

OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY

**1st Quarter, 2012
(January, February, March 2012)**

State gross business income grew \$5.9 billion to \$147.4 billion in the first quarter of 2012, a 4.2 percent increase over the first quarter of 2011.

Gross income increased in most industry groups. Manufacturing was up 18.0 percent to \$37.2 billion, and Wholesale Trade increased 3.3 percent to \$29.7 billion. Construction was up 2.8 percent to \$7.3 billion. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate were up 0.8 percent to \$8.0 billion. New and Used Auto Dealers were at \$3.6 billion, an 8.9 percent increase over first quarter of 2011. Grocery and Convenience Stores increased 3.7 percent to \$3.3 billion. General Merchandise Stores increased to \$4.0 billion, up 6.4 percent and Gas Stations increased 8.1 percent to \$2.9 billion. Some industry groups continue to experience declines. Retail Trade, as an industry, was down, decreasing 5.7 percent to \$25.7 billion and Information was at \$3.9 billion, a 6.2 percent decrease.

Statewide, taxable retail sales were up 4.7 percent compared to the first quarter of 2011. Most counties showed increases in taxable retail sales. King County was up 5.7 percent, Snohomish County was up 5.0 percent, Spokane County was up 4.4 percent, and Clark County showed an increase of 7.1 percent over first quarter of 2011. Yakima County was up 6.2 percent, and Whatcom County was up 8.9 percent. Pierce County increased 2.4 percent, and Kitsap County showed a 1.6 percent increase year over year. However, some counties showed a decline in taxable retail sales; Clallam County was down 3.4 percent compared to first quarter of 2011, Chelan County was down 3.0 percent, and Grays Harbor County showed a 4.5 percent decrease year over year.

The incorporated area of Seattle had a taxable retail sales increase of 9.7 percent. Tacoma was also up, at \$932 million, a 2.4 percent increase. Spokane was up 4.9 percent to \$854 million, Vancouver was up 6.2 percent, Kent was up 3.0 percent, Bellingham was up 6.2 percent, and Everett was up 3.6 percent. Bellevue was down 0.1 percent to \$1.1 billion and Pasco was down 0.9 percent to \$192 million. Richland dropped 3.1 percent to \$202 million compared to first quarter of 2011. Tukwila dropped 4.1 percent compared to first quarter of 2011.