

## March Labour Market Report for Saskatchewan

This report was prepared by the Sask Trends Monitor for the Saskatchewan Construction Association on April 7, 2017

### Provincial Employment

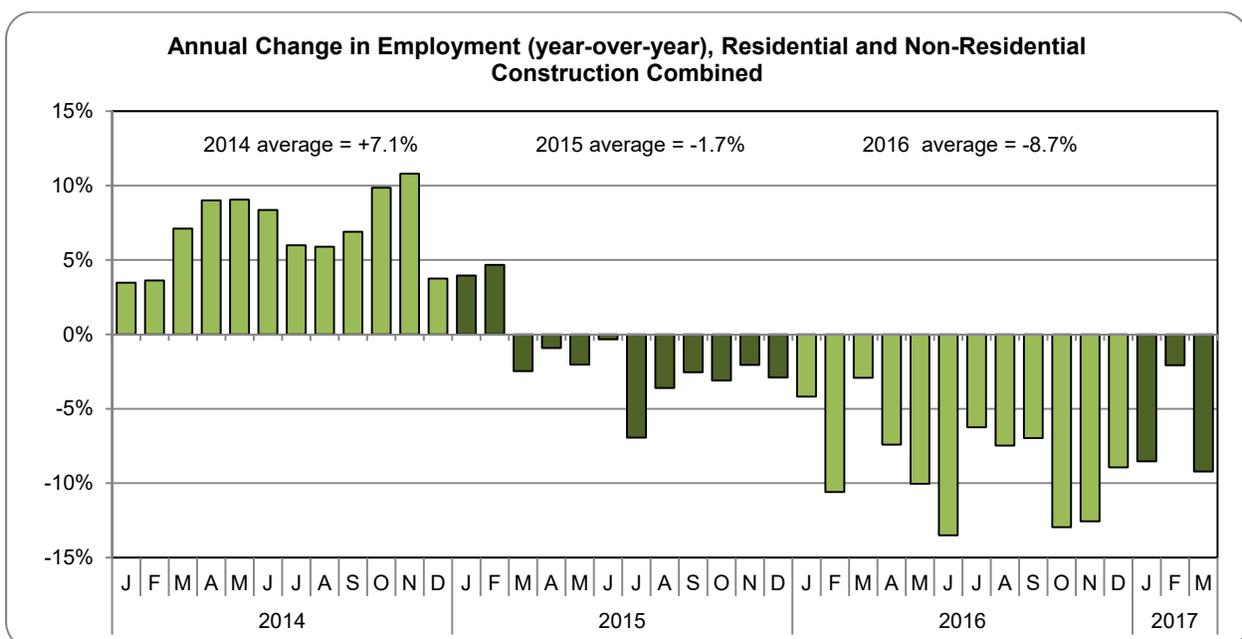
After the big jump in provincial employment in February, the March figures are still up on a year-over-year basis but with a much more realistic 0.4% increase to a total of 561,200 jobs. With two consecutive months of increases, it certainly looks like the labour market is turning the corner.

That provincial recovery is not yet evident in construction. Counting heavy construction and both the residential and non-residential building sectors, construction employment in March was 45,300 which is 9.2% lower than the 49,900 a year ago and near the annual for the 2016 calendar year. The year-to-date figures for the first quarter show a 6.7% decline.

The weak demand in March was concentrated in heavy and engineering construction. Compared with March a year ago employment is:

- down 25% in heavy and engineering construction;
- down 2% in residential and non-residential building construction; and
- down 9% in trade contracting firms.

The drop in employment was mainly among the self-employed (-21%); the number of paid workers in construction declined by 3%. The average hours increased by 1.1% to an average of 37.1 hours/week.

