



# Montana Economic Update

March 28, 2016

## Summary

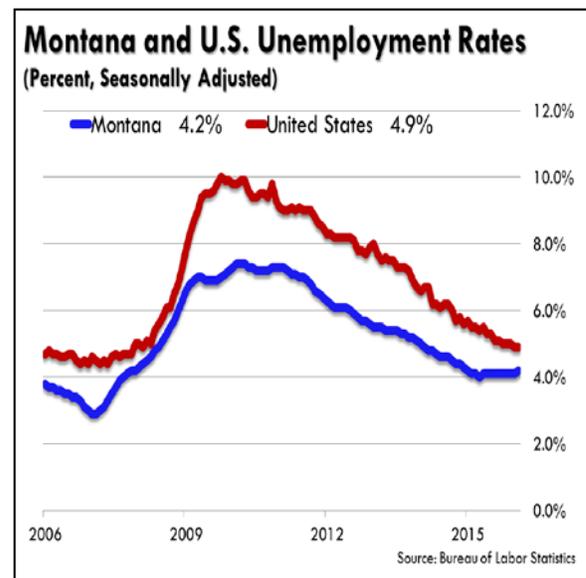
Nonfarm payroll employment in Montana increased by 1,300 jobs and the unemployment rate rose to 4.2 percent in February according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## Montana Unemployment Rate

During February, the unemployment rate in Montana increased by 0.1 percentage point to 4.2 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed rose by 385 in February to 22,042, while the labor force grew by 234 to 524,106. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 14 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Montana. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Montana stood at 4.1 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 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.



## Montana Payroll Employment

Montana nonfarm payrolls increased by 1,300 jobs, or 0.28 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during February. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls increased by 1,300. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Montana increased by 3,900, or 0.85 percent. Montana nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 9 of the past 12 months.

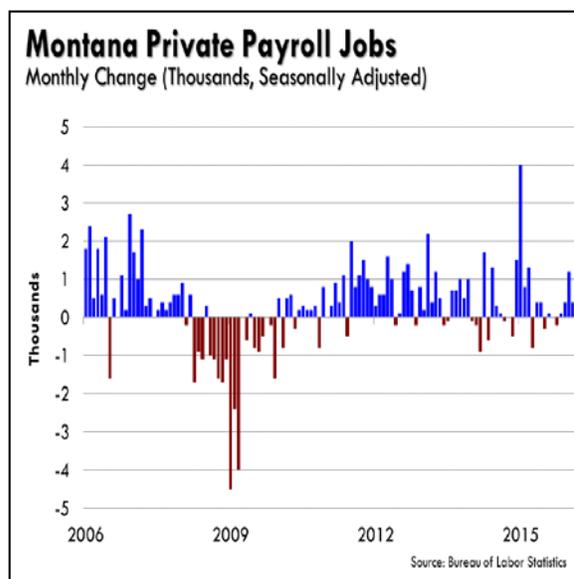
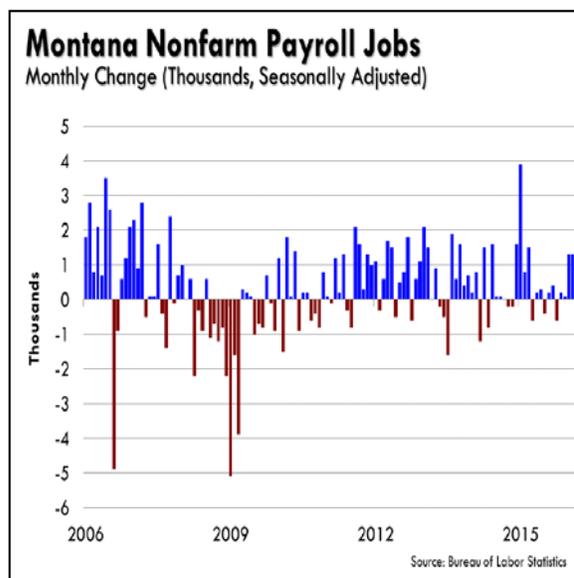
Nationally, nonfarm payrolls increased by 242,000 jobs in February, or 0.17 percent. Over the 12-month period ending February 2016 nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,672,000 jobs, or 1.9 percent. Montana ranks 42nd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, Montana private sector payrolls increased by 400, or 0.11 percent. Private sector payrolls increased by 1,200 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Montana increased by 3,000, or 0.81 percent. Montana private sector payroll employment has increased in 8 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.

Montana ranks 43rd 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 Montana increased by 900, or 1.00 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.78 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 800, or 2.85 percent, while local government payroll employment was unchanged.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 900, or 1.00 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 400, or 1.40 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 400, or 0.82 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during February were Total Government (+900) and Educational & Health Services (+900). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Professional & Business Services (-600) and Construction (-500).

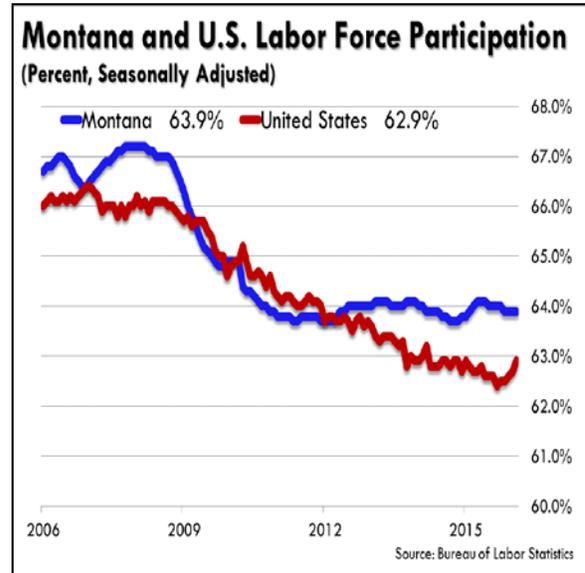
The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Educational & Health Services (+3,300) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+1,200). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-1,800) and Professional & Business Services (-400).

#### Other Montana Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Montana was unchanged at 63.9 percent in February. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 24 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 63.7 percent in November 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 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 Montana civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, was unchanged at 61.2 percent in February. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 23 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Montana. The employment-to-population ratio in Montana is 0.1 percentage point lower 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 0.2 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.

