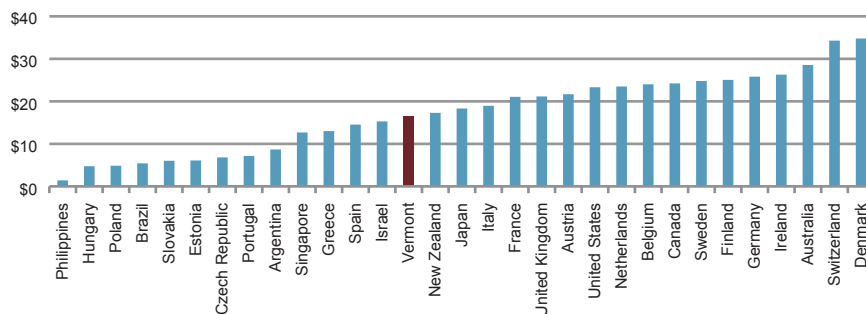


For Vermonters, it's still cold outside

In spite of a slight rise in manufacturing jobs last year, Vermont lost more than 28 percent of the jobs in this sector in the past decade. One reason: competition from abroad. According to figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest international survey of manufacturing wages, Vermont's average manufacturing wage was lower than much of Europe's in 2010, but more than twice as high as in some low-wage countries. Wages for China were not included in this survey.

Vermont's Manufacturing Wages are Lower than Most of Europe's
Hourly pay for work in manufacturing, 2010, in US dollars



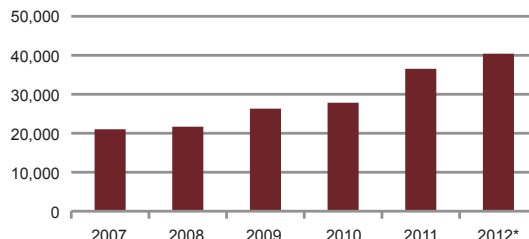
Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Low fuel tanks in a mild winter

A record number of Vermonters are in need of heating fuel assistance this winter. The state projects that more than 40,000 households will be eligible for one of the four programs offered through the Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP). That's nearly double the number receiving assistance in 2007, before the start of the Great Recession. And because the federal government has cut its funding for the program, eligible households are getting less help.

Need for Heating Aid Rises

VT households receiving fuel assistance since start of recession



* Projected

Data source: Office of Home Heating Fuel Assistance

Illusory unemployment rate drop

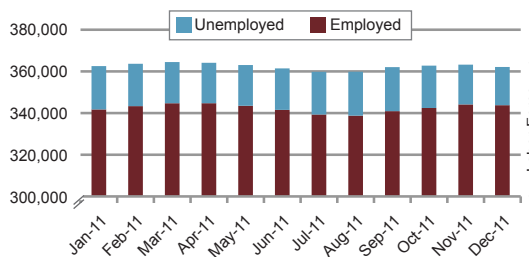
Vermont's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ticked down again in December, but not because more Vermonters found jobs. The rate went from 5.3 percent in November to 5.1 percent in December. However, there were both fewer employed workers and fewer unemployed workers actively seeking work last month; the Vermont labor force, which is the sum of the two, lost over 1,000 people. The official jobless rate declined, but the job market didn't get any better.

	Dec 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2010
Labor Force	362,128	363,240	361,235
Employment	343,784	344,156	340,239
Unemployment	18,334	19,084	20,996
Rate	5.1%	5.3%	5.8%

Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Labor Force Changed Little in 2011

Vermont's employed and unemployed labor force



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics