# Oregon unemployment rate increases slightly in Feb.

*by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources*

Oregonâ€™s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.3 percent in February compared with 5.2 percent in January, according to a report released today by the Oregon Employment Department. The U.S. seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.5 percent in February and 4.6 percent in January. In February, Oregonâ€™s seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment rose by 7,000. This was the largest monthly gain since December 2005 when 7,800 jobs were added. Industry Payroll Employment (Establishment Survey Data)Payroll employment rose substantially in February after a flat trend over the prior six months. Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 7,000 in February after a revised decline of 500 in January (previously reported as a gain of 500). Strength in three industries â€“ professional and business services ( 3,500), trade, transportation, and utilities ( 3,200), and construction ( 900) â€“ was partially offset by a decline in manufacturing (-1,900). Professional and business services employment surged in February as several of this major sectorâ€™s component industries â€“ employment services ( 2,100), services to buildings and dwellings ( 900) and professional and technical services ( 900) â€“ expanded. Professional and business services has been one of Oregonâ€™s hottest sectors over the past 12 months as it has expanded by 6,000 jobs or 3.2 percent over that period. Trade, transportation, and utilities posted solid gains during the first two months of the year, recovering from lackluster trends in the last three months of 2006. The sector added 3,200 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis in February, following a gain of 3,100 jobs in January. Wholesale trade added 500 jobs in February, continuing its strong gains over the past year, during which employment grew by 3,000. Construction added 1,300 jobs in February, which was above the normal seasonal trend. Several component industries posted modest gains, including nonresidential building construction ( 600 jobs), specialty trade contractors ( 700), and building equipment contractors ( 500). Since last summer, employment estimates indicate a slight pullback in Oregonâ€™s overall construction activity. Seasonally adjusted employment in construction peaked at 102,000 in August and has since edged down to 100,700 by February.

Manufacturing cut 1,100 jobs in February at a time of year when it would normally gain 800. Reductions were concentrated in food manufacturing, which lost 600. Lumber and wood product manufacturing cut 200 in February and is down 2,800 jobs or 8.5 percent over the past 12 months. Seasonally adjusted manufacturing employment declined for the sixth consecutive month, reaching 201,900, which is down 7,300 jobs or 3.5 percent from its recent peak of 209,200 jobs in August. Much of this six-month decline was in durable goods manufacturing, where employment had been rising steadily in the two-year period ending in the summer of 2006, but now has fallen back due to job losses in wood product manufacturing, computer and electronic product manufacturing, and transportation equipment manufacturing. Unemployment (Household Survey Data)Oregonâ€™s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.3 percent in February and 5.2 percent in January and remains close to levels seen throughout the past 14 months. In February, 118,381 Oregonians were unemployed, compared with 120,279 in February 2006. Oregonâ€™s civilian labor force reached its highest February level ever at 1,916,368, up 42,964 from February 2005. In the seasonally adjusted series, the civilian labor force was at its all-time high.