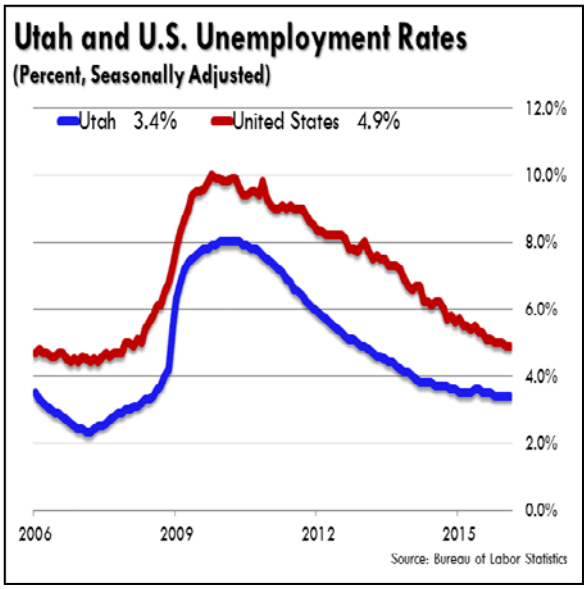
Utah Economic Update

March 28, 2016

Summary

Nonfarm payroll employment in Utah increased by 7,500 jobs and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.4 percent in February according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Utah Unemployment Rate



During February, the unemployment rate in Utah was unchanged at 3.4 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed rose by 542 in February to 50,089, while the labor force grew by 3,577 to 1,478,489. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 6 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Utah. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Utah stood at 3.5 percent.

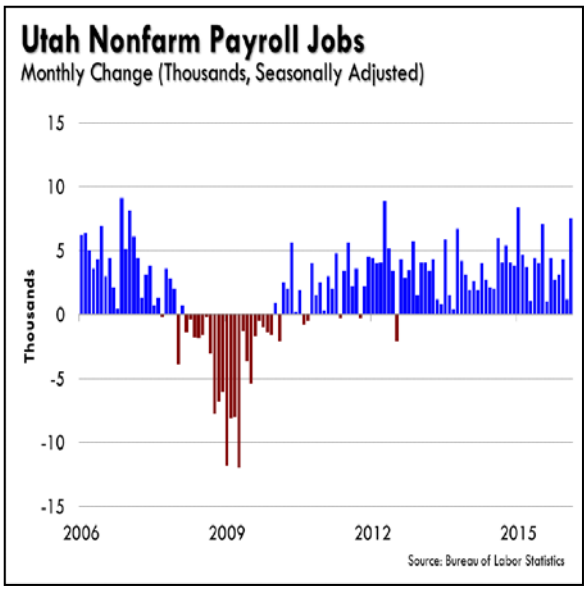
The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Utah was 8.0 percent in May 2010. The series high for the unemployment rate in Utah occurred in March 1983 when the unemployment rate reached 9.6 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate was 2.3 percent in March 2007. This also represents the series low for the unemployment rate in Utah. 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.

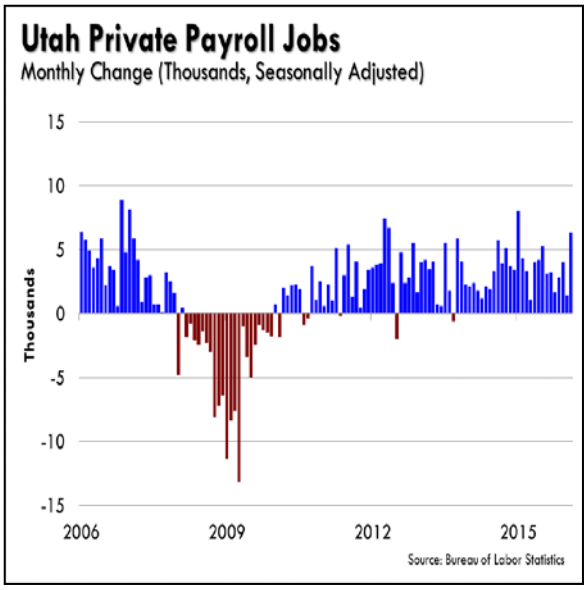
Prepared by the Joint Economic Committee
Senator Dan Coats, Chairman Representative Pat Tiberi, Vice Chairman

Utah Payroll Employment

Utah nonfarm payrolls increased by 7,500 jobs, or 0.54 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during February. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls increased by 1,200. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Utah increased by 44,500, or 3.27 percent. Utah 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. Utah posted the second highest percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment among the 50 states and the District of Columbia over the past 12 months.

