

# National Week In Review

## Week Ending April 7, 2006

**U**nemployment Rate . . . The nation's unemployment rate slid 0.1 percentage point to 4.7% in March. The unemployment rate for African Americans aged 16 to 19 jumped 2.3 percentage points to 33.1% in March.

**Nonfarm Employment Up For 31<sup>st</sup> Consecutive Month . . .** Nonfarm employment rose for the 31<sup>st</sup> consecutive month, up 211,000 in March. Nearly all sectors of the economy expanded over the month. The service-providing sector grew by 202,000. Professional and business services rose by 52,000 jobs, primarily in professional and technical services (+20,700). Leisure and hospitality rose by 42,000, on the strength of accommodations and food services (+35,500). Education and health services advanced 33,000, with gains centered in health care and social assistance (+28,400). Trade, transportation and utilities increased by 32,000, mostly in retail trade (+29,400). Government added 24,000 jobs, primarily in local government (+22,000). Employment in the goods-producing sector increased by 9,000. Construction added 7,000 jobs, with gains centered in construction of buildings (+9,600). Natural resources and mining jumped 7,000, on the strength of mining (+5,800). Since April 2003, mining employment has expanded by 97,000. Manufacturing decreased by 5,000, with losses centered in nondurable goods (-11,000).

**Metropolitan Area Unemployment Rates . . .** Unemployment rates were lower in February than a year earlier in 326 of the 367 metropolitan areas across the United States. Seven metropolitan areas in Florida recorded jobless rates below 3.0% while six metropolitan areas in California registered rates of 10.0% or higher. Honolulu, Hawaii recorded the lowest jobless rate at 2.2%. The highest rate was registered by Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss. (15.6%). Analyzing metropolitan area nonfarm employment, 329 recorded over-the-year increases, 35 reported decreases, and 3 had no change. The largest over-the-year percentage declines in employment were reported in New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, La. (-30.7%); Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss. (-18.3%); Weirton-Steubenville, W.Va.-Ohio (-3.6%); Anderson, S.C. (-3.2%); and Danville, Va., and Spartanburg, S.C. (-3.0% each).

**Duration of Unemployment In 2005 . . .** Nearly 1.4 million unemployed persons were jobless for at least 27 weeks at the end of 2005, down 317,000 over the year. These long-term unemployed persons made up 18.6% of total unemployment in the fourth quarter of 2005, down from 21.2% in the fourth quarter of 2004. The average duration of unemployment in the fourth quarter of 2005 was 17.7 weeks, down from 19.6 weeks in the fourth quarter of 2004.

**Sources:**

- Bureau of Labor Statistics

**By Mike Daniels**