

# Unemployment hits 5-year low

**Austin Business Journal - 10:42 AM CST Friday Jan 19**

Texas' unemployment rate is down almost 1 percent from a year ago.

According to the Texas Workforce Commission's monthly labor force report, the state's December unemployment rate fell to 4.5 percent, compared with last December's 5.2 percent. The number is also down two-tenths of a percent from November's 4.7 percent.

The current seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is the lowest in five years and matches the U.S. seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 4.5 percent.

Texas' economy grew by 15,600 jobs in December. During the last 12 months, the Texas economy grew by 213,200 jobs, with a growth rate of 2.2 percent.

Texas employers have added jobs for 27 consecutive months, according to the state.

"Record-setting low unemployment rates and high job growth highlight the strength of the Texas economy," says Texas Workforce Commission Chairwoman Diane Rath. "Employers are displaying confidence as they continue to add jobs."

Particularly surprising is that employment in the construction industry rose by 2,800 jobs in December despite a nationwide housing slump. Overall, construction jobs are up 44,700 since December 2005 -- a 7.7 percent boost, according to the TWC.

"For Texans seeking employment, now is the time to find work," says TWC Commissioner Ronny Congleton. "The tremendous job growth means many opportunities in a variety of industries."

The report also says that claims for unemployment compensation in December were down 4.8 percent from a year ago to 56,501.

The commission did not break out data by county or metro area, as it usually does, citing weather delays.

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**