

## Austin jobless rate at lowest level so far this year

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AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF  
Friday, May 20, 2011

Austin-area employers added 14,100 jobs from April 2010 to April of this year, an increase of 1.8 percent, the Texas Workforce Commission reported Friday.

**Newly released numbers also show the region's unemployment rate dropped from 6.8 percent in March to 6.5 percent in April, its lowest level this year.**

Though the report showed a modest pace of job growth, there has been a string of recent announcements by companies planning to add jobs in Central Texas this year.

They range from startups adding five or 10 jobs to Altera Corp. , a California chip design firm that plans to open an Austin design center this year and grow to several hundred workers in the next few years.

Some high-tech firms say they're having trouble finding the qualified workers they need to support their growth. The emerging shortage was a major topic at the CEO Summit, a gathering of dozens of area tech CEOs, on Thursday.

A report released by the Manpower Group this week shows that information technology positions are among the nation's 10 hardest jobs to fill.

"There's a lot of opportunities available in Austin," said Dick Beal, executive vice president for search firm DHR International 's Austin office.

"The market in Austin is tight, and it seems to stay that way despite what we see elsewhere in the country."

The region's improving job picture is threatened, however, by proposed budget cuts at a number of school districts and state agencies. Government employment in the Austin area accounts for 173,500 jobs, more than any other sector, according to Workforce Commission figures.

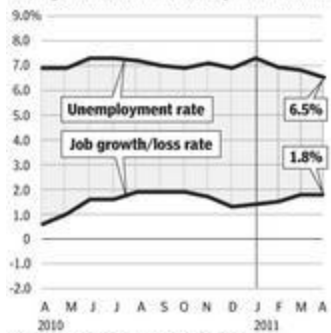
"Layoffs at the state level and at public schools will mean layoffs in the private sector, as well," said Mimi Garcia, outreach coordinator for the Texas State Employees Union . "It could have a huge impact on Austin."

Statewide, the unemployment rate was 8 percent in April, down from 8.1 percent in March and 8.2 percent a year ago. The Midland area has the lowest rate in Texas at 4.4 percent.

**"Texas employers added 32,900 jobs in April, making it the seventh consecutive month of employment increases," Texas Workforce Commission Chairman Tom Pauken said. "Annual job growth was positive, as Texas added 254,400 jobs since last year."**

### Central Texas jobs report

The region had a total of 781,100 jobs last month.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission

AMERICANSTATISTICIAN

## JOBLESS TRENDS

### Unemployment rates decline in three-quarters of U.S. states

WASHINGTON — Unemployment rates fell last month in more than three-quarters of the nation's states, adding to evidence that companies are feeling more confident in the U.S. economy.

The Labor Department said Friday that jobless rates dropped in 39 states in April. It's the largest number of states to see decreases since November 2003. Rates rose in three states and the District of Columbia. They were unchanged in eight states.

Employers added workers in 42 states, the best showing since March 2007, nine months before the recession started. Eight states and the District of Columbia lost jobs last month.

**Nationally, businesses have added more than 250,000 jobs per month, on average, in the past three months. It's the fastest hiring spree in five years. The unemployment rate has dropped nearly a full percentage point since November. Still, it remains very high at 9 percent.**

Courtesy of JB Goodwin