

Austin area job market shows improvement

Market's year-over-year gain was biggest since November 2008

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Austin's job market showed signs of a rebound in June, led by a surge of hiring in the leisure and hospitality industry.

The five-county Austin metro area had 771,300 nonagricultural jobs in June, for a gain of 10,100 jobs, or 1.3 percent, from a year ago, the Texas Workforce Commission said.

It was the local job market's largest year-over-year gain since November 2008, when the nation's economic tailspin was beginning.

Most of the gain came in the local leisure and hospitality industry, which had 93,900 area jobs in June, up 9,100 from a year ago. The segment includes jobs in hotels, food services and drinking places.

Three other segments were strongly up for the year: education and health services, 85,500, up 2,400; government, 169,400, up 1,700; and other services, 34,400, up 700.

The weakest local segments were mining, logging and construction, 39,700, down 1,700 from a year ago, and manufacturing, at 47,100, down 1,400.

Austin's jobless rate was 7.4 percent in June, up from 6.9 percent in May and equal to the jobless rate in June 2009.

Texas reported an 8.2 percent jobless rate in June, down slightly from the May rate of 8.3 percent. Unemployment in the state continues to trend well below the U.S. rate of 9.5 percent.

The state added 14,000 jobs in June and has gained 166,100 jobs since the start of the year.

"The good news is that the region continues to add jobs," said Alan Miller, executive director of Workforce Solutions-

Capital Area . June was Austin's third straight month of year-over-year job gains.

But a spokesman for the group said that it would like to see more local job growth in areas that offer higher pay and long-term career paths.

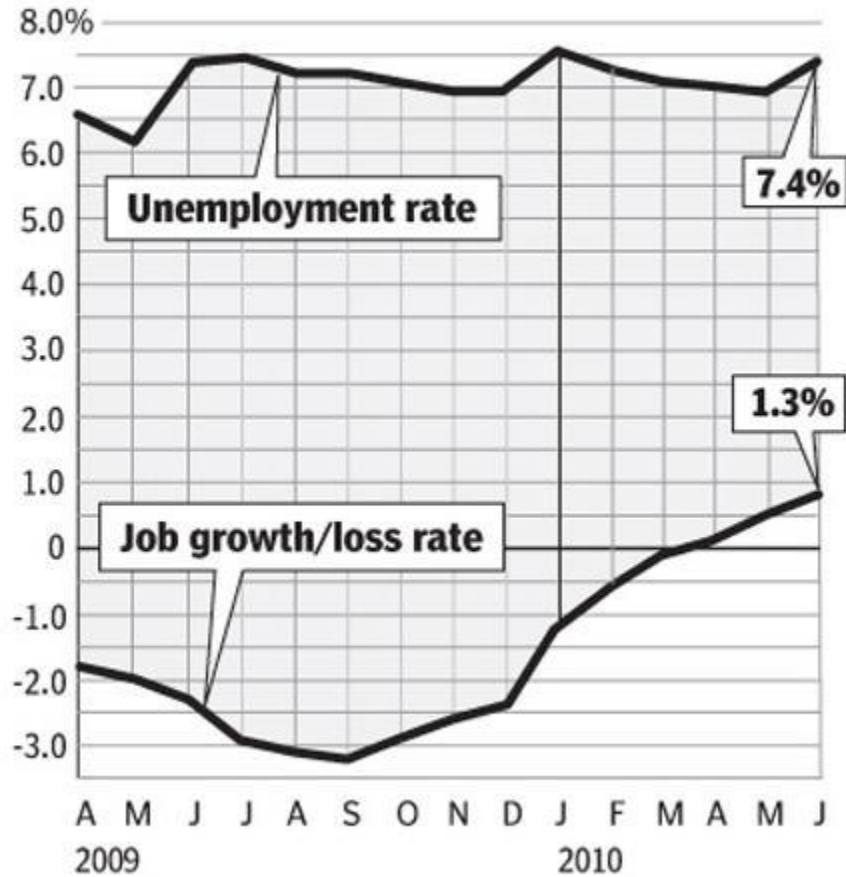
"The conventional wisdom is, the worst is behind us," said Austin economist Jon Hockenyo. "We have hit the bottom, and we are moving out, but the economy still isn't back to where we would like it to be."

Midland reported the lowest unemployment among the state's metro areas at 5.9 percent. The McAllen-Edinburg-Mission area had the highest rate at 12.2 percent.

Among the largest metro areas, Dallas-Fort Worth had an 8.5 percent jobless rate, with Houston at 8.8 percent and San Antonio at 7.7 percent.

Austin job numbers improving

The area added 10,100 jobs between June 2009 and last month.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission

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Courtesy of JB Goodwin