



West Virginia Economic Update

March 28, 2016

Summary

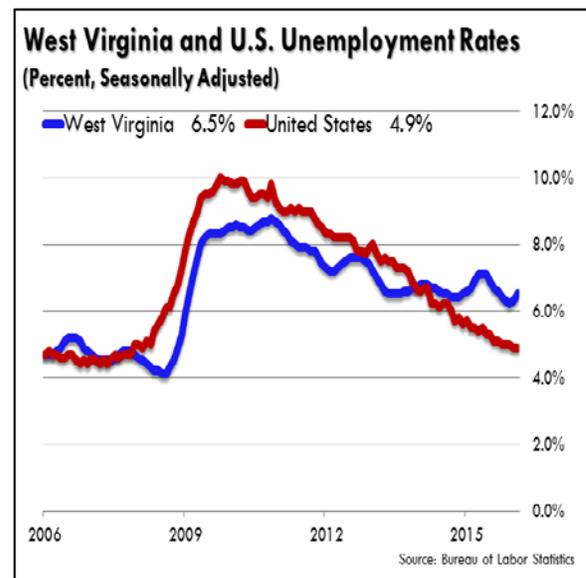
Nonfarm payroll employment in West Virginia declined by 1,300 jobs and the unemployment rate rose to 6.5 percent in February according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

West Virginia Unemployment Rate

During February, the unemployment rate in West Virginia increased by 0.2 percentage point to 6.5 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed rose by 1,344 in February to 50,794, while the labor force grew by 1,075 to 786,283. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 47 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than West Virginia. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in West Virginia stood at 6.7 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in West Virginia was 8.8 percent in November 2010. The series high for the unemployment rate in West Virginia occurred in February 1983 when the unemployment rate reached 18.8 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate was 4.1 percent in August 2008. This also represents the series low for the unemployment rate in West Virginia. 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.



West Virginia Payroll Employment

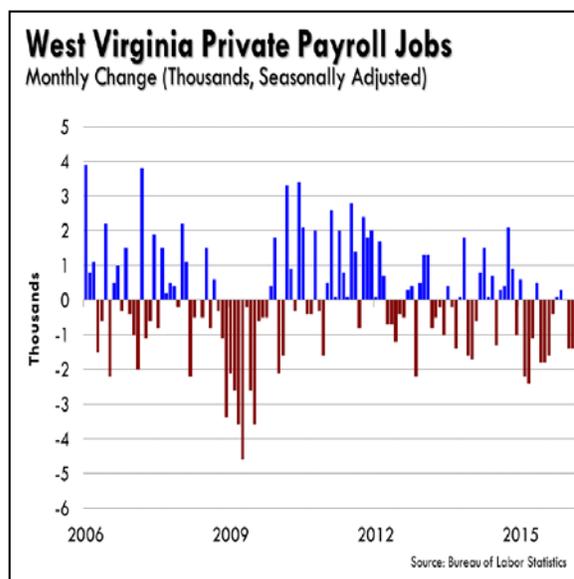
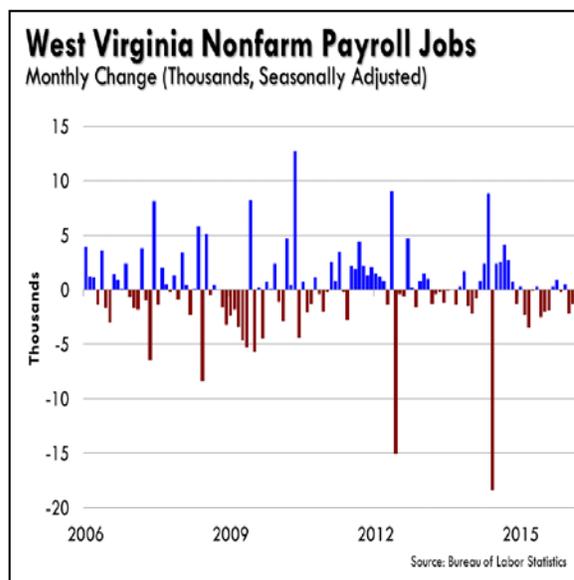
West Virginia nonfarm payrolls declined by 1,300 jobs, or 0.17 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during February. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 2,200. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in West Virginia declined by 11,700, or 1.52 percent. West Virginia nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 4 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. West Virginia ranks 49th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, West Virginia private sector payrolls declined by 1,400, or 0.23 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 1,400 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in West Virginia declined by 11,000, or 1.78 percent. West Virginia private sector payroll employment has increased in 3 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. West Virginia ranks 49th 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 West Virginia increased by 100, or 0.07 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.43 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 100, or 0.21 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.12 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment declined by 700, or 0.46 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 1,000, or 2.04 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.12 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during February were Leisure & Hospitality (+300) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+200). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Educational & Health Services (-700) and Construction (-400).

