



PRESS RELEASE



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Starts Continue Rebound in March

OTTAWA, Ontario, April 8, 2004 — The seasonally adjusted annual rate¹ of housing starts was 247,000 in March, compared with 216,200 in February, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

"The rebound in starts that began in February continued in March", said Bob Dugan, Chief Economist at CMHC's Market Analysis Centre. "The pace of new home construction accelerated, as interest rate cuts earlier this year began to be reflected in construction activity. Since the beginning of the year mortgage rates have moved down with the current five-year posted rates the lowest since June 1951. Looking ahead, low mortgage rates should continue to support high levels of starts."

The seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts in Canada rose 16.2 per cent to 221,400 units, with most of the increase coming from multiples. Urban multiple starts increased 28.2 per cent in March to 114,700, while urban single starts rose 5.5 per cent to 106,700.

Seasonally adjusted urban starts rose in almost all regions with starts up 8.3 per cent in British Columbia, 22.7 per cent in Ontario, 16.6 per cent in Quebec and up strongly in the Atlantic Region. In the Prairie region, seasonally adjusted starts dropped 2.4 per cent due to a 23.9 per cent decline in multiple starts.

Rural starts in March were estimated at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 25,600 units.

Year to date actual urban starts were 2.7 per cent higher through March than for the same period last year. Single starts were up 2.9 per cent while multiple starts were up 2.5 per cent.

1. All starts figures in this release, other than actual starts, are seasonally adjusted annual rates (SAAR)-that is, monthly figures adjusted to remove normal seasonal variation and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

Information on this release:

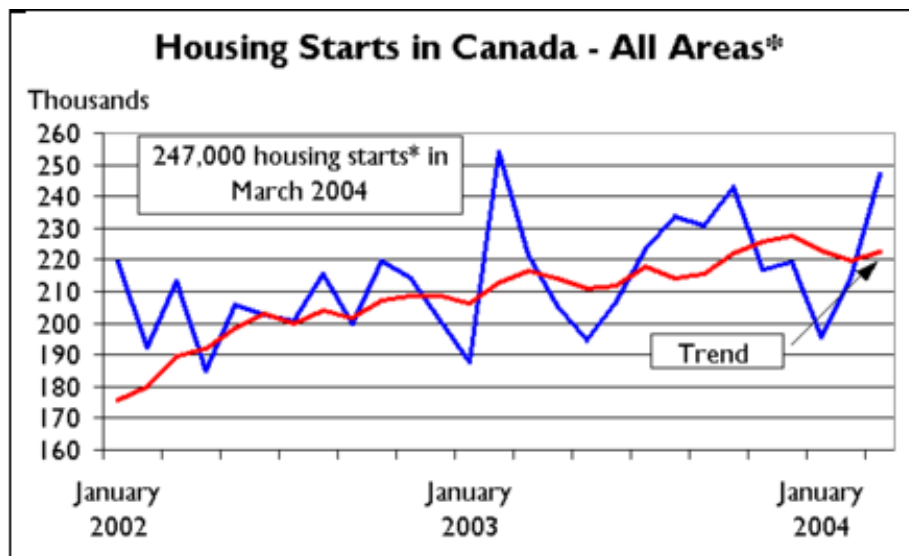
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Housing Starts, Actual and SAAR*

	February 2004 Final		March 2004 Preliminary	
	Actual	SAAR	Actual	SAAR
Canada, all areas	12,020	216,200	15,463	247,000
Canada, rural areas	1,040	25,600	1,141	25,600
Canada, urban centres**	10,980	190,600	14,322	221,400
Canada, singles, urban centres	5,341	101,100	6,905	106,700
Canada, multiples, urban centres	5,639	89,500	7,417	114,700
Atlantic region, urban centres	199	8,100	346	13,700
Quebec, urban centres	2,624	47,500	3,773	55,400
Ontario, urban centres	3,677	70,500	5,730	86,500
Prairie region, urban centres	2,707	38,100	2,455	37,200
British Columbia, urban centres	1,773	26,400	2,018	28,600

Source: CMHC

*Seasonally adjusted annual rates

** Urban centres with a population of 10,000 persons and over.

Detailed data available upon request.