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# Trades struggle to find work in Saskatchewan

'It's very, very tough for us right now,' says Saskatoon business owner

By Victoria Dinh, CBC News Posted: Apr 18, 2016 1:23 PM CT | Last Updated: Apr 18, 2016 4:34 PM CT



Saskatchewan's construction industry is hitting an economic downturn. (Government of Saskatchewan)

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Construction around Saskatchewan is slowing down and local businesses working in the trades are starting to feel the consequences.

### Saskatchewan's construction industry hits an economic downturn

"It's getting scary. There's a lot of people out of work [and] there's a lot of people looking for work," said Sandy Sairally, owner of her own tiling business in Saskatoon.

"This time of year, we shouldn't be having trouble finding work."

She told CBC's Saskatoon Morning that she started to see a change in pace in January 2015. Since then, her company's workload has been slowing down more and more as time progresses.

"It's been just OK but we're expecting it to get worse," Sairally said. "Our phones should be ringing off the wall [right now]."

Instead, she said she's been spending a lot of her time watching Kijiji for possible jobs.



Sandy Sairally is the owner of a tiling company in Saskatoon. (Submitted by Sandy Sairally)

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"It's very, very tough for us right now," explained Sairally.

"We've had to take jobs for less money just because we needed the job."

## City housing builds declining

Compared to the last seven years in Saskatoon, contractors are building far fewer new homes. Permits for non-residential builds in that city have dropped 61 per cent.

In 2010, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported 1,638 single-detached home builds in Saskatoon. That number dropped to just 1,608 in 2011 before shooting back up to 2,025 home builds in 2012.

Since then, the number of single-detached homes has seen a steady decline. There were 1,658 home builds in 2013, 1,577 in 2014 and 1,000 in 2015.



"It's getting scary." -Sandy Sairally (Submitted to CBC by Sandy Sairally)

Scott Werner, a site superintendent for a commercial construction company, said tradespeople who have joined the industry in the last decade have never experienced a slowdown like this.

"This is all new to them. So to not name your price and 'I'm working full-time hours plus overtime' was just an assumption before. Now you've got regular hours and no overtime in this job. Be efficient. There's nothing wrong with that," he said.

He said that despite the tough reality nowadays, it's an up and down industry.

"We've had swings like this in the past. We've gone on such a long positive streak that when we get a correction like we have now, people forget it's cyclical," said Werner.

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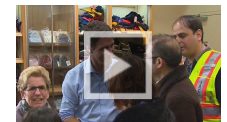
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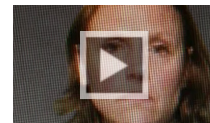
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"People forget it's cyclical." - Scott Werner (Submitted to CBC by Scott Werner)

Saskatoon Morning is taking a closer look at the construction downturn in the city. [Send us a selfie and your story.](#)

with files from Saskatoon Morning and Jennifer Quesnel

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