

State jobless rate rose to 4.1%

Unemployment in Oregon increased in October even though state added 5,200 jobs

BY KATE DAVIDSON

Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Oregon added 5,200 jobs in October, even as the state's unemployment rate rose to 4.1% and economic forecasters warned a mild recession is likely within the next year.

The state jobless rate edged up from 3.8% in September, breaking 4% for the first time since the beginning of 2022. It's now slightly higher than the national unemployment rate of 3.7%.

"Despite the uptick in unemployment, it's still really low by historical standards, at 4.1% in Oregon," said state employment economist Gail Krumenauer in a recorded statement.

Krumenauer noted that, after a net job loss in September, hiring bounced back in October. The unemployment rate is measured differently from the tally of jobs statewide. For several reasons, it's possible for the jobless rate to rise even as more positions are filled.

In fact, Oregon's private sector reached an all-time high of 1,682,300 jobs in October, according to the Oregon Employment Department. That's well above its pre-pandemic peak.

Three sectors added more than 1,000 jobs each last month: financial activities; manufacturing; and health care and social assistance. Within the broad category of financial activities, employment gains in real estate and rental and leasing were particularly robust, with 1,900 new jobs. Construction and leisure and hospitality businesses also added hundreds of jobs, with construction also reaching record-high employment.

Conversely, government and retail trade groups lost hundreds of jobs last month.

State economic forecasters warned Wednesday, Nov. 16, that they expect a mild recession to hit within the next year, causing the state unemployment rate to peak at 5.4% in early 2024. Forecasters anticipate a loss of roughly 24,000 jobs, many of them in industries tied to construction and manufacturing. "A mild recession is now the most likely outcome for the economy," state economists wrote in their quarterly forecast.

It's too soon to know how deeply layoffs in the tech industry could affect Oregon's workforce. Intel, the state's largest corporate employer, said last month it would undertake aggressive cost-cutting measures including targeted job cuts. Amazon, Twitter and Meta's lay-off plans have rocked the tech world, but their impact is far more pronounced in Washington. Meta and Twitter have laid off at least 900 Washington employees so far.



Josh Rindfleisch/Wallowa County Chieftain

Dr. Nick West examines patient Bill Smergut during a visit at Winding Waters Medical Clinic on Monday, Nov. 21, 2022. An Imbler High School graduate, West is now on staff at the Wallowa County health center.

Hanging his shingle

Imbler graduate Dr. Nick West joins staff at Winding Waters Medical Clinic

BY TRISH YERGES

For The Observer

ENTERPRISE — Dr. Nick West, a board certified family physician, is hanging his doctor's shingle and taking new patients at Winding Waters Medical Clinic, Enterprise.

West's return to Northeastern Oregon is the fulfillment of a long-held dream to serve the health care needs of rural families and patients in his home territory.

"Winding Waters is very happy to welcome Dr. West and his family to our team and our community, and we look forward to many years of serving our patients together," Winding Waters Chief Executive Officer Nic Powers said.

West is the son of Russ West, a retired judge, and Mary West, an Imbler schoolteacher. He grew up on the family's cattle ranch northeast of Imbler and graduated from Imbler High School in 2009.

He then attended Oregon State University, where in 2014 he earned a bachelor of science degree in bio-resource research with minors in toxicology and chemistry. He earned a doctorate in 2019 after which he and his wife, Alex, relocated to Klamath Falls, where he completed his three-year residency in family medicine in June 2022 at OHSU Cascades East

Family Medicine.

"At Winding Waters, Dr. West joins a team of primary care professionals providing care at clinics in Enterprise, Joseph, and Wallowa," Powers said.

West will also take care of patients through home visits, delivering babies in the hospital, and working shifts in the Wallowa County emergency department and as rotation hospitalist doing inpatient rounds.

"We are very excited about his joining Winding Waters, and we've been working on it for years," Powers said. "We were aware of Nick West when he was just a medical student, and we knew he was interested in coming back to Northeastern Oregon to take care of people. Happily, he reached out to us to do a clerkship."

It was during West's third year of

medical school that he worked at Winding Waters for six months.

"I really fell in love with Winding Waters, and since I was already very committed to rural family medicine, this experience kind of cemented that," West said.

