

## Energy states, Idaho leading comeback from recession

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By [Dennis Cauchon](#), USA TODAY

The longest recession the country has endured since World War II ended in June 2009, a group that dates the beginning and end of recessions declared Monday.

**Texas, North Carolina, Idaho and a handful of other states are leading the nation's crawl out of the worst recession since the 1930s, a USA TODAY analysis finds.**

Since the recession officially ended in June 2009, a group of about 10 states that have outperformed the nation almost continuously for 25 or more years again is generating new income at a faster pace than the rest of the nation.

"Our pipeline of companies looking to expand or relocate here is the biggest it's been in a decade," says Bibiana Nertney of the Idaho Department of Commerce.

Idaho ranked 10th in personal income growth in the year since the recession's end, up from 50th among states and [Washington, D.C.](#), during the recession. That's the USA's biggest rebound.

**Meanwhile, two of the recession's biggest victims — Nevada and Florida — show virtually no signs that income has begun to pick up.**

The [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) on Monday released personal income numbers for all 50 states through the second quarter of 2010 — the same day the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) declared that the recession that began in December 2007 ended in June 2009.

USA TODAY calculated which states have done best and worst during the 12 months after the recession ended. Key findings:

•**Energy states. States such as Texas and Alaska did the best during the recession — and continue to do well now. Even coal states such as Kentucky have enjoyed strong income gains.**

•**Sun Belt struggles.** Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia have done poorly.

•**California rebounds.** The state ranked 22nd in income growth since the recession, up from a dismal 46th in the downturn.

•**Bottom dwellers. Nevada's income fell 7.4% during the 18 months of the recession and 3.6% in the year after — worst in the nation, both before and after. Florida ranks 45th and Michigan 46th post-recession.**

The income data from July 2009 through June 2010 show a lukewarm recovery. Nationwide, income rose just 0.3% after inflation in the year after the recession. Wages actually fell 1.1% while benefits from government programs jumped 4.1%.

New Mexico ranked No. 1 in income growth because it ranked No. 1 in increased money from government programs. Even states that are doing well in the private economy are reaping a large share of income from government benefits. **Texas ranked No. 2 in wage growth and No. 3 in growth of government income.**

Personal income is a broad measure — including wages, unemployment benefits, Social Security payments, investment income and more — that is an important sign of a state's well-being.

Population growth is helping states with reputations for prosperity. "One of the strangest things is North Carolina got hit harder than the nation, but people keep coming because they perceive there's economic opportunity here — even if there isn't," says John Connaughton, an economic forecaster at the [University of North Carolina-Charlotte](#).

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, USA TODAY analysis

1 – Data through June 2010. Numbers adjusted for inflation.

| How states did during the recession and in the year since it officially ended in June 2009. |                                |                                |                  |                 |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|   | During recession               | Since recession                | During recession | Since recession |
| State   | Pct. change in personal income | Pct. change in personal income | Rank             | Rank            |
| New Mexico  | 1.4%                           | 2.2%                           | 10               | 1               |
| <b>Texas</b>  | <b>2.8%</b>                    | <b>1.6%</b>                    | <b>5</b>         | <b>2</b>        |
| Alaska  | 3.4%                           | 1.6%                           | 4                | 3               |
| Kentucky  | 1.6%                           | 1.5%                           | 8                | 4               |
| North Carolina  | -0.7%                          | 1.5%                           | 30               | 5               |
| Montana   | 0.2%                           | 1.3%                           | 21               | 6               |
| Tennessee   | -1.5%                          | 1.2%                           | 36               | 7               |
| Kansas  | 1.1%                           | 1.2%                           | 11               | 8               |
| Utah  | -1.1%                          | 1.0%                           | 31               | 9               |
| Idaho   | -4.2%                          | 0.9%                           | 50               | 10              |
| Arkansas  | -1.8%                          | 0.9%                           | 37               | 11              |
| Minnesota   | -2.2%                          | 0.8%                           | 39               | 12              |

|                      |       |      |    |    |
|----------------------|-------|------|----|----|
| South Carolina       | 0.1%  | 0.7% | 22 | 13 |
| Colorado             | -2.8% | 0.7% | 44 | 14 |
| Iowa                 | 0.5%  | 0.7% | 15 | 15 |
| Washington           | 0.3%  | 0.6% | 17 | 16 |
| Nebraska             | -0.7% | 0.5% | 29 | 17 |
| Oklahoma             | 1.4%  | 0.5% | 9  | 18 |
| Maine                | 0.5%  | 0.5% | 16 | 19 |
| Indiana              | -1.4% | 0.5% | 34 | 20 |
| Louisiana            | 2.5%  | 0.4% | 7  | 21 |
| California           | -3.1% | 0.4% | 46 | 22 |
| Wisconsin            | -0.6% | 0.4% | 28 | 23 |
| Oregon               | -0.3% | 0.4% | 24 | 24 |
| West Virginia        | 4.9%  | 0.4% | 2  | 25 |
| New Jersey           | -3.1% | 0.3% | 47 | 26 |
| Maryland             | 0.7%  | 0.3% | 13 | 27 |
| Pennsylvania         | 0.0%  | 0.3% | 23 | 28 |
| District of Columbia | 5.0%  | 0.3% | 1  | 29 |
| Virginia             | 0.7%  | 0.3% | 14 | 30 |
| Georgia              | -1.4% | 0.2% | 35 | 31 |
| New Hampshire        | -3.0% | 0.2% | 45 | 32 |
| Massachusetts        | -2.2% | 0.1% | 38 | 33 |

|               |       |       |    |    |
|---------------|-------|-------|----|----|
| Ohio          | -1.3% | 0.1%  | 33 | 34 |
| Mississippi   | -0.7% | 0.0%  | 12 | 35 |
| Alabama       | 0.3%  | 0.0%  | 18 | 36 |
| Missouri      | -0.5% | 0.0%  | 26 | 37 |
| Delaware      | -1.1% | -0.1% | 32 | 38 |
| Wyoming       | 2.6%  | -0.2% | 6  | 39 |
| New York      | -3.4% | -0.2% | 48 | 40 |
| Arizona       | -2.4% | -0.4% | 40 | 41 |
| Hawaii        | 0.2%  | -0.4% | 19 | 42 |
| Illinois      | -2.6% | -0.4% | 43 | 43 |
| Vermont       | -0.4% | -0.4% | 25 | 44 |
| Florida       | -2.6% | -0.5% | 42 | 45 |
| Michigan      | -2.5% | -0.5% | 41 | 46 |
| Rhode Island  | -0.5% | -0.5% | 27 | 47 |
| South Dakota  | 0.2%  | -0.9% | 20 | 48 |
| Connecticut   | -4.1% | -1.1% | 49 | 49 |
| North Dakota  | 3.6%  | -2.3% | 3  | 50 |
| Nevada        | -7.4% | -3.6% | 51 | 51 |
| United States | -1.3% | 0.3%  |    |    |

Courtesy of JB Goodwin