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Building permits in December rise to hit levels last seen in June 2007

By: The Canadian Press

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Construction workers are shown in Vancouver, B.C., in this October 8, 2009 photo. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck

OTTAWA - Construction plans heated up strongly in December as municipalities issued \$6.8 billion worth of building permits, the highest level since June 2007.

Statistics Canada said Tuesday that was a jump of 11.1 per cent over November and was driven mainly by increased plans for apartments and condos in Ontario and commercial buildings in Alberta.

The value of residential sector permits rose 16.1 per cent to \$4.5 billion in a second consecutive monthly increase.

Major projects in Ontario pushed permits for multi-family dwellings up 28.9 per cent to \$1.9 billion, the highest level since December 2005.

In the non-residential sector, the value of permits grew 2.8 per cent to \$2.4 billion in December, following a 15.1 per cent drop in November.

The total value of building permits was up in five provinces, led by Ontario, Alberta and Quebec.

Municipalities issued \$2.6 billion worth of permits for single-family dwellings in December, up 8.1 per cent from November. The rise was attributable to higher construction intentions in six provinces, led by Quebec and Alberta.

In the commercial component, the value of permits jumped 41.0 per cent to \$1.6 billion in December.

The increase follows two monthly declines and was driven by higher construction intentions for office buildings and warehouse facilities in Alberta, as well as hotels in Ontario.

The value of industrial permits declined 24.2 per cent to \$353 million in December. It was the second consecutive monthly decrease.

In the institutional sector, the value of building permits declined 42.2 per cent to \$402 million. It was a second consecutive monthly decline after the sector hit a peak of more than \$1 billion in October 2011.

The largest declines were in construction intentions for educational institutions in Ontario, health care facilities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and government buildings in British Columbia.

The total value of permits issued rose in 17 of 34 census metropolitan areas.

Toronto had the largest increase, followed by Calgary. Toronto's increase was mostly attributable to building permits for multi-family dwellings. Calgary's increase was largely due to higher intentions for commercial buildings and single-family dwellings.

The largest declines were in Ottawa and Vancouver.

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