"Then in my second year of residency, I spent another five weeks at Winding Waters. It was at that point that I signed the contract to work at Winding Waters."

Powers said West is an asset to Winding Waters because of his sharp aptitude for medicine and his commitment to Northeastern Oregon. He was willing to offer "frontier medicine" in all of its deliveries, including making frequent home visits, pulling shifts in the hospital ER, working as a hospitalist every eight weeks and seeing patients at several clinics.

West said he thrives on the cog-

nitive stimulation he receives while filling these roles.

"It's just been so much fun to be back practicing here and having the reception from patients, coworkers and colleagues," he said. "In the last couple months I've been getting busier and busier."

It's the enthusiasm Powers sees in West that makes him such a good fit for the job.

"He's of the community and understands a lot about people from having grown up here," Powers said. "Whereas if we had brought someone here from far away, they might not get it."

West said that he believes in the comprehensiveness of family medicine at Winding Waters and the team approach that is utilized to solve a patient's health problems. Being a rural health care system, the Wallowa County health center offers an integrated approach with wraparound services that conveniently meet the needs of the individual patient or family.

West will be seeing patients at the main clinic next to the hospital, and he'll also be on a rotating schedule at the clinics in Wallowa, Enterprise and Joseph.

Generally, new patients have a short wait list, and after they are seen, patients have access to the county's care provider portal.

States take key role in fighting fake online reviews

BY ELAINE S. POVICH

Stateline.org

WASHINGTON — With studies showing that at least three-quarters of online shoppers check product and service reviews before they buy, the evaluations have become more important than ever in global commerce. But fake reviews upend the system.

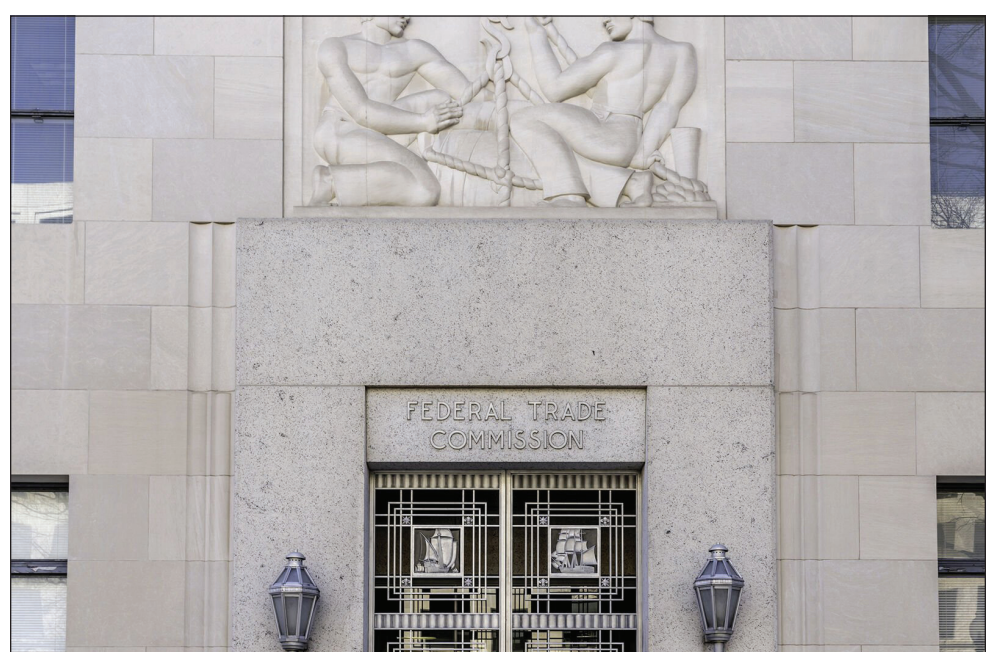
In the United States, state attorneys general and a key federal agency are leading efforts to crack down on

false or manipulated reviews that can lead to purchases of shoddy products or services and sometimes leave little recourse for consumers.

Still, efforts to address the problem pale in comparison to the number of fake reviews and the economic damage they cause, according to recent studies from the Center for Data Innovation and the World Economic Forum.

About 4% of worldwide on-

See [Reviews](#) / B2



Dreamstime via TNS

The Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general are leading efforts to crack down on fake product reviews.

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