

NEWS RELEASE

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Idaho Posts Biggest One-Month Decline in Jobless Rate in 25 Years

A surge in hiring across most of the economy sent Idaho's forecasted seasonally adjusted unemployment rate down three-tenths of a percentage point to 9.1 percent in April. It was the rate's largest one-month decline since 1983, when the economy was pulling out of another recession.

April was the second straight month Idaho's jobless rate declined, bucking the national rate which jumped two-tenths of a percent to 9.9 percent. Until March, Idaho's rate had climbed steadily from a record low 2.7 percent in March 2007 to 9.5 percent this February.

Most sectors of the Idaho economy posted April job gains near or above seasonal levels. The estimated increase of 6,700 lifted total jobs statewide to 602,800. It was the first time the number of Idaho jobs climbed over 600,000 this year and only 4,900 below April 2009, the smallest year-over-year job gap since June 2008.

Only hotels and private education significantly missed the five-year average performance from March to April. Even construction, which has lost over 20,000 jobs since the housing bubble burst in 2007, added more than 1,000 jobs from March to April, an increase approaching 5 percent and the norm for the previous five springs.

The substantial improvement in the job market provided work for the 2,800 people who joined the labor force last month and for over 1,700 of the workers who had been without jobs. It was the 11th straight monthly increase in the labor force, the fourth month in a row that the labor force has exceeded the year-earlier level and the largest one-month increase in total employment - 4,600 - in 16 years.

Employers remained cautious during the month, hiring just 11,400 new workers. While up from March, the total was still below April 2009. But temporary employment agency hiring, a signal of whether employers believe the economy is growing again, was up 3.6 percent from March and running 8.6 percent ahead of April 2009.

April marked the second consecutive monthly decline in the number of unemployed, which fell to 69,300. About 46,000 of those jobless workers collected \$12.8 million in unemployment benefits last week. The average weekly benefit is about \$238. Compared to the same week in 2009 the number of claimants was down only about 1.8 percent as workers exhausted their regular state unemployment benefits and moved to federal extended benefits. Benefit payments were also nearly 7 percent lower than the same week in 2009 totaling \$294 million for the first four months of 2010.

Job growth was recorded in both rural and urban Idaho. The unemployment rate in the two largest urban areas dropped back into single digits in Boise for the first time this year and in Coeur d'Alene for the first time since last August.

Fifteen of Idaho's 44 counties posted jobless rates in double digits, down from 16 in March. Valley was the highest at 17.6 percent. Oneida and Clark were the lowest at 5 percent. In March, three counties had rates over 18 percent. Five other counties also had rates under 6 percent.

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Seasonally Adjusted Forecast Data

	4/10	3/10	4/09
Civilian Labor Force	760,500	757,700	748,500
Unemployment	69,200	71,000	55,400
% Labor Force Unemployed	9.1	9.4	7.4
Total Employment	691,300	686,700	693,100

Unadjusted Forecast Data

	4/10	3/10	4/09
Civilian Labor Force	757,100	753,800	743,300
Unemployment	68,300	74,200	55,200
% Labor Force Unemployed	9.0	9.8	7.4
Total Employment	688,800	679,600	688,100

Area Unemployment Rates

	4/10	3/10	4/09
Boise City-Nampa MSA	9.9	10.1	8.5
Burley MicSA	6.8	6.8	4.8
Coeur d'Alene MSA*	9.9	10.1	7.8
Grangeville SLMA	10.4	10.8	8.9
Hailey SLMA	9.4	9.7	7.1
Idaho Falls MSA	6.7	7.1	5.3
Lewiston MSA	6.9	7.4	6.2
Pocatello MSA	8.3	8.6	5.9
Rexburg MicSA	6.2	6.7	5.4
Twin Falls MicSA	7.8	8.0	5.4