



# Montana Economic Update

November 20, 2015

## Summary

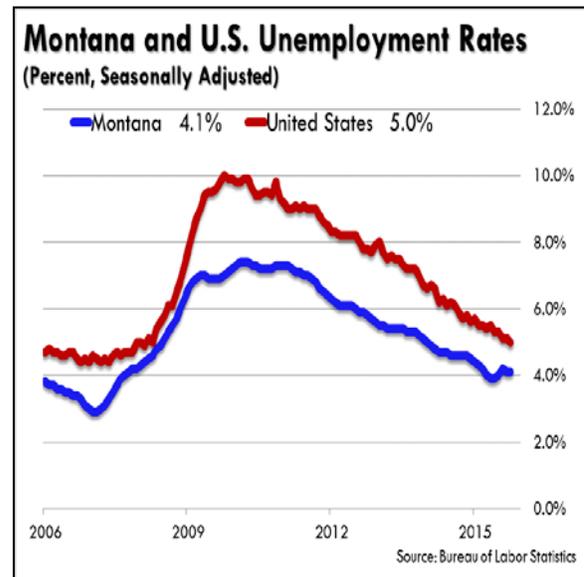
Nonfarm payroll employment in Montana increased by 700 jobs and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.1 percent in October according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## Montana Unemployment Rate

During October, the unemployment rate in Montana was unchanged at 4.1 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 145 in October to 21,545, while the labor force fell by 43 to 524,471. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 12 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Montana. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Montana stood at 4.6 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Montana was 7.4 percent in April 2010. The series high for the unemployment rate in Montana occurred in May 1983 when the unemployment rate reached 8.8 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate was 2.9 percent in February 2007. This also represents the series low for the unemployment rate in Montana. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate declined by 0.1 percentage point to 5.0 percent in October. October's unemployment rate was 0.7 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The ten year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The ten year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## Montana Payroll Employment

Montana nonfarm payrolls increased by 700 jobs, or 0.15 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during October. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 500. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Montana increased by 4,200, or 0.93 percent. Montana nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 8 of the past 12 months.

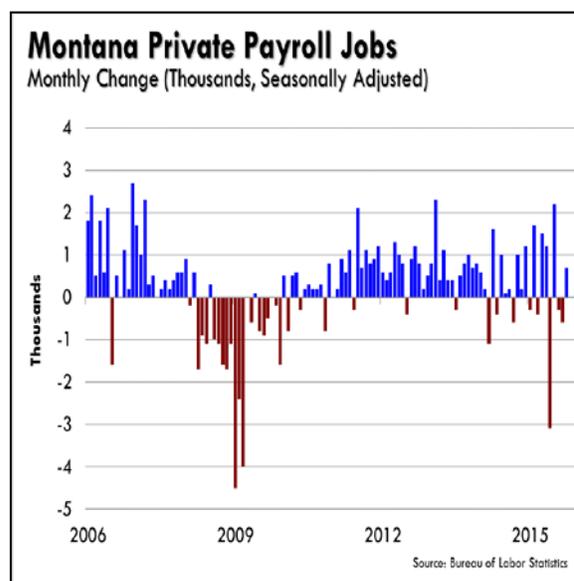
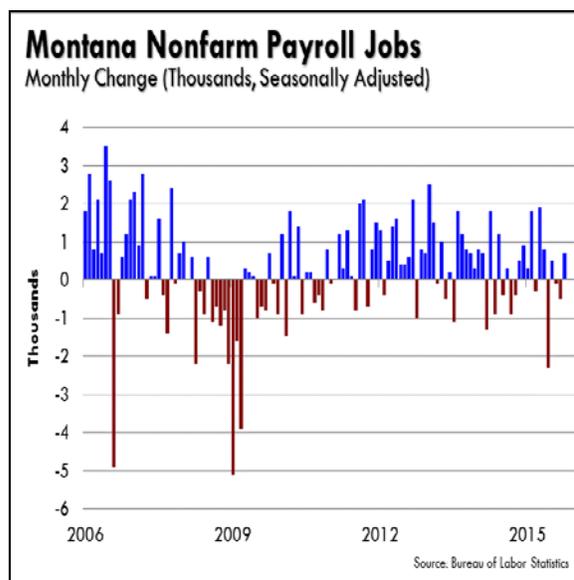
Nationally nonfarm payrolls increased by 271,000 jobs in October, or 0.19 percent. Over the 12 month period ending in October 2015 nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,814,000 jobs, or 2.01 percent. Montana ranks 37th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During October, Montana private sector payrolls increased by 700, or 0.19 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 600 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Montana increased by 4,000, or 1.09 percent. Montana private sector payroll employment has increased in 7 of the past 12 months.

Nationally private-sector payroll jobs increased by 268,000 jobs in 2.01, or 0.22 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,709,000 jobs in the private sector, an increase of 2.30 percent.

Montana ranks 39th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During October, total government payroll employment in Montana was unchanged. Federal government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.76 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 200, or 0.76 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.21 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 200, or 0.23 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 100, or 0.38 percent. Local government payroll employment declined by 200, or 0.41 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during October were Construction (+1,100) and Educational & Health Services (+800). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Leisure & Hospitality (-1,000) and Professional & Business Services (-300).

The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+2,500) and Financial Activities (+1,900). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Leisure & Hospitality (-1,900) and Mining & Logging (-800).

#### Other Montana Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Montana was unchanged at 64.2 percent in October. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 21 have a higher labor force participation rate than Montana. The labor force participation rate in Montana is unchanged from a year earlier. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and older who are employed or actively looking for work.

The 10 year high for the labor force participation rate in Montana was 67.2 percent in March 2008. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Montana occurred in April 1990 when the labor force participation rate hit 69.4 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 63.6 percent in December 2014. The series low for the labor force participation rate occurred in July 1976 when the labor force participation rate hit 61.2 percent.

The national labor force participation rate was unchanged at 62.4 percent in October. That rate was 0.4 percentage point lower than a year earlier. At 62.4 percent, the labor force participation rate is at its lowest level since September 1977.



The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Montana civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, was unchanged at 61.6 percent in October. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 18 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Montana. The employment-to-population ratio in Montana is 0.9 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Montana was 64.7 percent in May 2007. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Montana occurred in April 1990 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 65.6 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 59.1 percent in February 2011. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in August 1976 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 57.5 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio rose by 0.1 percentage point to 59.3 percent in October. That rate was 0.1 percentage point higher than a year earlier, but still 0.1 percentage point lower than it was when the recession ended in June 2009. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 percent in April 2000. The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio was 63.4 percent in December 2006. The recent low occurred in October 2013 when the employment-to-population ratio dipped to 58.2 percent. The last time the employment-to-population posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for November is scheduled for release on Friday, December 18. The national employment situation report for November will be released on Friday, December 4.

