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## Number Of Beneficiaries Topping Out

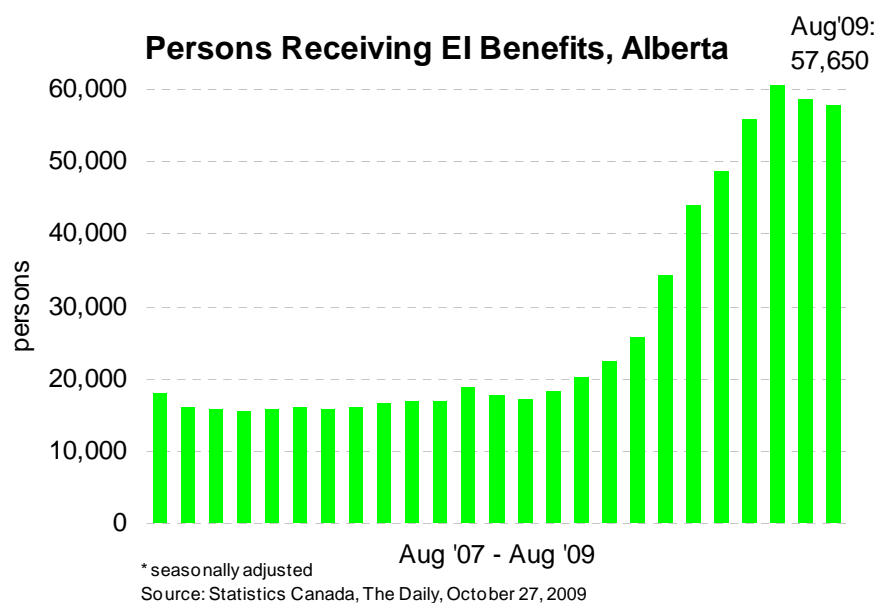
The number of Canadians and Albertans receiving employment insurance benefits fell for the second consecutive month in August 2009. Although the beginnings of a recovery in labour markets helped fuel that trend, that's only part of the reason the number of claimants fell.

There were 57,650 Albertans receiving E.I. in August, down marginally from July's 58,720 (-1.87%) beneficiaries, but up significantly from August 2008's 18,660 recipients (+228%). Alberta has still seen by far the largest relative increase in E.I. beneficiaries of any province over the past year, followed by BC (+108%). All figures have been adjusted for seasonality.

Nationally there were 2.4% fewer people claiming E.I. benefits in August, compared to July. Statistics Canada noted in its

press release that Calgary and Edmonton continued to see the largest relative increase in claims among major centers in Canada, as the manufacturing, construction, and oil and gas sectors decreased employment compared to a year ago.

The most recent Labour Force Survey showed Alberta's unemployment rate declined by 0.3 percentage points to 7.1% in September. Combined with today's data, which shows beneficiaries topped out as well, Alberta's labour markets are probably in the very early stages of a recovery. However, the maximum length for E.I. claims in Alberta is just over eleven months, which probably means the fall in claimants has a lot to do with benefits running out, as opposed to people finding jobs.



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