

Employment numbers a mixed bag

Oregon's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 10.5 percent in June, essentially unchanged from 10.6 percent in May, according to the Oregon Employment Dept. (OED).

The rate has been between 10.5 and 10.7 percent for the most recent eight months. Oregon's unemployment rate was 11.6 percent in June 2009, which tied May 2009 as Oregon's highest unemployment rate since the early 1980s, said OED.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the United States dropped to 9.5 percent in June from 9.7 percent in May.

In June, Oregon's seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment dropped by 3,600, following a gain of 2,600 (as revised) in May.

In June, government employment declined due mainly to the ending of 2,600 temporary Census jobs. In the private sector, most of the major industries had monthly job changes that were close to their normal seasonal pattern. The biggest exception was in professional and business services, which posted a seasonally adjusted job decline of 2,500.

There was a substantial upward revision to the May payroll employment numbers. The originally reported seasonally adjusted totals showed no change between April and May. Revised numbers show a gain of 2,600 jobs, said OED.

The upward revisions were spread across several service-providing industries: government; educational and health services; professional and business services; and trade, transportation, and utilities, OED said.

Government shed 3,500 jobs in June at a time of year when a loss of only 300 is expected due to seasonality. The ending of work for 2,611 intermittent Census workers reduced federal government and total government for June, subtracting from the 6,403 individuals working for the Census during May.

OED added: "State and local governments performed in line with normal seasonal patterns in June, and both are close to their respective employment levels of June 2009.

"Professional and business services took a sudden drop of 2,500 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis in June, following a flat seasonally adjusted trend since October. Much of the decline in June was due to below-normal hiring in the component industry "administrative and waste services." This industry is down 3,700 jobs during the past 12 months with job losses in all of its component categories.

"The closely watched employment services industry

employed only 27,000 in June, which was 700 below its year-ago level. The expansion in this industry seen in recent quarters has stalled in the most recent months. Services to buildings and dwellings is also down substantially over the year, with a loss of 1,000 jobs since last June.

"This industry continues to see declines even though the broader economy is arguably in recovery.

"Trade, transportation, and utilities added 1,500 jobs in June, about its typical June seasonal pattern. However, its component industries reported differing trends.

"Retail trade dropped again in June, losing 2,100 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis. This was the third consecutive such job loss. Motor vehicle and parts dealers cut 300 jobs in June. This retail industry suffered a huge drop in business within the past two years.

"It has recovered somewhat during the past year, pushing up employment by 700 since June 2009. However, employing a total of 22,400 jobs in June, it is still well below its typical June of close to 27,000 for the years 1999 through 2008.

"Wholesale trade continued to rebound, having added 2,700 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis since its low in November 2009.

In June, transportation, warehousing, and utilities shot up 1,100 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis. Truck transportation added 200 jobs in June but is still down 1,400 from its June 2009 level.

"Financial activities rose 300 in June to 93,000, a level it has been close to for the first six months of 2010. Real estate and rental and leasing added 600 jobs in June but remained below 36,000, which is near its lowest level of the past 15 years and well below its peak of near 45,000 of nearly three years ago.

"Insurance carriers cut 200 in June to reach 25,000. This industry's employment has been trending downward since early 2008, when nearly 27,000 were employed.

"Educational and health services cut only 2,400 jobs in June, when a loss of 4,100 is the normal seasonal pattern. Private educational services was the primary reason for the better-than-normal showing in June, as the published figure was a cut of only 1,600 jobs during the start of the summer break.

"Employing 28,800, educational services was 200 above its year-ago figure.

"Health care and social assistance cut 800 jobs in June and was up only 600 since June 2009. During the past 20 years, health-care employment had been growing at one of the fastest and most steady paces of all the

industries. However, within the past six months to a year several of its component industries have slowed or even declined in terms of job counts. Ambulatory health care services is down 1,200 since June 2009 and hospitals have shed 400 in that time.

