

Klickitat and Skamania Counties



May 2015

Labor Area Summary Volume 2015, Number 5

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Monthly Review

State of the States—and PDX

Washington (2nd) and Oregon (6th) remain near the top of state rankings in terms of job growth over the past twelve months. Of the top seven states, six are in the west: Utah, Washington, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, and California. Florida (3rd) is the lone eastern state.

State of Washington

- Over-the-year job growth strong at 111,500 jobs (3.6 percent).
- May another good month, preliminary estimate of 7,700 jobs.
- April revised slightly from 8,200 jobs to 7,800 jobs, still very good.
- Unemployment essentially unchanged at 5.4 percent.
- Seven areas have grown rapidly (4.0 percent or higher), ranging from King and Adams counties at 4.0 percent to 14.2 percent in Whitman, the latter a one-month anomaly caused by higher ed seasonal employment pattern being off a month this year.
- Eleven counties have grown slowly (with less than 1 percent job growth), including six that lost employment.
- Identical growth rates for the west side and east side of the state.

State of Oregon

- Unemployment essentially unchanged at 5.3 percent in May.
- May job loss of 1,400 jobs, first drop in two and a half years.
- April job growth revised down slightly to 6,000 jobs.
- Over the year: +50,500 jobs/2.9 percent

Portland Metro area

- Unemployment essentially unchanged at 5.0 percent in May.
- Small May job gain, +500 jobs
- Over-the-year growth of +35,500/3.3 percent over the year.
- Most sectors doing well except for some weakness in construction (+0.5 percent) and finance & insurance (+0.7 percent). Manufacturing continued to be strong (4.6 percent) especially semiconductors (7.2 percent).

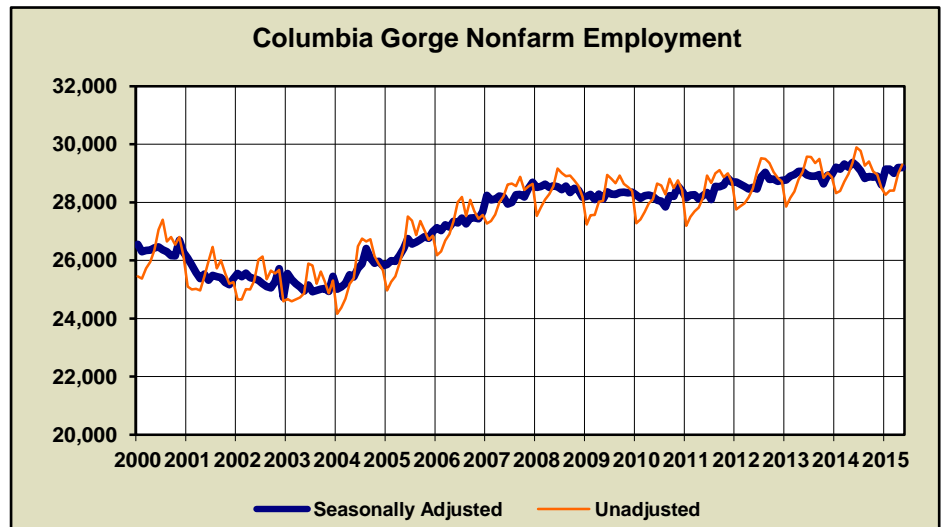
May 2015 Unemployment Rates			
	May 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2014
Seasonally Adjusted:			
U.S.	5.5	5.4	6.3
U.S. U-6	10.8	10.8	12.1
Washington	5.4	5.5	6.2
Oregon	5.3	5.2	7.0
Portland Metro	5.0	4.9	6.3
Columbia Gorge*	5.5	5.7	7.0
Unadjusted:			
U.S.	5.3	5.1	6.1
Washington	5.3	5.0	6.0
Oregon	5.3	5.2	6.6
Columbia Gorge*	5.8	5.6	7.2
Klickitat	6.9	6.4	8.3
Skamania	7.2	7.2	8.5
Hood River	5.1	4.6	6.3
Sherman	5.8	6.4	6.8
Wasco	5.2	5.4	6.6
Clark	6.6	6.3	7.7
Cowlitz	7.6	7.3	8.2
Wahkiakum	8.1	7.8	9.2
Portland Metro	5.1	4.9	6.2
*Includes Hood River, Klickitat, Sherman, Skamania, and Wasco counties.			

The Gorge

Nonfarm employment in the Gorge was estimated at 29,300 in May. That was 325 jobs more than April, which matched the typical seasonal hiring pattern for the month. Trade, transportation & utilities added the most jobs (125), and construction & natural resources (80), government (70) and manufacturing (60) also expanded payrolls. Leisure & hospitality cut back by 70 positions.

Employment was down 70 jobs (0.2 percent) over the year. There were solid gains in construction & natural resources (+60 jobs/5.0 percent), manufacturing (+100 jobs/3.2 percent) and trade, transportation & utilities (+120 jobs, 2.4 percent). The big decline in education & health services (-320 jobs, -7.3 percent), due to the closure of a payment processing service for regional home health care workers in Hood River, will stick out like a sore thumb for the next year.

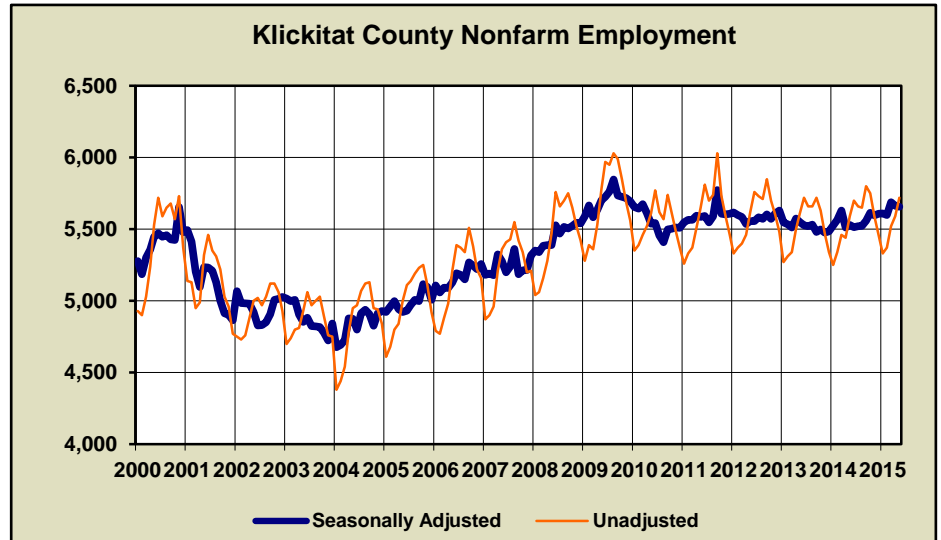
The unemployment rate for the Gorge was estimated at 5.8 percent, more than a point lower than the 7.2 percent from last May. Seasonally-adjusted unemployment was essentially unchanged at 5.5 percent. The underlying numbers showed a small increase in the number of employed residents, and a large decline in unemployed residents.



Klickitat Summary

Klickitat nonfarm employment followed its typical seasonally pattern by adding 130 jobs in May. Most major sectors added jobs or held steady over the month. Leisure & hospitality had the biggest gain at +60 jobs.

Total employment in the county reached 5,730 nonfarm jobs, up 130 jobs (2.3 percent) from last May. Construction, manufacturing, and trade & transportation have each added 20 jobs over the past year. Professional & business services (+50 jobs) and leisure & hospitality (+40) have produced the bulk of the net new jobs. There were small declines in education & health services (-10) and government (-30).

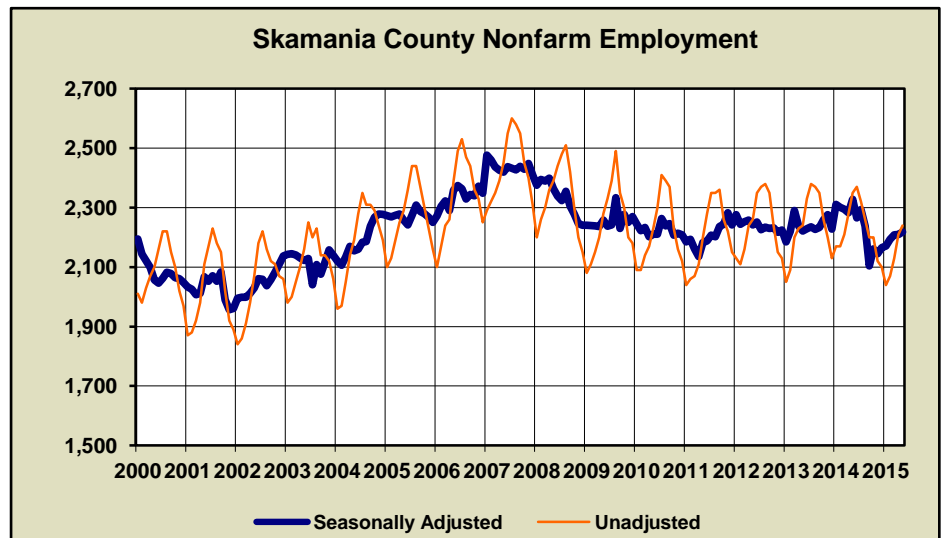


The county unemployment rate was estimated at 6.9 percent, a 1.4 point improvement over last May's 8.3 percent. An estimated 690 county residents were looking for work, versus 800 a year ago. Both initial and continued unemployment claims were little changed over the month and remained at low levels.

Skamania Summary

Skamania County nonfarm employment edged up by 30 jobs in May, led by a 20 job increase in leisure & hospitality. Other sectors showed little change.

The total of 2,240 jobs was 110 below last May, due chiefly to a decline of 70 jobs in manufacturing. Leisure & hospitality and government were both running 30 jobs below last year's level. The overall trend for employment over the past six months continues to be positive, as shown by the blue line in the chart to the right.



The county's unemployment rate was estimated at 7.2 percent, more than a point below the 8.5 from a year earlier. About 360 county residents were jobless and seeking work, down from 420 last May. Both initial and continued unemployment claims were little changed over the month and remained at low levels.