



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2020

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**FEBRUARY JOB GAINS RENDERED LARGELY IRRELEVANT IN
LIGHT OF CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY IN TEXAS, U.S.**

(HOUSTON) Houston-area employers added 36,800 workers to their payrolls in February, an ephemeral 1.2 percent bump likely wiped out by job losses in the face of the regional Novel Coronavirus emergency, according to data released Friday by Workforce Solutions.

The most recent employment survey was taken during the week of February 12, three weeks prior to the first reported COVID-19 case in the Houston area, said Workforce Solutions Economist Parker Harvey. “The Coronavirus emergency declaration in Harris County happened on March 17 and the so-called ‘shelter-in-place’ order took effect a week later,” he explained. “So we won’t know the real toll, in terms of job losses due to the emergency health measures, until April’s survey is released in late May – at the earliest.”

Harvey pointed out that an oil price war between OPEC nations and Russia, along with decreased demand globally due to emergency health measures, has caused oil prices to drop by nearly fifty percent over the last month, “Energy firms shedding jobs will only worsen the overall employment situation caused by Coronavirus-related losses in the Leisure and Hospitality sector,” he said.

“We really have no analogue to what we are facing in terms of job losses,” said Mike Temple, Director of Gulf Coast Workforce Board – Workforce Solutions, pointing to an analysis conducted by Parker Harvey this week. “Parker’s research looked at the three most recent employment disruptors: Hurricane Harvey, the collapse of oil prices beginning in 2014, and the great recession of 2008.”

According to Harvey’s analysis, these three events provide only a “rudimentary” baseline of what to expect going forward, “However given the sheer scale of disruption affecting nearly all forms of work across all industries, the effects on the job market are already being characterized by a host of superlatives. Regardless, how, where, and when we work will be fundamentally transformed for the foreseeable future.” A copy of Harvey’s report is available for download at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats.

www.wrksolutions.com 1.888.469.JOBS (5627)

Workforce Solutions is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. (Please request reasonable accommodations a minimum of two business days in advance.) Relay Texas: 1.800.735.2989 (TDD) 1.800.735.2988 (voice) or 711

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In light of the public health emergency, Workforce Solutions is following “Stay home...work safe” practices. “While all our locations remain closed to the public, staff is ready to assist anyone remotely, “ said Mike Temple. “They can be reached by phone and email Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m..” A directory of locations and contact information is available at www.wrksolutions.com/directory. Customers can also call 1-888-469-5627 (JOBS), enter their ZIP Code and be connected to their nearest career office.

Customers are also encouraged to visit www.wrksolutions.com/jobsnow for a list of immediate job openings for employers in need of candidates during the COVID-19 outbreak. The page is updated Monday through Friday.

Additional labor market information including the detailed February report can be found at wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment data for March on April 17, 2020.

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ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: Workforce Solutions is dedicated to keeping the Gulf Coast region a great place to do business, work, and live. Our employer-driven, people-focused approach elevates the economic and human potential of the region to attract and retain the best employers, afford everyone the dignity of a job, and remain indispensable to the global economy. As the public workforce system for 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston region, we work in tandem with the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network to maintain the state’s largest job-match database - WorkInTexas.com.