"Nursing and residential-care facilities, while up by 1,300 jobs during the year, has cut back by 600 since its peak figure in February. Social assistance cut 600 in June, but is up 900 since June 2009.

"Construction added 2,100 jobs in June as it ramped up for the busy summer building season. This gain, which came from all published industry components, was close to the normal gain for the time of year. The industry typically adds thousands of workers in July and August, followed by cutbacks in subsequent months.

"With the typical June gain, construction continued to hold close to 65,000 (seasonally adjusted), where it has been hovering all year.

"Manufacturing added only 2,200 jobs in June, when its normal seasonal pattern calls for a gain of 2,800. Food manufacturing added 900 to reach 24,400, its highest June employment level since 1998.

"This is one of the few manufacturing industries in Oregon that has seen increasing employment in recent years. Conversely, many of the durable goods manufacturing industries continue to shed workers. Durable goods is down 4,200 since June 2009, with cutbacks seen in the following industries over the past year: wood products (-900 jobs), fabricated metals (-1,300), machinery (-1,400), computer and electronic products (-500), and transportation equipment (-700).

Unemployment (Household Survey Data)

"In June, Oregon's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained essentially unchanged at 10.5 percent compared with 10.6 percent in May.

"The unemployment rate dropped significantly since reaching a peak a year ago. During June 2009 Oregon had the highest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in nearly three decades, reaching 11.6 percent. Similarly, the number of unemployed Oregonians has dropped substantially, by more than 25,000 during that 12-month period.

"During June, 203,884 Oregonians were unemployed. In June 2009, 229,471 Oregonians were unemployed."

OED was to release the June county and metropolitan area unemployment rates on Monday, July 19, and the statewide unemployment rate and employment survey data for July on Aug. 17.



Eastfork (above) was among bands featured during the seventh-annual Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Siskiyou Bluegrass Festival, held Saturday, July 17 at Lake Selmac. The festival also featured performances by the Goldman Family (left) and Jefferson (bottom); 'Kuzin Keith' Fuller (below, left) once again served as Master of Ceremonies. (Photos by Michelle Binker, Illinois Valley News)



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AG gets tough with Pacific Foods

Tualatin company alleged to have concealed distribution, recall of contaminated soy products

An agreement has been reached with Pacific Nutritional Foods Inc., an Oregon food processor that allegedly sold contaminated food products after learning of the contamination and failed to inform the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Oregon Attorney General John Kroger announced the agreement.

"Consumers must be able to trust that food on the shelf is safe to eat," said Deputy Attorney General Mary Williams. "Companies that knowingly risk or compromise the public health will be held accountable."

In October 2009, the FDA issued a warning letter after conducting several inspections of the Tualatin food processing facility. The letter detailed serious violations of low-acid and canned food

regulations that rendered Pacific Nutritional Foods' soy and oat-based beverage products "adulterated" because they were prepared, packed or held under unsanitary conditions and as a result were unfit for consumption.

The FDA warning letter prompted the Oregon Dept. of Justice (ODJ) to conduct an independent review that revealed numerous violations by Pacific Nutritional Foods. It failed to comply with various procedural and reporting requirements intended to ensure the safety of commercially processed food, according to ODJ. It added:

"On multiple occasions, Pacific Nutritional Foods discovered potentially harmful micro-organisms in products it had released for distribution. It surreptitiously withdrew the products from the

market without issuing a formal recall.

"FDA guidelines require commercial processors of low-acid foods to promptly report to the agency when contaminated food has in whole or in part entered distribution.

"In addition, the company failed to address what might have caused the tainted soy products and did not institute any policies or procedures to mitigate the possibility of future contamination."

The settlement requires Pacific Nutritional Foods Inc. to pay \$15,000 to ODJ; develop adequate protocols for preventing and responding to future contaminations; and comply with state and federal regulations and reporting requirements.

Senior Assistant Attorney General Greg Smith handled the case for ODJ.



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