cent annual growth rate. The declining growth rate is due largely to a decline in the number of international immigrants and an increase in the number of inter-provincial out migrants. The latest population estimates are now based on the 2011 Census counts adjusted for census net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated Indian reserves.

International migration continues to be an important, but declining, factor in population growth for PEI. From July 2012 to June 2013, 863 international immigrants came to the province, a decline of 37.4% from the previous year. At a rate of 5.9 per thousand, the province has gone from having the third highest immigration rate in the country to the seventh. The immigration rate for Canada remained at 7.5 per thousand. A total of 3,146 inter-provincial in migrants came to PEI in 2012/13, while 4,220 people left the province for other areas of Canada for a net interprovincial loss of 1,074 persons. There were 1,440 births and 1,287 deaths on Prince Edward Island from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, resulting in natural growth (births minus deaths) of 153.

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Outlook 2014

Due to the industrial mix found on Prince Edward Island, the economic situation has been more stable compared to other parts of the country. Though many of the downside risks identified in previous reports have materialized, the global economic situation is more stable than at this time last year. It is not expected that the world economy will return to recession, and though advanced economies are beginning to see stronger economic growth, public sector deleveraging and fiscal consolidation will continue to slow growth in advanced economies throughout the near term.

Prince Edward Island is not immune from these external factors, and will be indirectly affected. Consequently, the economic outlook for 2013 and 2014 is that growth will be moderate. Private sector forecasts for Prince Edward Island for 2013 range from 1.2 to 1.5 per cent, while forecasts for 2014 range from a low of 1.0 per cent to a high of 1.7 per cent.

Employment growth has been strong through 2013 year to date, and is expected to moderate into 2014. Federal and provincial job reductions in the near term are projected to limit growth in overall employment, though recent events in the aerospace, bioscience and food manufacturing sectors are expected to increase employment in those industries. Housing starts and resale activity are expected to moderate further in 2014. According to CMHC, starts are projected to decline to 650 units, or by 11.6 per cent in 2014, while resale activity will decline by 5.2 per cent to 1,350 units.

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Immigration levels experienced a falling back from recent heights in 2012 as changes to the provincial nominee program begin to take effect. Due to these changes, immigration levels going forward are projected to be approximately 1,100 persons – higher than the historical average – but lower than recent years.

The province's primary industries and manufacturing sectors are expected to contribute positively to growth through the end of 2013 and into 2014. Capital spending will return to historic levels in 2013 due to the conclusion of the provincial stimulus program, though several private and public sector projects are expected to provide support to the Island construction industry through 2013 and into 2014. These projects include, but are not limited to, the ongoing provincial manor replacement project, the expansion of the Wyman's blueberry plant in Morell, and ongoing retail expansion in the Charlottetown area.

The tourism sector is projected to contribute positively to economic growth through 2014. The 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown conference is likely to boost tourism activity next year, while the Charlottetown convention centre, which opened this August, will see an increase in the number of conventions hosted on the Island. According to Meetings and Conventions PEI, convention bookings for 2014 are up 75 per cent compared to 2013. It is expected that this increase will result in an additional 4,000 delegates visiting the Island next year.

Steps toward the resolution of the fiscal issues in the United States and Europe could provide upside risk to the forecast by improving market conditions and restoring confidence in the economy. A sustained lower value for the Canadian dollar could provide some relief to exporters currently struggling with high export costs. However, a further deterioration in either Europe or the United States could substantially weaken growth prospects going forward on a global basis.

Priority Focus

External Influences

Employment Insurance (E.I) Reform

In its March 29th, 2012 budget the Federal Government announced reforms to the Employment Insurance program. Changes relating to regular and fishing EI benefits were enacted in Bill C-38, the *Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act*, which came into force on April 1, 2013. Furthermore, on May 24th, 2012, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada announced further details of the changes as set out in a backgrounder, *Connecting Canadians with Available Jobs*.

With a strong presence of agriculture, fisheries and tourism, Prince Edward Island's economy is highly seasonal, accounting for its strong seasonal variation in employment and Employment Insurance (EI) claims. Found within the EI reforms were a number of measures, with potential adverse outcomes for Island claimants, targeted at tightening regulation, including:

- Increased enforceability around suitable employment and reasonable job search;
- Transition of the Best Weeks pilot into the EI program has resulted in less generous provisions for claimants with lower qualifying weeks;
- Changes to the Working While on Claim pilot saw the clawback increase to 50%, requiring claimants to work twice the hours to achieve the same pay;
- Sunset of the Extended EI pilot, which effectively removed five additional weeks of EI income for beneficiaries; and
- Increasing enforcement staff and standardizing and centralizing the appeals process.

Monitoring is on-going and the full impact of changes are not yet known, particularly those around implementation of changes to regulations for suitable employment and reasonable job search; however, as of November 2013 year-to-date, PEI beneficiaries are down 10% over the same period in 2012, whereas nationally, beneficiaries are down 4.4%.

The Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP) formed a joint working group, the Pan Atlantic Study of the Impact of Recent Changes to Employment Insurance, to examine impact of the reforms and to initiate provincial consultations. Consultations were implemented to gather input from affected and interested parties, on specific impacts of the changes to the EI Program experienced by workers, communities, and industries. A final report is expected this spring.

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Given the importance of seasonal industries in Atlantic Canada, CAP has expressed concern that EI reforms don't recognize the value of our skilled seasonal workforce. Additionally, new EI regulations have the potential to negatively impact seasonal operations via staff turnover. These workers are essential to the sustainability of our seasonal industries and as a result of reforms many employees with short-term labour market attachment are experiencing or expect to experience shorter claims and lower benefit rates, in addition to five fewer weeks of claim resulting from sunset of the Extended EI pilot.

