



# Oregon Economic Update

May 27, 2015

## Summary

Nonfarm payroll employment in Oregon increased by 7,600 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to 5.2 percent in April according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## Oregon Unemployment Rate

During April, the unemployment rate in Oregon declined by 0.2 percentage point to 5.2 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 5,068 in April to 100,860, while the labor force fell by 10,481 to 1,945,247. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 22 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Oregon. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Oregon stood at 7.0 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Oregon was 11.9 percent in May 2009. This also represents the series high for the unemployment rate in Oregon. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate in Oregon was 5.0 percent in May 2007. The series low for the unemployment rate in Oregon occurred in February 1995 when the unemployment rate reached 4.7 percent. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.4 percent in April. April's unemployment rate was 0.8 percentage point lower than a year earlier when the rate stood at 6.2 percent. The ten year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The ten year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## Oregon Payroll Employment

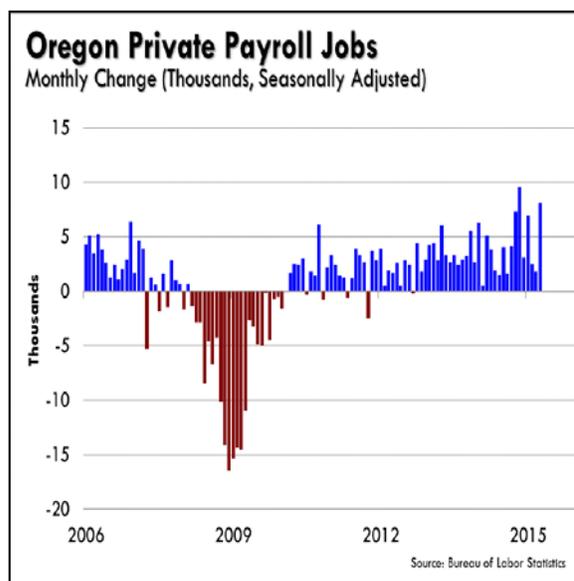
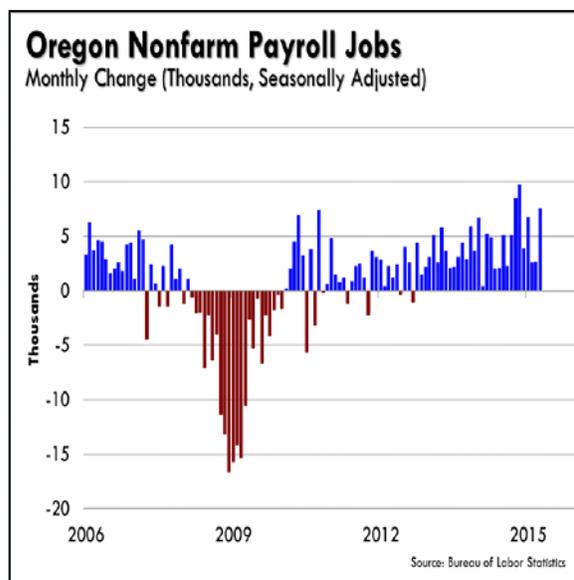
Oregon nonfarm payrolls increased by 7,600 jobs, or 0.43 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during April. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls increased by 2,700. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Oregon increased by 58,400, or 3.41 percent. Oregon nonfarm payroll employment has increased in each of the past 24 months.

Nationally nonfarm payrolls increased by 223,000 jobs in April, or 0.16 percent. Over the 12 month period ending in April 2015, nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,982,000 jobs, or 2.15 percent. Oregon posted the fifth highest percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment among the 50 states and the District of Columbia over the past 12 months.

During April, Oregon private sector payrolls increased by 8,100, or 0.55 percent. Private sector payrolls increased by 1,800 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Oregon increased by 52,400, or 3.69 percent. Oregon private sector payroll employment has increased in each of the past 24 months.

Nationally, private sector payroll jobs increased by 213,000 in April, or 0.18 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,918,000 private sector payroll jobs, an increase of 2.50 percent. Oregon posted the fifth highest percentage gain in private sector payroll employment among the 50 states and the District of Columbia over the past 12 months.

During April, total government payroll employment in Oregon declined by 500, or 0.17 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 200, or 0.73 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 100, or 0.12 percent, while local government payroll employment declined by 600, or 0.32 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 6,000, or 2.05 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 2,600, or 3.12 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 3,100, or 1.71 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during April were Leisure & Hospitality (+2,900) and Professional & Business Services (+2,400). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Financial Activities (-1,800) and Construction (-1,100).



The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Professional & Business Services (+12,800) and Educational & Health Services (+12,200). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-400) and Construction (unchanged).

#### Other Oregon Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Oregon declined to 60.8 percent in April from 61.2 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 39 have a higher labor force participation rate than Oregon. The labor force participation rate in Oregon 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 Oregon was 66.4 percent in March 2009. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Oregon occurred in May 2000 when the labor force participation rate hit 69.1 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 60.8 percent in April 2015. This also represents the series low for the labor force participation rate in Oregon.



The national labor force participation rate rose by 0.1 percentage point to 62.8 percent in April. That rate is the same as a year earlier.

The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Oregon civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, declined to 57.7 percent in April from 57.9 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 37 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Oregon. The employment-to-population ratio in Oregon is 1.0 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Oregon was 62.5 percent in February 2007. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Oregon occurred in April 2000 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 65.6 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 56.2 percent in October 2013. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in March 1976 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 56.1 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio was unchanged at 59.3 percent in April. At 59.3 percent, the national employment-to-population ratio is still below the level of 59.4 percent when the recession ended in June 2009. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 percent 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 posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for May is scheduled for release on Friday, June 19. The national employment situation report for April is scheduled for release on Friday, June 5.

