



## Vehicle sales in B.C. climb in March and April

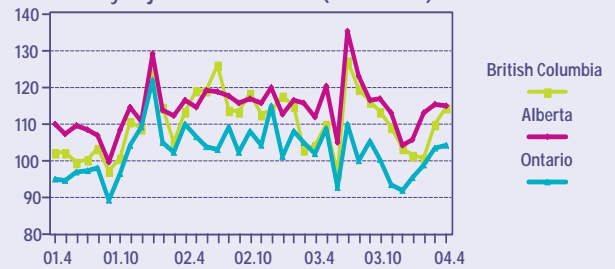
Total revenue from sales of new cars and trucks in B.C. climbed strongly in March and April, after excluding seasonal patterns. Seasonally adjusted sales totalled \$507 million in April, up 4% from March, which saw a 9% jump from February. Auto sales followed similar trends in Ontario and Alberta in March and April, except that growth rates were lower in those provinces and revenues ebbed in Alberta in April.

Auto sales revenue in B.C. reached an all-time high in July 2003, but slipped from then until March this year. Sales revenue also peaked in July last year in Alberta and Ontario, followed by ebbing sales in the second half of 2003. In all three provinces, total revenues from new vehicle sales were lower in 2003 than in 2002. Over the long run, sales revenues have grown strongly, particularly since the peak baby boom population in B.C. reached their twenties in the early 1980s.

With tame inflation and a maturing population, new vehicle revenues are projected to continue to climb, although at a less robust growth rate trend than seen over the past 20 years. **Credit Union Central** forecasts new vehicle sales in B.C. will contribute to growth in total retail sales of about 5% per year through 2005.

### Strong growth in BC auto sales in March and April

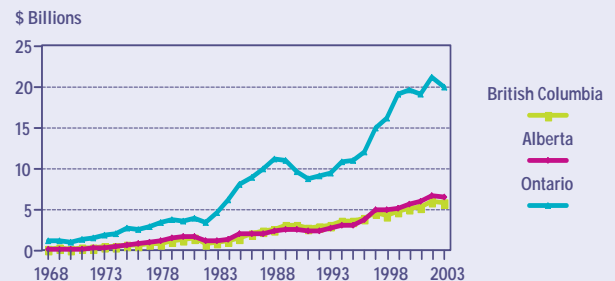
New Motor Vehicle Sales Revenue  
Selected Provinces, Monthly  
Seasonally Adjusted and Indexed (2000 = 100)



Source: Statistics Canada.

### New car and truck sales climb over long run but ebb in 2003

New Motor Vehicle Sales Revenue  
Selected Provinces, Annual



Source: Statistics Canada.

## Tourist traffic up in April

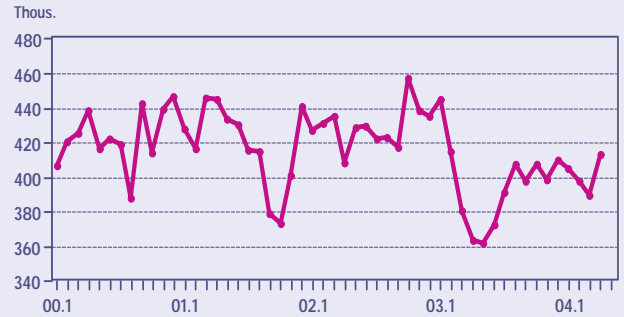
International tourism to B.C. bounced back rather sharply in April, with a 6% increase over March. U.S. tourist traffic was up 5%, while overseas tourist visits jumped by almost 9%. After a rather slow start to the year, April's level was the highest since February 2003, just before the Iraq invasion and SARS scare.

B.C.'s tourism industry went through a difficult period in 2003 and prospects appear brighter this year. The higher Canadian dollar is still a negative factor, but stronger U.S. and Pacific Rim economies provide some offset. The Canadian dollar is up, mostly against the U.S. currency, but down against the Japanese yen. Tourism traffic is expected to be higher this year by about 5% and possibly more. Last year's shock-related drop makes for a low comparison base, so exceeding last year's tourist count should be easy, barring another shock.

The return of international tourists will benefit mostly the Vancouver and Victoria markets since they capture the largest share of international visitors. The tourism sector in those markets experienced a weaker tourist season during 2003 than did other areas in B.C.

## Latest month up

International Tourists to B.C., Seasonally Adjusted



Source: Statistics Canada, CUCBC

Latest: Apr.