On February 20, 2014, the federal government announced that effective October 12, 2014, PEI would be split into two economic regions, Charlottetown area and non-urban areas of PEI, for administration of the EI program. The estimated population in the two regions is 64,000 and 75,000, respectively. As the unemployment rate is typically higher in the non-urban areas of PEI versus Charlottetown region and it is the unemployment rate that determines number of hours required for qualification, length of draw and divisor, EI claimants in the non-urban areas of PEI region will experience slightly more favourable EI benefit regime. Conversely, those in the Charlottetown region will experience a less favourable EI benefits regime. These changes will have implications for provincial hiring/job creation programs. The province will have to evaluate implications for its training programs

Atlantic Workforce Partnership

In June 2012, the Council of Atlantic Premiers commissioned the Deputy Ministers' Steering Committee to establish an Atlantic Workforce Partnership (AWP) Working Group which includes Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. The AWP was established to identify potential areas of cooperation among respective jurisdictions, which includes the ability to respond collectively to large projects such as ship building, energy and other labour force priorities.

This collaboration model will assist Atlantic Provinces to;

- address skills deficits
- enhance training and apprenticeship
- recruit and retain immigrants
- develop regional perspectives on national programs
- address supply chain gaps

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Through consultations, the AWP is focusing on six priority areas which are in the interest of the Atlantic Provinces; Immigration and Attraction, Apprenticeship, Youth, Business Support, Federal Programs, and Labour Market Information.

An example of this collaboration is an initiative underway to create a common regional approach to apprenticeship to support greater mobility. The AWP was successful in preparing and gaining approval through Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP) and ESDC to proceed with a workplan to harmonize ten trades over the next four years.

Labour Market Consultations

To ensure programs and services continue to meet the needs of clients and align with the economic development plans of the province, SkillsPEI engaged in a consultation process that involved input from key stakeholders across Prince Edward Island. Through this process, feedback was gathered regarding labour market challenges and input received on the design and delivery of labour market programs. Aligning training programs and services with local labour market needs will promote opportunities for sustainable growth. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills to maximize their opportunities to participate in the labour market.

Following discussions with organizations responsible for administering employment services, community organizations engaged in supporting labour market development initiatives and industry representatives, it has become apparent that continued strategic investments in employment related interventions will be vital to ensure continued economic growth. Without access to a skilled workforce in both the rural and urban areas of the province, employers will have difficulty maintaining their current level of business and it will prove very challenging to consider expansion opportunities. Limited opportunities for economic growth will have a significant impact on the sustainability of a vibrant and skilled labour force.

It will be essential to ensure individuals have the opportunity to gain skills and experience necessary to successfully transition to sustainable employment. This can be achieved by providing programs and services which foster opportunities to gain and enhance job related skills of all Islanders.

In addition to annual stakeholder consultations which are part of the planning process, SkillsPEI remains engaged with stakeholders through on-going program delivery. This

engagement ensures programs and services remains responsive to local labour market needs.

Presently, the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning is also involved in a business survey that was initiated in early 2014. The survey was launched to approximately 2500 Prince Edward Island businesses in all sectors of the economy. The findings of the survey will help inform and guide the province's decision making, policy and program development in order to ensure that government is providing the proper supports to Prince Edward Island businesses. This survey is funded exclusively through the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

As well, the province continues to participate in joint tables with federal counterparts and representatives of the Aboriginal and Francophone communities. Through this approach, stakeholders exchange information on strategic developmental projects and share information on federal and provincial policies, programs and services that would benefit these groups.

Moving Forward Together

Prince Edward Island has established a network to provide services and programs to assist private sector employers and job seekers. While it is critical to continue this support, Prince Edward Island is committed to a direct approach to connect Islanders to the labour market and to increase the employment levels in the province.

Prince Edward Island has experienced an increase in inter-provincial out migration. With the combination of an aging workforce and out migration, it is important that Prince Edward Island create opportunities for individuals to gain long term sustainable employment. A vibrant economy will enable Islanders, in particular youth, to have the choice to remain in the province. If our economy is to grow, there needs to be an increased start up of new businesses and continued growth of existing businesses. By providing opportunities for individuals to gain relevant work experience in the private sector, employers gain access to skilled and capable new entrants which will assist in economic growth.

A large number of businesses on Prince Edward Island are small and medium sized enterprises. Over the past number of years Prince Edward Island has focused on

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diversifying its economy through innovation. In order to maximize these investments, it is essential for individuals to develop or enhance their entrepreneurial skills. This is achieved by providing opportunities to build entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes. Entrepreneurs create jobs for themselves and for others. Prince Edward Island remains committed to providing an environment to facilitate growth through small business development.

Through available programs, Prince Edward Island has provided funding support for employer based training initiatives. Subject to signing the Canada – Prince Edward Island Job Fund Agreement, the introduction of the Canada Job Grant will require an adjustment in the delivery of training programs for Island employers.

Collaboration between the business community, post secondary institutions and governments to promote an environment in which entrepreneurship can grow and prosper, will provide Islanders with opportunities to participate in a vibrant and sustainable labor market.

Summary

The LMDA implementation plan will provide Prince Edward Island with an opportunity to assist Islanders with programs and services to improve their labour force participation and to develop or enhance entrepreneurial skills that will provide an environment to facilitate economic growth through small business development.

Anticipated investments totaling approximately \$ 25.6 M in the upcoming fiscal year will enable employers, educators and other stakeholders to deliver tools that are necessary to build a skilled workforce.