

Green Tool Kit for REALTORS®

Consumers across the province are increasingly interested in greener homes, communities and lifestyles. More and more homebuyers are asking for green features, while many owners want to make their existing homes more environmentally friendly. In light of this trend, REALTORS® need to be prepared to answer clients' questions about environmental issues.

In late March, BCREA launched a new online resource: the Green Tool Kit for REALTORS® (www.greentoolkit.ca). The site has been built primarily for REALTORS® and related professionals, and is also accessible to the public.

There's a wealth of information available, and now much of it is accessible from one place at www.greentoolkit.ca. Created with the help of REALTOR® James Rodgers, Executive Director of the Greener Realty Association of BC and self-described greener professional, the site aims to inform REALTORS® about all aspects of green real estate.



Some of the questions the site answers are:

- What is green real estate?
- What is a greener home or building?
- What kind of programs

and rebates are available to homebuyers and homeowners interested in greening their homes?

- Are there green certification programs for REALTORS®?

The website also mirrors Quality of Life's third principle, preserving the environment. REALTORS® recognize one of the most important elements of our Quality of Life is the environment: clean air and water, parks and open space.

The Green Tool Kit for REALTORS® website will evolve over the coming months. Please send your comments, suggestions and greener experiences to bcrea@bcrea.bc.ca.

Economics

The Resource Sector Impacts All of Us

By Cameron Muir, BCREA Chief Economist



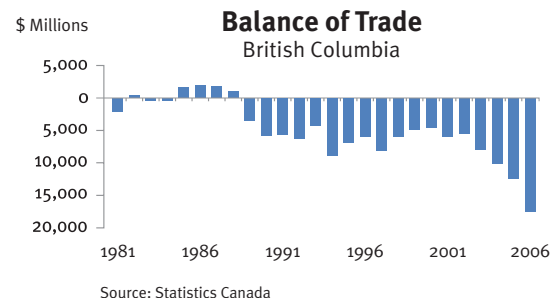
The downturn in the US housing market and the corresponding freefall in US housing starts aren't good news for the BC economy. With more than a million fewer homes being built south of the border this year, BC's balance of trade will likely worsen.

Trade deficits are nothing new to BC. The province has posted a balance of trade deficit every year since 1986. The drag on net exports has historically been interprovincial trade, where the deficit has ranged from \$8 billion to \$12 billion each year since 1981. That deficit was usually offset by an international trade surplus. While a trade deficit is never good, it's the magnitude that's important.

BC's trade deficit has ballooned from

\$4.7 billion in 2000 (3.5 per cent of GDP) to \$17.4 billion in 2006 (11 per cent of GDP)—largely the result of net international exports moving from a \$3 billion surplus in 2000 to a \$7.8 billion deficit in 2006. With an exchange rate at parity and weak US lumber demand, imports will likely increase and exports will likely fall further this year.

The Lower Mainland and Greater Victoria contain two-thirds of the population, but are responsible for just one-third of the province's exports. According to the Urban Futures Institute, based on 2001 data, the south coast generates \$9,700 per person in export revenue, while the rest of the province generates \$28,000 per person. This uneven playing field is smoothed by transfers through resource-oriented manufacturing, processing and administration, plus the sale



of goods and services to areas outside the metropolitan regions.

Whether you live in Mackenzie or Maple Ridge, the resource sector is important to your economic well-being.