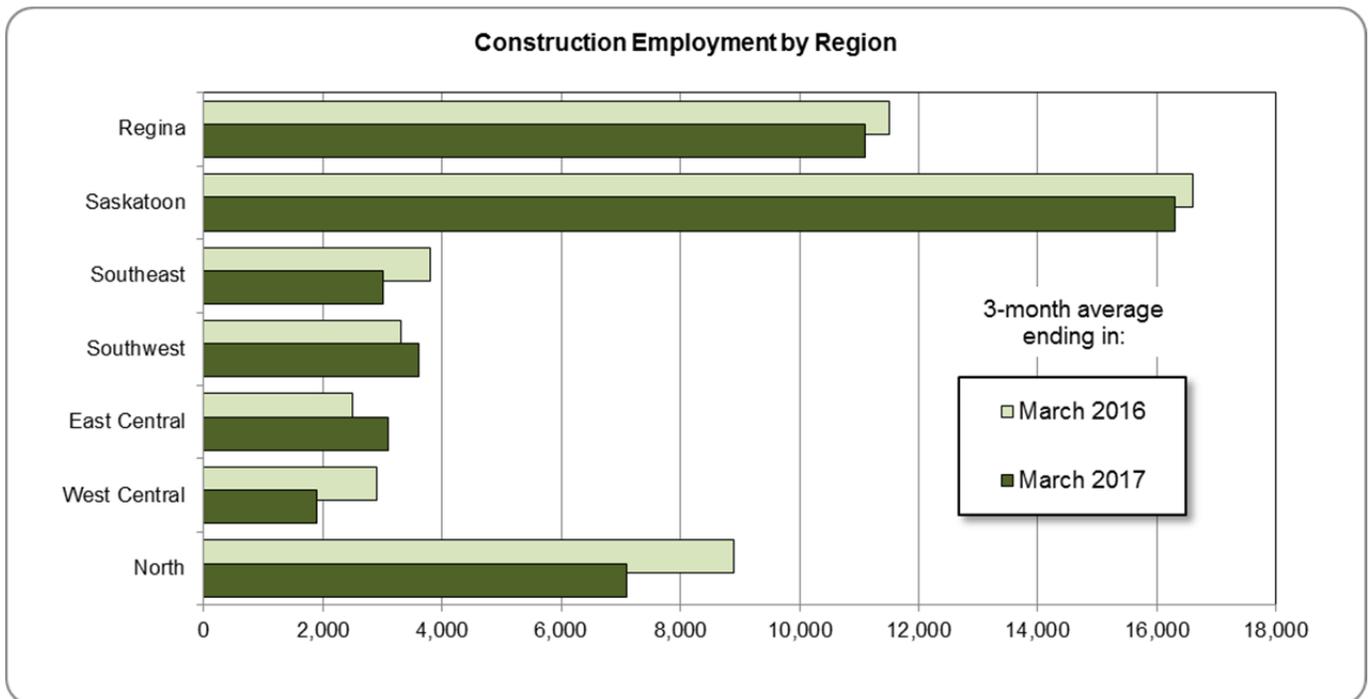


## Regional Employment<sup>1</sup>

The weakness in construction employment in the early 2017 was widespread across the province with declines in five of the seven regions used in the Labour Force Survey.

In absolute numbers, the largest declines were in the northern part of the province which lost 1,800 construction jobs in the last twelve months. Employment is also down in the west central (Kindersley/Rosetown) region. Employment is down slightly in both Saskatoon and Regina.

The only part of the province showing a substantial increase was the east central (Melville/Yorkton) region where employment in the three months ending in March 2017 was 27% higher than a year ago – the equivalent of 600 jobs.



<sup>1</sup> In the Labour Force Survey, the regional data measure where you live not where you work.

## Construction Wage Rates

After three consecutive years of wage increases that were well above the rate of inflation, the March figures confirm that the weak labour market has finally started to exert downward pressure on wages. On a year-over-year basis, construction wage rates in March were down for the fourth consecutive month whereas they increased by 0.5% in the province as a whole.

In March 2017, the average hourly wage rate among paid workers in construction was \$29.26. This is 3.2% lower than in March 2016. The year-to-date decline for the first quarter of 2017 is 3.9%.

