

Texas jobless rate hits 31-year low

Strong state economy drives down the unemployment rate.

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The Texas unemployment rate fell to 4.1 percent in May, the lowest point since at least 1976, the Texas Workforce Commission said Friday.

That was down a notch from April's jobless rate of 4.2 percent.

A year ago, the Texas jobless rate was 5 percent.

The Central Texas rate remained at 3.2 percent, a six-year low, and job growth was 4.2 percent, down slightly from 4.4 percent in April.

The region's biggest sector jump, 10 percent, came in mining and construction, reflecting strong activity in commercial construction and road building.

The hotel and restaurant sector added jobs at a 5.5 percent rate.

The statewide job growth rate was 2.4 percent, nearly double the national increase of 1.4 percent.

"Sustained job growth and a strong Texas economy have driven the unemployment rate to this historic low," commission Chairwoman Diane Rath said. "Texas employers are prospering, which means more opportunities for working Texans."

The commission said the 4.1 percent jobless rate was the lowest since the current system of tracking the work force began in 1976.

The statewide figures were adjusted for seasonal trends in hiring and firing, which most economists say gives a better picture of the job market. The local figures are not.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin