Central Oregon unemployment rate increases again

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

All three counties in Central Oregon saw their unemployment rates increase from December to January, while Jeffersonâ€™s gain was less than expected. Deschutes County had the lowest rate at 7.6 percent, while Jefferson County had the highest at 9.8 percent. Crook County: The countyâ€™s unemployment rate climbed to 9.5 percent in January, up 2.2 percentage points from December. The increase was greater than expected for the month. The rate is higher than the historical lows of last year, but below the double digit levels it saw during 2002, 2003 and 2004. Overall the rate was similar to where it stood in 2001 and much of the first half of the 1990s. The county lost 150 jobs in January, after shedding 330 jobs in the previous three months. Overall the county began the year with 210 fewer jobs than it began 2007. The drop in January was right inline with expectations. Typically the county sees seasonal declines through the autumn and winter months. Overall the countyâ€™s employment performed near expectations during the first three quarters of 2007, but took a slight slide in the final quarter. The largest job losses in January occurred in construction, leisure and hospitality and federal government. Each of these lost 30 jobs over the month. Construction shed about 50 jobs since its high-water mark last year in July with 440 jobs. Leisure and hospitality lost jobs in each of the past six months, shedding 110 jobs since last July. Federal government also shed jobs since last July. All these seasonal shifts are to be expected. Only one industry added jobs in January. Educational and health services gained 10 jobs, putting the industryâ€™s employment at its same level as last October. In 2007, the industry grew by 20 jobs. The county recorded fewer jobs this January than January of 2007. Following our annual revision the county has recorded negative year-over-year growth since last August. Overall the county has 3.0 percent fewer jobs than a year ago. Industries showing declines include wood product manufacturing (â€‘5.8%), retail trade (â€‘5.1%), wholesale trade (â€‘3.4%) and construction (â€‘2.5%). Only one industry has seen gains, information (33.3%). Deschutes County (Bend MSA): The countyâ€™s unemployment rate increased by 1.5 percentage points to 7.6 percent in January, up from 6.1 in December. This was a slightly larger than expected move for the rate during the month, and the rate currently stands 2.1 percentage points higher than a year ago. The rate is near the same level it saw three years ago in January 2005 (7.4%). January (â€‘1,920) saw job losses again after December (100) had a small reprieve. The county shed 3,340 jobs since August and the height of the summer season. The decline in January was only slightly larger than expected, as the county normally sees declines after the busy holiday season. The countyâ€™s largest job declines occurred in the private sector and were concentrated in retail trade (â€‘390), natural resources, mining and construction (â€‘390) and professional and business services (â€‘380). Retail trade shed about 50 more jobs than it added in November and December in preparation for the holiday season. Due to both the slowing housing market and normal seasonal slowdowns construction has shed 920 jobs since July. Meanwhile, professional and business services continued to shed jobs and is down about 1,170 jobs since August. Remember this industry sector contains employment services or temporary help agencies, one of the first areas to lose jobs during a slowdown and add them during an expansion. Manufacturing lost 40 jobs in January and is down 300 jobs since seasonal declines began in August. Elsewhere, leisure and hospitality lost 200 of the 300 jobs it gained in preparation for the busy holiday season. During the month the only industry to add jobs was educational and health services. Its gain of 50 jobs adds to its gains of the past five months and leaves the industry with 580 more jobs than last January. The area continued to see over-the-year growth â€“ 2.1 percent this January. Expansion continued, stimulated by educational and health services (6.8%), professional and business services (6.4%) and leisure and hospitality (5.9%). Manufacturing (â€‘6.7%), natural resources, mining and construction (â€‘5.0%) and financial activities (â€‘0.4%) showed weakness. Jefferson County: The countyâ€™s 9.8 percent January unemployment rate was higher than its December rate of 8.2 percent. The 1.6 percentage point gain was actually less than expected for the month, and the rate now stands 2.3 percentage points higher than last year. This is the highest January unemployment rate since 1999. Jefferson County lost 130 jobs in January at a time of year when job declines are typical. However, normally the county sheds about 60 more jobs during the month, so again the county performed above expectations. Employment gains were sparse in January, only occurring in state government (10). Since last summer state government has gained 170 jobs, primarily due to Deer Ridge Correctional Facility opening. The last month to see a job decline in state government was a year ago in February. There were a lot of industries that shed a few jobs in January

and only one with substantial losses. Indian tribal dropped 50 jobs in January, possibly due to the slowing leisure trade after the holiday season and more declines may be in the future for Indian tribal if tribally-owned Warm Springs Forest Products Industries releases the 63 employees they sent notices to. Other smaller declines over the month include leisure and hospitality (â€‘30) and manufacturing (â€‘20). The recent gains in state government were enough to keep the county in positive year-over-year territory in January. Employment this January was up 0.8 percent from last January. Gains were seen in state government (142.9%), professional and business services (28.6%) and financial activities (11.1%). Losses in manufacturing (â€‘23.8%) and construction (â€‘20.0%) were the largest contributors on the declining side.

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