



Non-metro employment trends

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Highlights

- Non-metro employment is now lower than the peak in 2008 – it is back to the level in 2002.
• Generally, the level of non-metro employment has fluctuated but has been essentially flat with no increasing and no decreasing trend in the past 10 years.
• This flat employment trend exists in each non-metro economic region, except in the Northwest Economic region which has been persistently declining during the past 10 years.

Why look at employment trends?

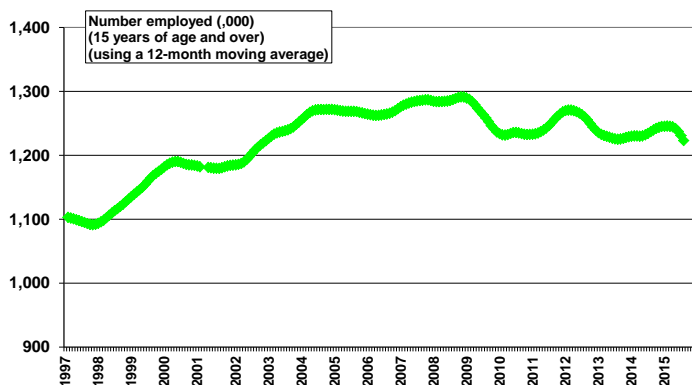
Employment is a key indicator of overall levels of economic activity. Since employment income is the most important source of income for most households, it can drive local purchasing and savings levels. Businesses may find it more or less difficult to find new employees, depending upon the share of the potential labour force that is employed.

Findings<sup>1</sup>

Employment peaked in non-metro<sup>2</sup> areas at 1.29 million in November, 2008 and then declined to 1.23 million in March, 2010 (Figure 1). Increases attained between 2011 and 2012 were not sustained. In August, 2015, employment had declined to 1.22 million, the lowest level since December, 2002.

Figure 1

Employment in non-metro Ontario was 1.22 million in August, 2015



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, CANSIM Tables 282-0007 and 282-0124.

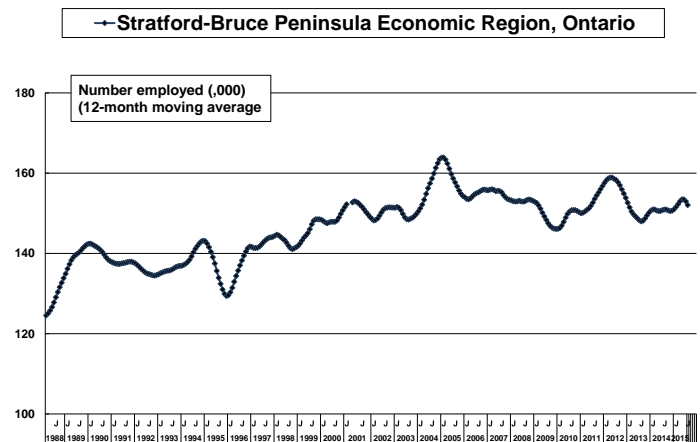
To see the pattern across the province, we turn to

<sup>1</sup> A complete set of charts is on-line at Appendix Charts "Levels and trends in employment levels and employment rates".

<sup>2</sup> Non-metro areas refer to non-CMA areas (i.e. areas outside Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)).

data for Economic Regions (ERs)<sup>3</sup>. Employment in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula ER peaked at 164 thousand in February, 2005 (Figure 2). In August, 2015, the level was lower (152 thousand) which is the same level as in February, 2001. Hence, we see a generally flat employment trajectory.

Figure 2



Employment in the Northwest ER was 99 thousand in August, 2015, which is lower than in any period before 2011 (Figure 3). Employment levels have been generally declining over the past 10 years.

Employment in the Northeast ER has varied between 230 and 265 thousand in the years since 1988 (Figure 4). The level has been essentially flat in the last 10 years.

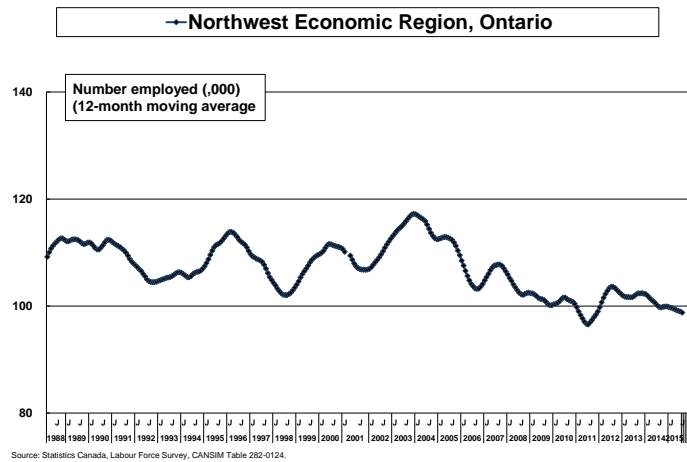
In the Muskoka-Kawarthas ER, the employment level has varied in the range between 165 thousand and

<sup>3</sup> ERs are groupings of census divisions (CDs). All CDs in the Stratford-Bruce ER are wholly non-metro CDs. There are 5 ERs which comprise a combination of non-metro CDs and partially-non-metro CDs and where 33% to 95% of their population resides outside a CMA (Northwest Ontario, Northeast Ontario, Kingston-Pembroke, Windsor-Sarnia and Muskoka-Kawarthas).

