BANNOCKBURN, IL – North American printed circuit board industry shipments in March decreased 12.2% year-over-year, says **IPC**.

Orders increased just 0.2% compared to March 2011.

Year to date, shipments were down 6.5%, and orders were up 4.1%. Sequentially, circuit board shipments for March increased 11%, while orders increased 8.8%.

The book-to-bill ratio strengthened to 1.06. A ratio of more than 1.0 suggests that current demand is ahead of supply, which is a positive indicator for sales growth over the next two to three months.

Rigid PCB shipments were down 12.6% year-over-year, and orders fell 2.2% compared to the same month last year. Year to date, rigid board shipments decreased 6.4%, and orders increased 4.6%. Sequentially, rigid board shipments increased 10.6%, while orders increased 9.1%.
The rigid board book-to-bill ratio improved to 1.05.

Flexible circuit board shipments for the month were down 7.2%, but orders were up 34.5% compared to March 2011. Year to date, flex board shipments decreased 7.2%, and orders decreased 1.5%. Sequentially, shipments increased 17%, and orders were up 5.3%.
The North American flex circuit board book-to-bill jumped to 1.18.

“PCB sales in North America in March continued to reflect normal seasonal patterns,” said Sharon Starr, IPC director of market research. “Orders continued to outpace sales,” she added, “pushing the book-to-bill ratio up for the fourth consecutive month, and that bodes well for sales growth in the next quarter.”

Rigid PCBs represent an estimated 89% of the current PCB industry in North America, says IPC. In March 2012, 82% of total PCB shipments were domestically produced. Domestic production accounted for 82% of rigid and 80% of flexible circuit board shipments.

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