

Central Oregon unemployment rate continues to rise

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson Counties' Unemployment Rates about Doubled from One Year Ago

Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates in Central Oregon continued to rise in February. Individual county rates ranged from 12.6 percent in Deschutes County to 16.1 percent in Crook County. The statewide rate also increased, from 9.8 percent in January to 10.8 percent in February.

Deschutes County (Bend MSA): The county's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 12.6 percent in February from a revised rate of 11.9 percent in January. The rate is slightly less than twice the rate of one year ago, when it was 6.4 percent. February's rate is also the highest rate since at least 1990, when the seasonally adjusted series begins.

The county gained 100 jobs in February, after losing 1,900 in January. Typically the county sees an increase of 250 jobs in February, as the winter tourism season ramps up. Thus employment gains this month were less than expected.

One private-sector industry showed a large employment loss in February: retail trade (-200). Other employment losses included a drop of 80 in manufacturing; 20 in mining, logging, and construction; and 10 jobs each in information and financial activities.

Two industries reported no change over the month: wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities. The industry with the largest gains was professional and business services (40). A gain of 20 jobs each was reported in educational and health services, leisure and hospitality, and other services.

All levels of the public sector posted jobs gains in February. The largest gains were in local education (240), with much smaller gains in federal and local government (30, total).

In February, Deschutes County posted a 4.0 percent over-the-year decline in total employment. Although industries such as federal government (5.3%), educational and health services (2.0%), and leisure and hospitality (1.7%) showed year-over-year job gains, losses in other industries offset these gains. The largest

losses were in mining, logging, and construction (â€‘17.6%); durable goods manufacturing (-14.3%); and transportation, warehousing, and utilities (â€‘10.2%).

Crook County: The countyâ€™s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by 1.3 percentage points in February, to 16.1 percent. One year ago the rate was less than half the current rate, at 7.9 percent. Februaryâ€™s rate is also the highest since at least 1990.

The county lost 110 jobs in February, which is less than the 400 jobs lost in January. Normally, however, employment increases in February by about 20 jobs.

Construction was the only major industry to post employment gains in February (+ 10), although several industries held steady over the month. The industry with the largest job losses was manufacturing, due entirely to a decline in wood product manufacturing (- 70). Employment in this industry has decreased since August 2008. Other private industries with job losses in February were wholesale trade (- 20), retail trade (- 10), and educational and health services (- 10).

Within the public sector, local government lost 20 jobs in February, while federal and state government employment held steady.

Overall, the county recorded 820 fewer jobs this February than in February 2008 – a decline of 12.1 percent. Employment in the county has been declining for the past 19 months. Wholesale trade lead the job losses (–47.1%), followed by mining and logging (–25.0%), and wood product manufacturing (–22.6%). Only one industry continues to show year-over-year job gains: state government (5.6%). A few industries reported no change over the year in employment.

Jefferson County: The county’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 14.4 percent in February, up nearly two percentage points from January’s revised rate of 12.6 percent. One year ago the rate was 7.3 percent. The unemployment rates in the last several months have been the highest since at least 1990.

Jefferson County lost 80 jobs in February, when normally the county gains about 20 jobs. The largest loss was in wood product manufacturing (–140). Minor losses were reported in wholesale trade, retail trade, and information (–10, each). A few private-sector industries managed to increase employment in February. Educational and health services, leisure and hospitality, and other services gained 10 jobs each. The

public-sector saw a net job gain over the month of 80, with an increase of 90 jobs at the local level slightly offset by a loss of 10 jobs in state government.

For the seventh month in a row, the county reported an over-the-year job loss. Currently, employment is 7.5 percent lower than February 2008. The industries that lost the most jobs over the year were manufacturing (â€‘36.5%), retail trade (â€‘8.9%), and educational and health services (â€‘8.3%). Some industries also showed employment growth since February 2008, including construction (10.0%); transportation, warehousing, and utilities (9.1%); and other services (5.9%).

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