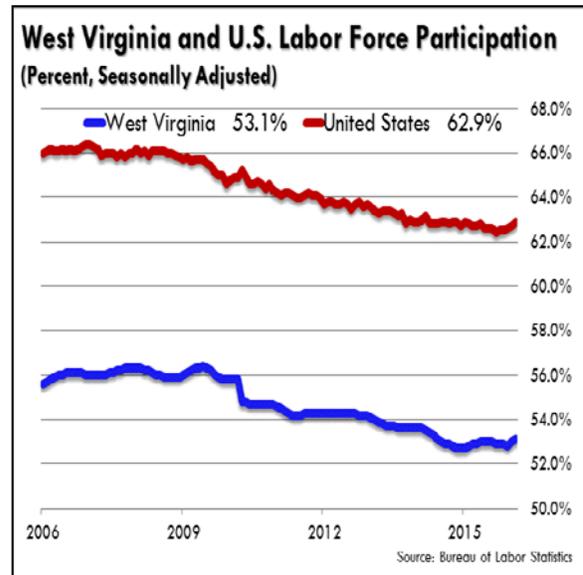
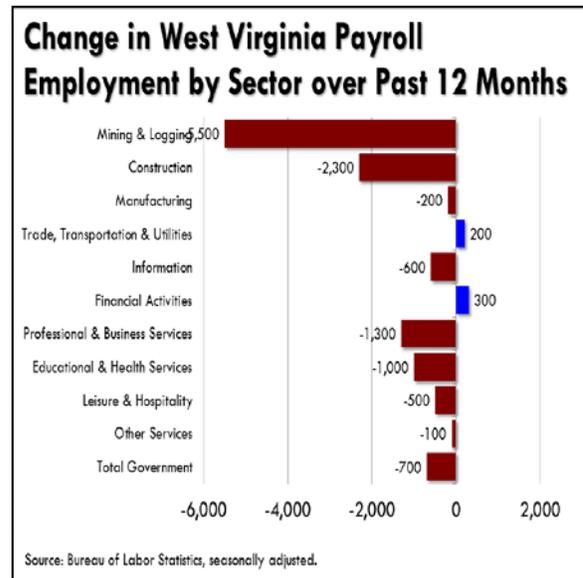
The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Financial Activities (+300) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+200). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-5,500) and Construction (-2,300).

Other West Virginia Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in West Virginia rose to 53.1 percent in February from 53.0 percent the prior month. At 53.1 percent, West Virginia has the lowest labor force participation rate in the nation. The labor force participation rate in West Virginia 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 West Virginia was 56.4 percent in June 2009. The series high for the labor force participation rate in West Virginia occurred in March 2001 when the labor force participation rate hit 57.0 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 52.7 percent in January 2015. The series low for the labor force participation rate occurred in October 1976 when the labor force participation rate hit 50.3 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 West Virginia civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, was unchanged at 49.7 percent in February. At 49.7 percent, West Virginia has the lowest employment-to-population ratio in the nation. The employment-to-population ratio in West Virginia is 0.5 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in West Virginia was 53.8 percent in March 2008. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in West Virginia occurred in April 2001 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 54.1 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 49.2 percent in May 2015. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in March 1983 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 42.2 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.

