



# Colorado Economic Update

March 28, 2016

## Summary

Nonfarm payroll employment in Colorado increased by 2,500 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to 3.0 percent in February according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

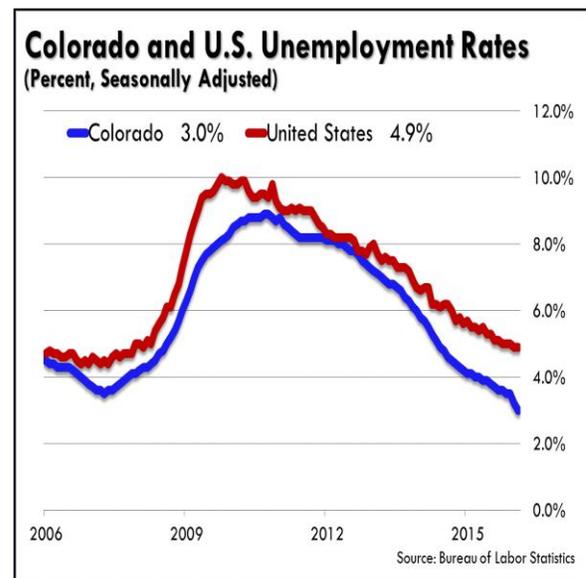
## Colorado Unemployment Rate

During February, the unemployment rate in Colorado declined by 0.2 percentage point to 3.0 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 5,530 in February to 85,014, while the labor force grew by 17,404 to 2,861,229. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, only 3 posted lower unemployment rates. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Colorado stood at 4.1 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Colorado was 8.9 percent in October 2010.

This also represents the series high for the unemployment rate in Colorado. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate in Colorado was 3.0 percent in February 2016. The series low for the unemployment rate in Colorado occurred in December 2000 when the unemployment rate reached 2.7 percent. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.9 percent in February. February's unemployment rate was 0.6 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The 10-year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The 10-year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## Colorado Payroll Employment

Colorado nonfarm payrolls increased by 2,500 jobs, or 0.10 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during February. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls increased by 3,700. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Colorado increased by 63,000, or 2.50 percent. Colorado nonfarm payroll employment has increased in each of the past 36 months.

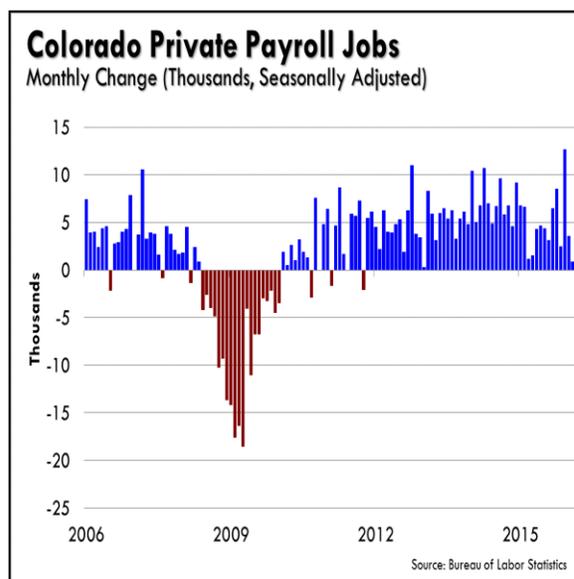
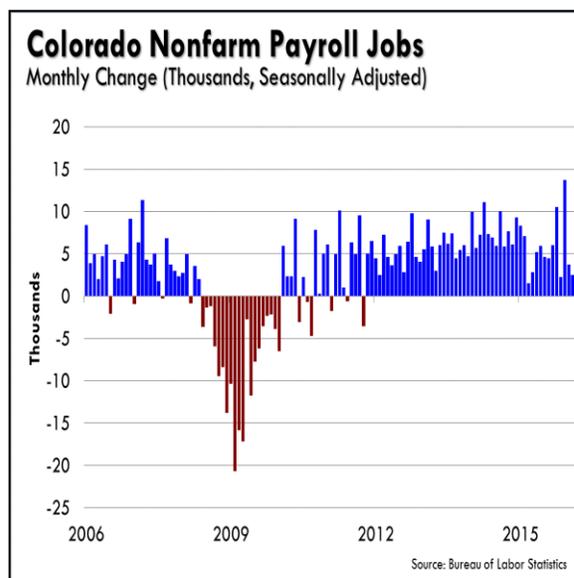
Nationally, nonfarm payrolls increased by 242,000 jobs in February, or 0.17 percent. Over the 12-month period ending February 2016 nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,672,000 jobs, or 1.9 percent. Colorado ranks 11th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, Colorado private sector payrolls increased by 900, or 0.04 percent. Private sector payrolls increased by 3,600 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Colorado increased by 53,900, or 2.56 percent. Colorado private sector payroll employment has increased in each of the past 36 months.

