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# Climate for tech jobs better here

Still, number of jobs in area down 12%

## **Austin Business Journal - by Christopher Calnan ABJ Staff**

The number of Austin-area technology jobs has sharply declined during the last year, but opportunities for tech workers are better here than in most U.S. cities.

The number of employed Central Texas technology workers declined nearly 12 percent this year compared with 2008, according to the **Texas Workforce Commission**.

**Yet in 2009 Austin has reported the second-highest percentage increase of technology jobs posting in the country, 31 percent. Charlotte, N.C., is No. 1, according to a study by Indiana-based Dice Inc.**

The tech-focused Web site operator lists 762 open jobs in Central Texas. The positions are across a broad range of businesses, but network security and virtualization are the two hottest fields, Dice Senior Vice President Tom Silver said.

**The Austin job market for technology workers hasn't been as volatile as other markets, he said.**

**"It's been relatively steady over a longer period of time," Silver said. "Austin has been a consistently strong performer, while there is a 30 percent decline in job count nationally."**

Although Central Texas may be doing better than other regions, the area has 6,400 fewer technology jobs than a year ago.

In October, Central Texas reported 47,800 tech jobs compared with 54,200 during the same period last year — an 11.8 percent decline, according to the Texas Workforce Commission.

Commission spokesman Robert Crowley declined to offer any reasons for the decrease, saying that it would merely be speculation.

In another study, by the California-based **Milken Institute**, Austin's job market, coupled with its technology production, earned the city a No. 1 ranking in the country.

Texas metros, led by Austin, claimed four of the top five spots in the Milken Institute report.

Austin in particular has been helped by its strong tech industry. It is the first city to be ranked No. 1 twice by the Milken Institute, the last time being in 2000.

“Another factor helping Texas metros move up in the rankings is that state’s favorable business climate and its ability to attract jobs and corporations away from higher-cost states,” the group reported.

During 2008, Texas led the nation in the number of jobs supported by technology exports, with an estimated 253,600 jobs. Nationally, technology exports supported more than 1 million jobs, according to TechAmerica Foundation.

Texas’ technology exports reached \$39.8 billion, a \$117 million, or 0.3 percent, increase versus 2007. Technology accounted for 21 percent of the state’s total export base of \$192 billion, TechAmerica reported.

The state was the leading exporter of communications equipment at \$9.5 billion in 2008, up from \$6.9 billion in 2007, and was also a leader in electronic components at \$3.5 billion in 2008, though this was a slight drop from \$3.6 billion the year before, according to U.S. Census figures.

Texas was second in semiconductor exports, although exports were down nearly 16 percent to \$10.7 billion during 2008 compared with \$12.7 billion in 2007. Nationally, semiconductor exports dipped 2.6 percent from 2007 to 2008, while California reported a 12 percent hit during the same period.

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**