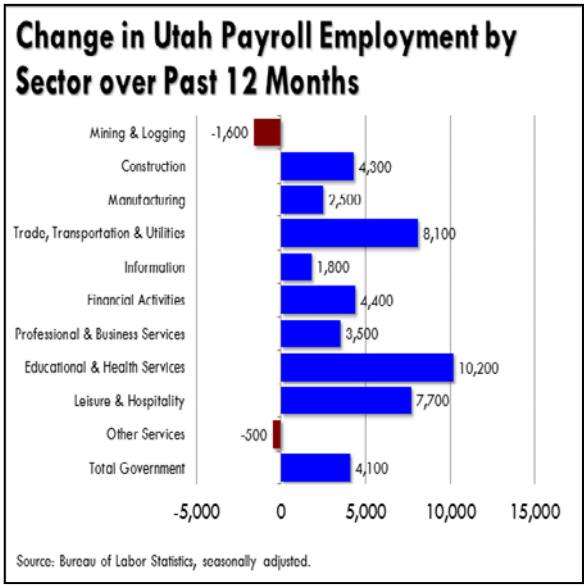


During February, Utah private sector payrolls increased by 6,300, or 0.54 percent. Private sector payrolls increased by 1,400 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Utah increased by 40,400, or 3.58 percent. Utah private sector payroll employment has increased in 16 of the past 24 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. Utah posted the fourth highest percentage gain in private sector payroll employment among the 50 states and the District of Columbia over the past 12 months.

During February, total government payroll employment in Utah increased by 1,200, or 0.51 percent. Federal government payroll employment was unchanged. State government payroll employment increased by 1,000, or 1.30 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 200, or 0.16 percent.

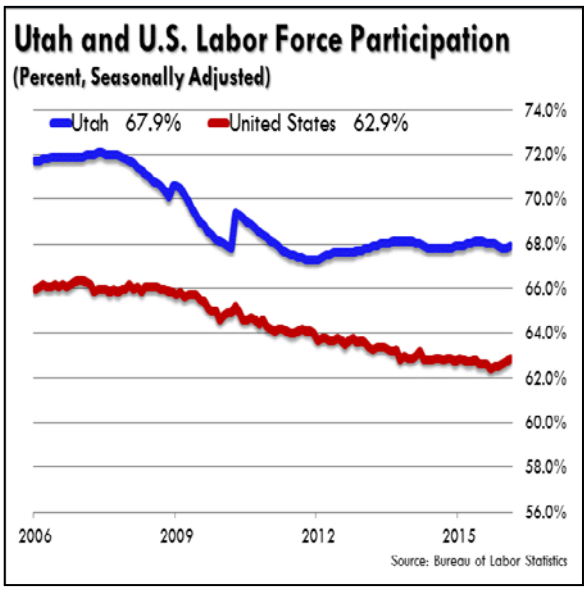
Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 4,100, or 1.76 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 2,400, or 3.17 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 600, or 0.49 percent.



The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during February were Educational & Health Services (+2,200) and Total Government (+1,200). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Leisure & Hospitality (-400) and Mining & Logging (-100).

The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Educational & Health Services (+10,200) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+8,100). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-1,600) and Other Services (-500).

Other Utah Labor Force Statistics

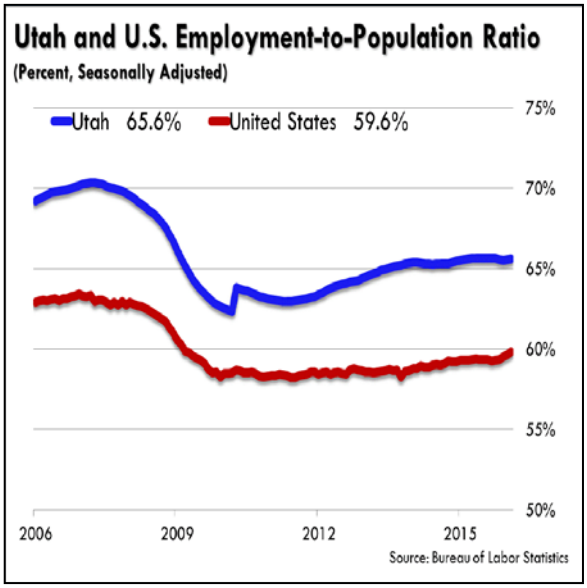


The labor force participation rate in Utah rose to 67.9 percent in February from 67.8 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 9 have a higher labor force participation rate than Utah. The labor force participation rate in Utah is unchanged from a year earlier. The labor 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 Utah was 72.1 percent in June 2007. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Utah occurred in June 1994 when the labor force participation rate hit 73.2 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 67.3 percent in January 2012. The series low for the labor force participation rate occurred in December 1977 when the labor force participation rate hit 62.6 percent.

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 Utah civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, was unchanged at 65.6 percent in February. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 6 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Utah. The employment-to-population ratio in Utah is 0.1 percentage point higher than a year earlier.



The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Utah was 70.3 percent in May 2007. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Utah occurred in June 1994 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 70.4 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 62.4 percent in March 2010. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in March 1976 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 58.9 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.