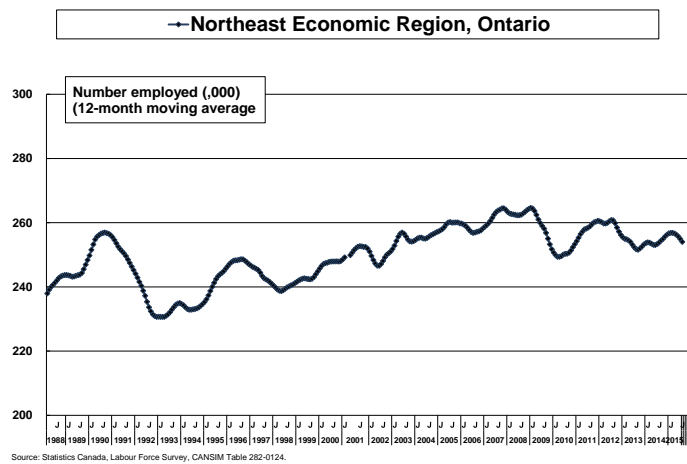
192 thousand in the period since September, 2003 (Figure 5). The present level of employment is 182 thousand with essentially no change since 2004.

Employment in the Windsor-Sarnia ER has been increasing marginally since March, 2010, where employment at the bottom of the downturn was 289 thousand (Figure 6). Employment has increased to 302 thousand in August, 2015. However, the level in August, 2015 is now the same as in February, 2002.

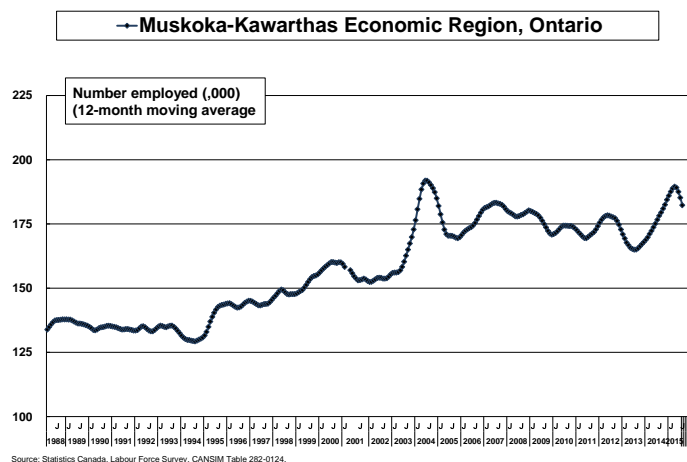
**Figure 3**



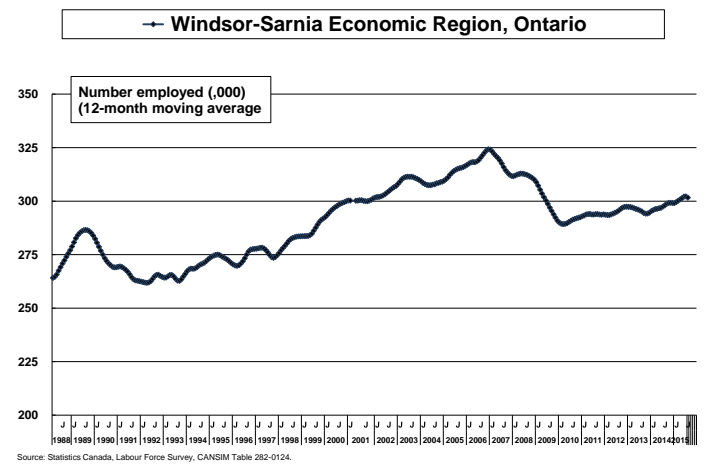
**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**

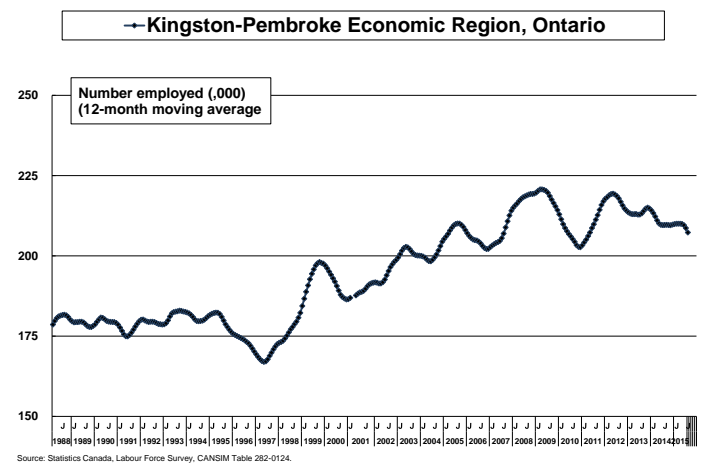


**Figure 6**



Employment in the Kingston-Pembroke ER has varied between 202 thousand (in November, 2006 and in December, 2010) and a peak of 221 thousand in April, 2009 (Figure 7). The level of 207 thousand in August, 2015 is the same as in March, 2005.

**Figure 7**



**Summary**

The general pattern across non-metro Ontario is that employment levels have fluctuated within a relatively narrow range but there has been no trend of growth for at least 10 years.

This conclusion holds within each of the wholly non-metro or partially non-metro economic regions. The exception is the Northwest Economic Region where there has been a noticeable declining trend in employment levels in the past 10 years. The Windsor-Sarnia Economic Region shows gradually recover from the downturn - - but the employment level is only back to the level of 2005.

Rural Ontario Institute gratefully acknowledges the work of Ray Bollman in preparing this edition of [Focus on Rural Ontario](#). Questions on data sources can be directed to [RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net](mailto:RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net). Any comments or discussions can be directed to [NRagettie@RuralOntarioInstitute.ca](mailto:NRagettie@RuralOntarioInstitute.ca).