

STAFDA – Austin Board Meetings – 2017

The Canadian economy is humming along as the country nears its 150th birthday. Consumer spending, housing starts, and a strong turnaround in business investment are largely responsible for the continued momentum that has built on the robust gains in the second half of last year. Gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow by 2.6 per cent in 2017 and 2.1 per cent in 2018. Continuing an eight-year trend, consumers are expected to provide a large lift to the economy in 2017. With business investment on the rise and government spending on infrastructure ramping up, we are projecting the economy will grow at nearly double the average pace of the prior two years. "Canada's economy is on track to post its strongest gain in three years", says Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist at RBC. "

Sales were up an impressive six per cent in the first quarter of 2017 on a year over year, not seasonally adjusted basis. However, a closer look reveals that much of this growth comes from the automotive and related sector, due to strong sales increases at both vehicle dealers and gas stations. Automotive and related sales gained 12 per cent in the first quarter, over four times higher than the rest of retail. The trend picture for store retail (excluding automotive) is decidedly less rosy. Store retail sales were up a modest 2.7 per cent year over year for the first quarter, the lowest such gain in three years. However, 2017 first quarter was good for Building material and garden equipment dealers' as sales were up 8.8 per cent.

The trend in housing starts was 214,621 units in May, compared to 213,435 units in April, says the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Montréal, QC, set a record for home sales in May with 5,057 residential sales, however, The value of residential building permits issued by Canadian municipalities fell 2.5 per cent in April to \$4.5 billion, marking a third consecutive monthly decrease.

Many Canadians are making financial sacrifices to complete home renovations in 2017. On average, homeowners plan to spend \$16,439 on their home renovations. Albertans anticipate spending the most on their renovations (\$22,586 on average), while those in Saskatchewan and Manitoba anticipate spending the least (\$11,934 on average).

Following its strongest showing in three years, production growth in Canada's wood products industry is expected to moderate significantly in 2017 due to the incoming U.S. trade restrictions on Canadian softwood lumber, says the Conference Board of Canada's 'Canadian Industrial Outlook: Canada's Wood Products Manufacturing Industry.' Canada's wood products manufacturers will see pre-tax profits shrink from \$1.8 billion in 2016 to \$1.4 billion this year and \$1.1 billion in 2018, as the U.S. issues duties averaging 30 per cent on Canada's softwood lumber. The report says softwood lumber duties will cause production within the industry's sawmills segment to contract in 2017

Demand for cordless electric tools is forecast to increase 6.4 per cent per year to \$7.6 billion in 2021, roughly in line with the pace of growth observed between 2011 and 2016, says a study by The Freedonia Group. These products will continue to take market share from plug-in models and will reach 41 per cent of the total in 2021. Ongoing improvements in cordless battery technology as well as the continuing replacement of nickel-based batteries with lithium-ion types will continue to improve cordless tool performance and thus prompt a greater number of cordless tool purchases. Investment on the part of power tool producers to manufacture an entire line of power tools around one battery architecture will also boost demand. The demand for all types of power tools is forecast to grow 3.9 per cent per year to \$33.2 billion in 2021.

However, the online dollar share for power tools has increased steadily over the past 10 years. This year, the power tool online category in the first quarter experienced two per cent growth over last year, while Amazon.com also grew its share of the category by two per cent, says TraQline's 'Quarter 1 2017' data.

With our 150th Birthday around the corner, I thought I would share some tidbits about Canada:

Canada is the second largest country in the world (after Russia) by land mass.

Canada has a total area of 9.9 million sq. km. and touches the Pacific, Arctic, and Atlantic oceans (which is why, its motto, "from sea to sea", is quite logical), making it the country with the longest coastline (243,791 km. long). It is composed of 10 provinces and three territories with Ottawa as its capital. The provinces are: Alberta (capital: Edmonton) , British Columbia (Victoria), Manitoba (Winnipeg), New Brunswick (Fredericton), Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's), Nova Scotia (Halifax), Ontario (Toronto), Prince Edward Island (Charlottetown), Quebec (Quebec City), and Saskatchewan (Regina). The three territories are: Northwest Territories (Yellowknife), Nunavut (Iqaluit), and Yukon (Whitehorse).

Land of Lakes

Canada has more lakes than the rest of the world combined. At last count, there may be as many as two million, with 563 lakes larger than 100 square kilometres. Canada's largest include Lake Huron (Ontario), Great Bear Lake (Northwest Territories), and Lake Superior (Ontario).

Canada is the first country in the world to adopt a policy of multiculturalism, embracing diversity. Today, of Canada's total population of more than 35 million, a fifth are immigrants. Canada is home to people from over 200 ethnic origins.

Canada is a Parliamentary Democracy headed by a Prime Minister. Currently Justin Trudeau.

However, it is also a constitutional monarchy with executive authority vested in the Queen. This means that the Queen is the head of state, while the Prime Minister is the head of government. A parliamentary democracy has three parts: the Sovereign (Queen), the Senate, and the House of Commons. Meanwhile, the government has three levels: federal, provincial and municipal.

Canada means "village"

The country's name is derived from "Kanata", a Huron-Iroquois word meaning village or settlement.

Did you know that it took 40 years for the Canadian parliament to finally decide on a Canadian flag? The red and white flag with the prominent maple leaf was officially launched on February 15, 1965 (making Feb. 15 National Flag of Canada Day) But have you ever wondered why the maple leaf is so identified with Canada? Well, for years even prior to the coming of European settlers, aboriginal peoples have been using maple sap as a food staple. Throughout history, the leaf has found its way into Canadian coins, emblems and coats of arms. Canada continues to produce three-quarters of the world's maple syrup output.

Canada Day commemorates the signing of the British North America Act (today known as the Constitution Act, 1867) which created Canada. The statutory holiday is celebrated every July 1st, and was, for a time, called Dominion Day.

Canada's national dish originated from Quebec in the 1950s. Made up of a tasty mix of french fries, cheese curds and gravy, Poutine has been claimed by numerous people, but its inventor has never been confirmed.?

What does basketball, the pacemaker, IMAX, and the Blackberry have in common? Yes, they were all invented by Canadians. As was Insulin, Walkie-Talkies, the Zipper, Telephone, Electric Oven, CanadaArm for the International Space Station and so on.....

Hockey is the national winter sport of Canada while lacrosse is the national summer sport. To give you an indication of how Canadians love hockey, the Canada-US Men's Gold Hockey Game at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics was the most watched television broadcast ever in Canadian history

	2016		January	2017	
	November	December		February	March
All industries [T001] ²	1,694,728	1,700,257	1,709,708	1,710,470	1,719,184
Construction [23]	117,263	118,032	118,503	118,918	119,831
Manufacturing [31-33]	175,779	177,284	178,693	176,926	179,731
Wholesale trade [41]	98,651	99,855	101,506	101,871	102,588
Retail trade [44-45]	94,486	93,849	95,469	95,564	96,526