

This week's economic indicators are positive. Employment climbed significantly in April, while building permits increased in March.

Employment in Ontario increased in April from March, according to the latest seasonally adjusted estimates from Statistics Canada. An estimated 6.62 million persons worked during the week of April 11-17, up 40,500 (0.6%) from March. That is a highly significant gain from a statistical and historical perspective, considering that the average monthly change over the past 34 years is 0.15%. Ontario's unemployment rate remained at 8.8%, as the labour force grew by the same amount as employment.

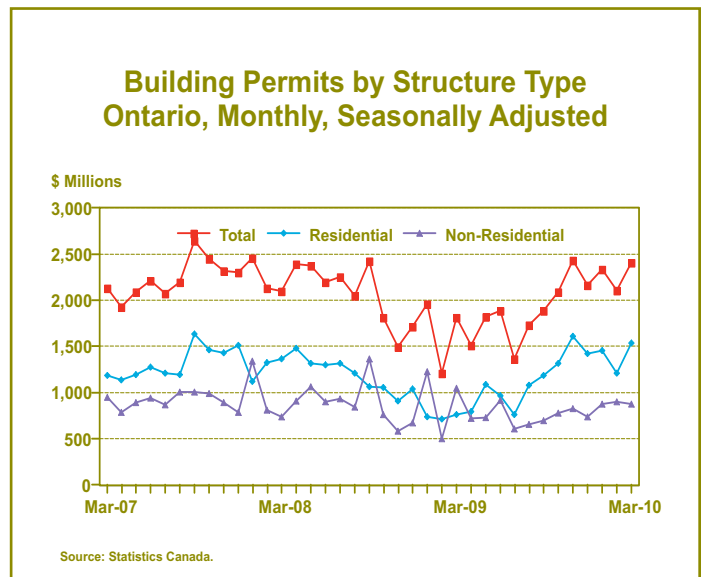
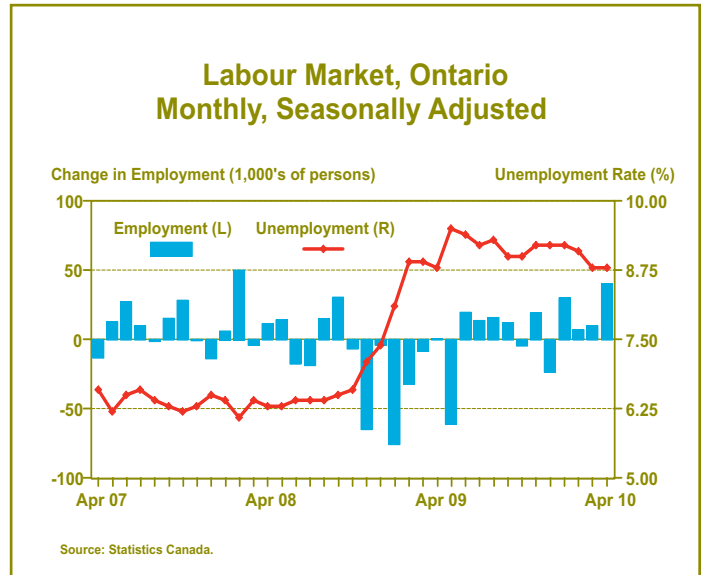
Net employment growth in March was almost entirely among men aged 25 years and over. Part-time employment increased more than full-time work. All of the net gain in jobs was among private-sector employees, as public-sector employees declined and self-employment was little changed.

Industry-wise, the number of persons employed in April increased in retail/wholesale trade, miscellaneous services, construction, business/building support services and information/recreation services. Gains in these industries were partly offset by declines in manufacturing and primary resources.

Regionally, employment has increased recently in all regions except for Hamilton-Niagara, which saw a decline. The strongest job growth lately has been in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie, Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor-Sarnia, Muskoka-Kawarthas and Stratford-Bruce regions.

Central 1 Credit Union forecasts the average level of employment in Ontario will rise 1.5% in 2010, following a 2.4% decline last year. This outlook for below-average job growth reflects weakness in America's economic recovery. More favourable economic conditions after 2010 will lead to higher job growth and a declining unemployment rate.

The value of **building permits** issued by local



governments in Ontario increased in March from February, according to the latest seasonally adjusted measurement from Statistics Canada. Overall building permits have essentially been on a level trend in Ontario for the latest six months. Residential building permits increased in March, while non-residential building permits held more or less steady.



Permits issued in March in Ontario totalled \$2.41 billion, up \$303 million (14%) from February. Nearly two-thirds of these permits were for residential buildings, which increased \$325 million (27%). Meanwhile, non-residential building permits inched down \$22 million (2%). Recent growth in non-residential permits has been entirely driven by commercial buildings, while permits for institutional/government buildings have trended downward and permits for industrial buildings have been level.

Most of Ontario's larger cities saw increased building permits in March, led by Toronto, Ottawa, London and Guelph. St. Catharines-Niagara, Thunder Bay and Peterborough also saw sizeable dollar gains in permits issued in March. The only larger cities seeing significantly lower permit values in March were Windsor, Kitchener and Oshawa.

Central 1 Credit Union forecasts residential investment spending will total \$41.5 billion in Ontario in 2010, up 12.1% from 2009. Gains will be largely due to new housing construction, while renovation spending remains more or less level. Non-residential construction spending is forecast to total \$12.6 billion, down 11.6% from 2009. Business investment spending is usually the last sector to recover after a recession and growth in Ontario's non-residential construction is not forecast until 2012.

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Non-Residential Building Permits Ontario, Monthly, Seasonally Adjusted

