

Oregon jobless rate declines to below 5 percent

Lowest rate in 20-plus years

By STEVEN DUBOIS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — How low can it go?

Oregon's unemployment rate dropped to 4.8 percent in February, its lowest level in more than 20 years, according to figures released Tuesday by the state Employment Department.

The jobless rate has been steadily declining since reaching a peak of nearly 12 percent in the spring of 2009, a time when Oregon was crushed by the recession. The state labor force has grown by nearly 100,000 in the past two years, driven largely by people moving from California and elsewhere, and finding work.

Oregon added 4,300 jobs last month, led by the construction industry, after a gain of more than 9,000 jobs in January. That has sent the jobless rate plummeting to a mark last seen in April 1995.

The U.S. unemployment rate for February was 4.9 percent.

"We've been somewhat

above the U.S. employment rate for many years, and now this is the first time Oregon's rate has reached and fallen slightly below the U.S. rate," said David Cooke, a state economist.

Another unemployment measure, known as U-6, slid to 9.7 percent in February — down from 20 percent in mid-2009. The figure includes discouraged workers who stopped looking as well as part-time workers who want but can't get full-time jobs.

"It's really come down rapidly, the number of people working part-time for economic reasons, and that's a sign of a sharply tightening labor force in Oregon," Cooke said.

Oregon workers have also been getting good news when it comes to pay. The average wage for private sector payroll employees has jumped 4.5 percent since last February, to \$24.40, a much-better pace than the national average of roughly 2.5 percent.

Besides construction, other major industries leading the way in February were health care and professional and business services. The laggards for the month were private educational services and manufacturing.

Freauff: Nearly \$100,000 went to gambling

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Freauff's crimes were discovered by an accountant who was updating the company's financial records. The accountant asked for passwords Freauff had to get into the records. Freauff never shared the passwords and quit days later.

For more than three years, Freauff used the company's ATM card to take out thousands of dollars for clothing, food, her cable bill, her father's car payments and furniture.

She spent nearly \$100,000 of the stolen money gambling at Spirit Mountain Casino in Grand Ronde and Palace Casino in La Center, Washington.

Prosecutor Beau Peterson said the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde voluntarily assisted in the case by providing Freauff's gambling records from Spirit Mountain. Tribes are under no obligation to assist in criminal cases, Peterson said, but the Grand Ronde's help was instrumental.

'I regret my choices and the effect those choices have had on others. Having spent the last 17 months in jail, I'm a different person.'

Deana Lynn Freauff

a former employee at Diamond Heating in Seaside who was sentenced for stealing more than \$214,000 from the local business

returned to take her first financial job at U.S. Bank. What became her Achilles' heel, von Boeckmann said, was an emerging gambling addiction.

"Gambling was the trigger that led to her first-ever criminal behavior," he said.

Freauff spoke at the sentencing hearing about how she spent her time in jail reflecting on her life and seeking treatment for her gambling addiction.

"I regret my choices and the effect those choices have had on others," she said. "Having spent the last 17

months in jail, I'm a different person."

She is ordered to pay back \$214,256 in restitution.

Although not physical harm, Peterson said, aggravated theft cases cause harm to those involved that is just as lasting. Diamond Heating is still negotiating with the IRS over back taxes.

Nelson, whose company has been in business for 27 years, said Freauff's punishment is a protection for the rest of the community.

"The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy. This woman is the devil, reincarnated," he said.

Roley: She was speechless after board's vote

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"We wouldn't have the angst of a new superintendent and new principal," Ulbricht said.

Initially, he was "taken aback" by Roley's 11th-hour application, said board member Patrick Nofield, but he

said he realized how many qualifications she met. He, too, said she would bring continuity to the district's operations.

Brian Taylor, another board member, worried that Roley would miss working with students. Then he realized that she would con-

tinue to be working with students — just on another level.

"I trust her with the reins," Taylor said.

Following the board's vote, Roley said she was speechless.

She told the board that, for her, the decision to seek the

superintendent's job wasn't sudden.

"I realized I didn't need to stop serving students, but I needed a change in the way I did it."

The district is "growing a new generation of leaders. What an honor to serve them," she said. "I'm overwhelmed."

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY
Baseball — R.A. Long at Astoria, 4 p.m.; CMH Field; Warrenton at Nestucca, 4:30 p.m.
Softball — Warrenton at Nestucca, 4:30 p.m.
Track — Seaside at Astoria, 3:30 p.m.
THURSDAY
Softball — Astoria at Estacada, 4 p.m.; Seaside at Molalla, 4:30 p.m.
Track — Warrenton at Ilwaco, 4 p.m.
Girls Golf — Astoria at Scappoose, 1 p.m.; Seaside at Banks Invitational, 1 p.m.

FRIDAY

Baseball — Astoria at Dallas, 4 p.m.; Seaside Tournament, TBA; Warrenton at Blanchet Catholic, 4:30 p.m.; Reedsport at Knappa, 4 p.m., CMH Field
Softball — Astoria at R.A. Long, 4 p.m.; Warrenton at Blanchet Catholic, 4:30 p.m.; Reedsport at Knappa, 4 p.m.
Boys Golf — Seaside at The Dalles, 10 a.m.

SATURDAY

Baseball — Seaside Tournament, TBA; Reedsport at Knappa, Noon, CMH Field
Softball — Reedsport at Knappa, Noon



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Cannon Beach Property Mgmt. currently has opportunities for Vacation Home cleaners to join our team. Flexible hours. Will train. Hourly rate DOE. Email resume to fcb@cbpm.com or fax 503-436-9264.

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311 W. Marine Drive, Astoria (Across from KFC where Captain Fishhead used to be) Disco balls, lighting and chandeliers, jewelry, tools, display cases and organizers - all sizes, shelves, furniture, yard decor, and wind chimes, speakers, receivers, small appliances, mosaic and tile, wrought iron/brass/copper pieces, fabric, collectibles, old glass, and paperweights, adult costumes, and wigs, oddball stuff, lots more.

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Applications may be obtained from NOHA, 147 S Main Ave, Warrenton, OR 97146.

Job closes Thursday, March 24, 2016, 4:00 p.m.

New Today

Astoria School District 1C is seeking qualified applicants for a Food Service Director. Visit astoria.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx for more information or contact the district office, 503-325-6441

The Silver Salmon is hiring a Chef/Kitchen Manager. Apply in person at 1105 Commercial, Astoria

20 Freebies
1 cubic yard of Garden Soil 503-325-5226

35 Lost & Found
Missing Cat! Long black fur Last seen in front of Columbia Vet Clinic, 576 31st St, Astoria, West side of Safeway. Answers to "Mama" and a whistle. Any Sightings Call: 1-360-581-0703 1-503-861-2003

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