

# Mississippi Economic Update

March 28, 2016

## Summary

Nonfarm payroll employment in Mississippi increased by 5,100 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to 6.5 percent in February according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## Mississippi Unemployment Rate

During February, the unemployment rate in Mississippi declined by 0.2 percentage point to 6.5 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 1,983 in February to 85,455, while the labor force grew by 6,400 to 1,305,487. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 47 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Mississippi. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Mississippi stood at 6.6 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Mississippi was 10.8 percent in March 2010. The series high for the unemployment rate in Mississippi occurred in April 1983 when the unemployment rate reached 12.8 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate in Mississippi was 5.9 percent in December 2007. The series low for the unemployment rate in Mississippi occurred in January 2001 when the unemployment rate reached 5.0 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.



## Mississippi Payroll Employment

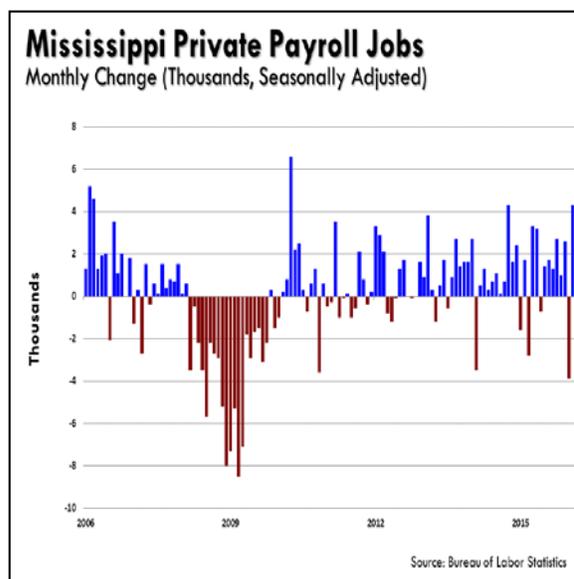
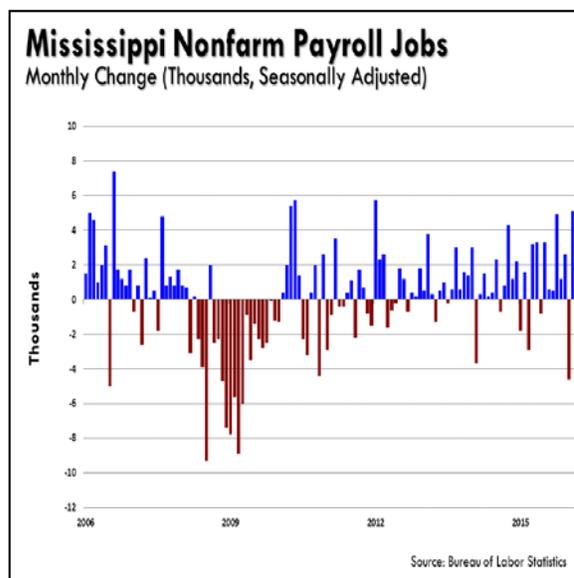
Mississippi nonfarm payrolls increased by 5,100 jobs, or 0.45 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during February. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 4,600. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Mississippi increased by 16,400, or 1.45 percent. Mississippi nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 9 of the past 12 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. Mississippi ranks 27th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, Mississippi private sector payrolls increased by 4,300, or 0.48 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 3,900 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Mississippi increased by 14,100, or 1.59 percent. Mississippi private sector payroll employment has increased in 9 of the past 12 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. Mississippi ranks 30th 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 Mississippi increased by 800, or 0.33 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 300, or 1.20 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 200, or 0.33 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 400, or 0.25 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 2,300, or 0.94 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 400, or 0.65 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 2,600, or 1.65 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during February were Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+1,800) and Leisure & Hospitality (+1,700). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Other Services (-700) and Information (-400).

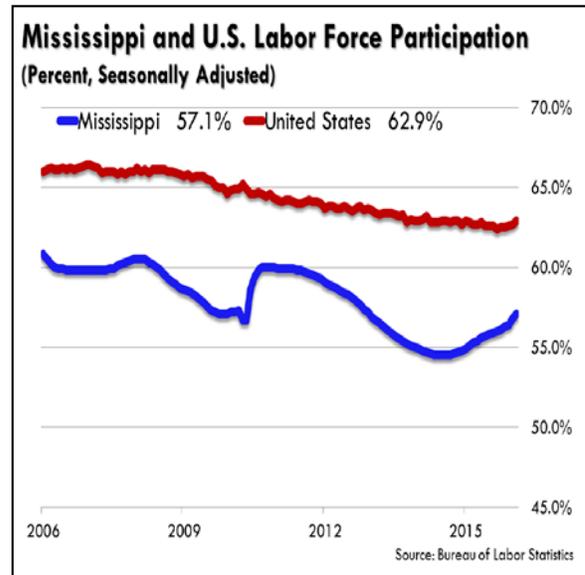
The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+6,000) and Leisure & Hospitality (+4,300). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-1,300) and Professional & Business Services (-900).



### Other Mississippi Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Mississippi rose to 57.1 percent in February from 56.8 percent the prior month. At 57.1 percent, Mississippi has one of the five lowest labor force participation rates in the nation. The labor force participation rate in Mississippi 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 Mississippi was 60.5 percent in March 2008. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Mississippi occurred in September 1994 when the labor force participation rate hit 63.5 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 54.5 percent in September 2014. This also represents the series low for the labor force participation rate in Mississippi.



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 Mississippi civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, rose to 53.4

percent in February from 53.0 percent the prior month. At 53.4 percent, Mississippi has one of the five lowest employment-to-population ratios in the nation. The employment-to-population ratio in Mississippi is 1.9 percentage points higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Mississippi was 56.9 percent in January 2008. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Mississippi occurred in May 2000 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 59.8 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 50.4 percent in July 2014. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in August 2014 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 50.4 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.