Nationally private-sector payroll jobs increased by 230,000 jobs in 1.9, or 0.19 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,597,000 jobs in the private sector, an increase of 2.18 percent.

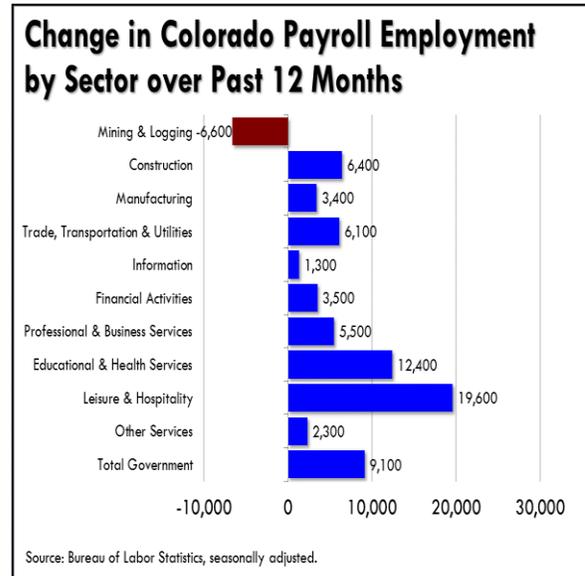
Colorado ranks 15th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, total government payroll employment in Colorado increased by 1,600, or 0.38 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 300, or 0.56 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 700, or 0.62 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 600, or 0.24 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 9,100, or 2.20 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 3,300, or 2.98 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 5,000, or 2.01 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during February were Educational & Health Services (+3,700) and Leisure & Hospitality (+2,600). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Professional & Business Services (-4,200) and Financial Activities (-1,500).



The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Leisure & Hospitality (+19,600) and Educational & Health Services (+12,400). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-6,600) and Information (+1,300).

#### Other Colorado Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Colorado rose to 66.6 percent in February from 66.3 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 14 have a higher labor force participation rate than Colorado. The labor force participation rate in Colorado 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 Colorado was 72.5 percent in January 2008. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Colorado occurred in August 1998 when the labor force participation rate hit 74.5 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 66.2 percent in December 2015. This also represents the series low for the labor force participation rate in Colorado.

The national labor force participation rate rose by 0.2 percentage point to 62.9 percent in February, but remains near its 38-year low of 62.4 percent.

The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Colorado civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, rose to 64.7 percent in February from 64.2 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 10 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Colorado. The employment-to-population ratio in Colorado is 0.4 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Colorado was 69.6 percent in October 2007. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Colorado

occurred in February 1999 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 71.7 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 63.4 percent in August 2012. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in October 1976 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 62.6 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio rose by 0.2 percentage point to 59.8 percent in February. That rate was 0.5 percentage point higher than a year earlier. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 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 ratio posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for March is scheduled for release on April 15, 2016. The national employment situation report for March will be released on Friday, April 1, 2016.

