

Region's job picture stays bright

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The job market for the five-county Central Texas region is going strong.

The region's unemployment rate was 3.8 percent last month, down from the 4.6 percent posted in June 2006, according to figures released by the Texas Workforce Commission on Friday.

The area is adding jobs at a fast clip as well.

Last month, employers added 29,000 jobs, a 4 percent annual job growth rate. The area's work force totaled 747,200 in June.

Statewide, the jobless rate fell as well, to 4.1 percent. The state unemployment rate, unlike local figures, is adjusted for typical changes in the job picture, such as summer hires.

"The remarkably low unemployment rate reflects the strength of the Texas economy," said Diane Rath, chairwoman of the Texas Workforce Commission.

The strong local job figures are the latest evidence that employers' appetite for hiring has not cooled despite a slowing local home market. Home construction had been a strong driver of new jobs during the last year.

For example, June figures for the region, which includes Travis, Williamson, Hays, Caldwell and Bastrop counties, show employers for every major sector, except software engineering jobs, were adding workers.

That includes the construction sector, which added jobs at a 9.5 percent rate, or 4,300 new jobs for the year.

Another big gainer was government. The government sector, which includes jobs ranging from teachers to state agency employees, added 8,100 jobs, a 5.5 percent gain, from June 2006 to last month, for a total work force of 155,100.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin