BANNOCKBURN, IL – North American printed circuit board shipments in October were up 0.1%, and orders decreased 10% year-over-year, says **IPC**.

Year to date, industry shipments were down 4.4%, and orders were down 1.1% compared to the same period last year. Sequentially, shipments decreased 12.2%, while orders decreased 13.4%.

The book-to-bill ratio in October remained slightly below parity at 0.96. A ratio of more than 1.00 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 1.1% in October compared to October 2011, and orders fell 9.2% year-over-year. Year to date, rigid board shipments grew 4.4%, while orders decreased 0.2%. Sequentially, shipments were down 12.4%, and orders fell 14.3%. The book-to-bill ratio for the North American rigid PCB industry slipped below parity to 0.98.

Flex circuit board shipments for the month were up 15.6%, and orders were down 18.9% year-over-year. Year to date, shipments decreased 4%, while orders dropped 10.5%. Sequentially, shipments decreased 10.3%, and orders were down 0.5% compared to the same period last year. The book-to-bill ratio remained low at 0.74.

“Although the book-to-bill ratios continued below parity in October, sales rebounded in the flexible circuit segment,” according to Sharon Starr, IPC director of market research. “The industry’s recovery is expected to resume in the near term, but possibly not until early 2013. Action by the US Congress to deal with the ‘fiscal cliff’ will have a significant impact on economic growth and business confidence.”

Rigid PCBs represent an estimated 90% of the current North American industry, says IPC.

In October, 82% of total PCB shipments reported were domestically produced. Domestic

production accounted for 82% of rigid and 84% of flex PCB shipments.