

City building permits approach record pace

Total slightly ahead of last November

BY SCOTT LARSON, THE STARPHOENIX DECEMBER 6, 2013



Building permits in Saskatoon are on pace to break 2012's record of \$1.082 billion.

Photograph by: Richard Marjan, The Starphoenix, The Starphoenix

Building permits in Saskatoon are closing in on record territory.

As of the end of November, the value of construction permits issued this year added up to \$1,042,192,000, almost identical to last year at the end of November, when the total was \$1,043,433,000.

In 2012, Saskatoon set a record with \$1.082 billion worth of permits.

The city is now about \$37 million short of that record, with one month to go, said Bob Baran, the building standards branch manager for the City of Saskatoon.

"December is a hit-and-miss thing," he said. "Sometimes we might issue \$40 million worth of permits and sometimes \$20 million. My best guess is that we will probably be close to the number we had last year, plus or minus a small amount."

The value of residential permits issued in November totalled 29.4 million. In November 2012, \$45.8 million worth of permits were issued.

On the commercial side, slightly more than \$25 million in permits were issued last month, compared about \$19 million in November 2012. Total residential and non-residential permits for November totalled \$54.6 million this year, compared to last year's \$65 million in November.

The largest building permit this year was for the Art Gallery of Saskatchewan at River Landing.

"There have also been some new hotels constructed in the city, apartment/condominiums and some office building construction as well," Baran said, adding the city has issued 12 permits this year that exceeded \$10 million in construction value.

Major projects on the horizon for 2014 include the Children's Hospital and condominium development in the downtown area.

"It shows there is still confidence and people are building, and that's good news for Saskatoon," Baran said.

Provincially, building permits hit a record \$370.6 million in October.

Month over month, building permits were up by 26.2 per cent between this September and October, the highest percentage increase among the provinces and well ahead of the 7.4 per cent posted nationally.

According to the Statistics Canada report released Friday, building permits were up by 14 per cent when compared with October 2012 - second-best in Canada, and much better than the 6.2 per cent decline recorded nationally.

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