

National Week In Review

Week Ending May 5, 2006

Unemployment Rate Unchanged . . . The nation's unemployment rate held steady at 4.7% in April. The jobless rate for men (4.2%) and women (4.3%) were essentially unchanged. The unemployment rate for teenagers fell 1.1 percentage points to 14.6%.

Nonfarm Employment Up For 32nd Consecutive Month . . . Nonfarm employment rose for the 32nd consecutive month, up 138,000 in April. Nearly all sectors of the economy expanded over the month. The service-providing sector increased by 101,000. Education and Health Services rose by 35,000, on the strength of Health Care and Social Assistance (+25,300). Professional and Business services grew by 28,000 jobs, with gains centered in Professional and Technical Services (+20,800). Financial Activities expanded 26,000 jobs, primarily in Finance and Insurance (+20,600). Leisure and Hospitality added 20,000 jobs, mostly in Food Services and Drinking Establishments (+18,800). Trade, Transportation and Utilities fell by 14,000, with losses centered in General Merchandise Stores (-34,200). Employment in the goods-producing sector rose 37,000. Manufacturing added 19,000 jobs, led by robust growth in Transportation Equipment (+13,900), and Computer and Electronic Products (+6,500). Construction increased 10,000, primarily in Residential and Nonresidential Building (+7,300). Natural Resources and Mining jumped 8,000, on the strength of Mining (+7,100).

Metropolitan Area Unemployment Rates . . . Unemployment rates were lower in March than a year earlier in 307 of the 367 metropolitan areas across the United States. Two Florida areas – Cape Coral-Fort Myers and Naples-Marco Island – posted the lowest unemployment rates at 2.2% each. Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss., registered the highest rate at 14.7%. Analyzing metropolitan area nonfarm employment, 324 recorded over-the-year increases, 37 reported decreases, and 6 had no change. The largest over-the-year percentage increases in employment were posted in St. George, Utah (+9.5%); Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, S.C. (+8.8%); Prescott, Arizona (+8.6%); Yuma, Arizona (+7.2%); and Laredo, Texas (+7.1%).

Employment Cost Index Slows In 1st Quarter . . . U.S. employment costs rose by 0.6% in the first quarter of 2006, the smallest increase in seven years. Wages and salaries rose 0.7% in the first quarter, matching the gain in the fourth quarter 2005. Benefit costs increased 0.5%, their smallest increase since March 1999. Total compensation for manufacturing workers fell 0.2% in the first quarter, the first decline in this industry series dating back to 1980. The Employment Cost Index (ECI), a component of the National Compensation Survey, measures quarterly changes in compensation costs, which include wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits for civilian workers (nonfarm private industry, and state and local government).

Sources:

- ABC News
- Bureau of Labor Statistics

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