

Where the JOBS are

HOUSTON-GULF COAST REGION* | JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

The Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown Metropolitan Statistical Area cut 500 jobs from payrolls in December but continues to maintain a healthy pace of job growth over the year, up 75,800 jobs or 3.0 percent from December 2010. Much weaker seasonal hiring at retail establishments was responsible for the loss. Most private sectors continue to see healthy over-the-year job gains, especially those with ties to oil and gas exploration. Job growth over the past year has been strongest in mining and logging, healthcare, manufacturing, and professional and business services. The public sector continues to struggle with budget constraints and has reported over-the-year losses for the last eight months.



Mining and logging added 700 jobs over the month with payrolls up 10,100 jobs or 12.1 percent over the year. Strongest hiring has been at companies that support the mining industry.



Ambulatory healthcare services, where employment in all types of medical offices are found, increased payrolls by 1,400 jobs over the month with payrolls up 11,000 jobs representing a strong 8.8 percent rate of over-the-year job growth.



Professional and business services added 300 jobs over the month with payrolls up 19,700 jobs or 5.4 percent over the year. Most of the hiring in December was at accounting tax preparation service companies. Strongest growth over the past year has been at companies that support day-to-day operations such as office administration, hiring and placing of personnel, document preparation and similar clerical services, solicitation, collection, security and surveillance services, cleaning, and waste disposal services.



Manufacturing trimmed payrolls by 200 in December which is not uncommon. Payrolls are up 11,500 jobs or 5.3 percent over the year. Most of the increase was found at manufacturers of durable goods where those supporting the mining industry continue to benefit from a high level of drilling activity.



Retail trade saw much weaker seasonal hiring than previous years in December adding 1,200 jobs compared to 5,300 jobs in 2010. Payrolls in retail trade are up by 6,800 jobs or 2.5 percent over the year.



Construction activity continued to fall in December resulting in a loss of 2,900 jobs over the month but payrolls remain higher than they were one year earlier, up 1,600 jobs or 0.9 percent over the year.

The 13-county region's unemployment rate dropped two-tenths of a percentage point to 7.3 percent in December, one full percentage point lower than it was one year earlier.

For more detailed job growth information, see the monthly reports located at wrksolutions.com (click on Labor Market Information).



Workforce Solutions is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Texas Relay Numbers:
1-800-735-2989 (TDD) • 1-800-735-2988 (voice) • 7-1-1

* The Houston- Sugar Land- Baytown Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is the only geographic area with monthly job count data in the Gulf Coast Region. The MSA has ten counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller.

NEXT UPDATE: WEEK OF MARCH 12