

The November Review

As of 2005, the sum of imports and exports was slightly more than one-quarter of the Nation's gross domestic product. An important part of understanding the implications of this fact is prices for goods in foreign trade. Jeffery Bogen's article summarizes, in some detail, import and export prices in 2005. It will probably not surprise our readers to find out that energy prices had a huge impact on aggregate import prices or that export prices for computers, peripherals, and semiconductors continued their long-term decline.

One well-known characteristic of survey respondents is a becoming reticence about discussing their incomes. One of the policy decisions statistical agencies must take is how to handle those missing data. Until recently, the Bureau's policy on missing income data in the Consumer Expenditure Survey was to restrict discussion of income to those responses that contained complete income reporting. Starting in 2004, however, BLS has used well-established statistical methods to impute certain missing income reports. Jonathan D. Fisher has outlined the impact of the change on the analysis of consumer expenditure data.

Mitra Toossi updates the Bureau's series of longer-term projections of the labor force. Over the next 50 years, there will be increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the labor force, a stabilization of women's participation rate after years of increases in participation, and the baby-boom will have its usual dramatic effects, at first in a rise in the average age of the workforce and then, as those cohorts begin to leave the labor force in large numbers, in a lowering of the growth of the labor pool.

Erin Lett and Judith Banister update Banister's recent (*Monthly Labor Review*, August 2005) estimates of the hourly compensation cost of manufacturing workers in China. Even after rising 8.1 percent to \$0.67, factory wages in China

were still about 3 percent of those in the United States.

Workplace violence

Five percent of all establishments had an incident of workplace violence in the 12 months prior to their responding to a special survey. Half of the largest establishments—those employing 1,000 or more workers—reported an incident. In these largest establishments in private industry, goods-producing industries reported a higher percentage of co-worker workplace violence than service-providing industries. Service-providing industries reported much higher percentages of criminal, customer, and domestic violence than goods-producing industries.

State government reported higher percentages of all types of workplace violence in the 12 months before the survey than did local government or private industry. Thirty-two percent of all State government workplaces reported some form of workplace violence, compared with 15 percent of local government workplaces and 5 percent of private industry establishments.

The higher reported incidence of violence in State and local government workplaces may be attributed to their work environments. These workplaces reported much higher percentages of working directly with the public, having a mobile workplace, working with unstable or violent persons, working in high crime areas, guarding valuable goods or property, and working in community-based settings than did private industry.

More than 70 percent of U.S. workplaces do not have a formal program or policy that addresses workplace violence. In establishments that did report having a workplace violence program or policy, those in private industry most frequently reported addressing co-worker violence (82 percent). Customer or client violence was the next most frequent subject of private industry policies or programs (71

percent), followed by criminal violence (53 percent) and domestic violence (44 percent).

These new data are from a special survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In this context, "criminal violence" refers to when the perpetrator has no legitimate relationship to the business or its employees and is usually committing a crime in conjunction with the violence (for example, robbery, shoplifting, or trespassing). For more information, see "Survey of Workplace Violence Prevention, 2005," news release USDL 06-1860.

Harmonized price indexes

A new table, to be updated monthly, uses the methods of the European Union's Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) to compare inflation rates of all G7 countries except Canada. (A comparable Canadian index is not available at this time.) These harmonized indexes provide a better basis for international comparisons of inflation than the national CPI data published by each country because the methods and concepts used are more standardized across countries than those used in national CPIs. For the United States, HICP data are an experimental series prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics; for Japan, data are published by the Japanese Statistics Bureau; and for the European Union countries, data are based on the monthly HICP series published by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT). Further information on the HICP can be found in "Comparing U.S. and European inflation: the CPI and the HICP," by Walter Lane and Mary Lynn Schmidt, *Monthly Labor Review*, May 2006. □

The news release discussed above is available at
www.bls.gov/bls/newsrels.htm.