

On the Trail to Recovery—With More Hills to Climb

There were mixed signals again in Vermont’s employment and jobs figures released today. The unemployment rate ticked down slightly, and more people reported they were employed. But according to the survey of Vermont employers, almost 2,000 jobs were eliminated last month. This is the second month in a row that the jobs figures and employment data appeared to contradict each other. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has changed the way it conducts its monthly survey of workers and employers. Officials at the Vermont Department of Labor have warned that the monthly figures are likely to be more volatile. Nevertheless,

	Apr. 2010	Mar. 2010	Apr. 2009
Labor Force	362,200	362,400	361,300
Employment	339,200	338,600	335,900
Unemployment	23,000	23,800	26,100
Rate	6.4%	6.6%	7.2%

the trend of both employment and jobs statistics has been generally positive since late last summer.

A Long Wait for Work

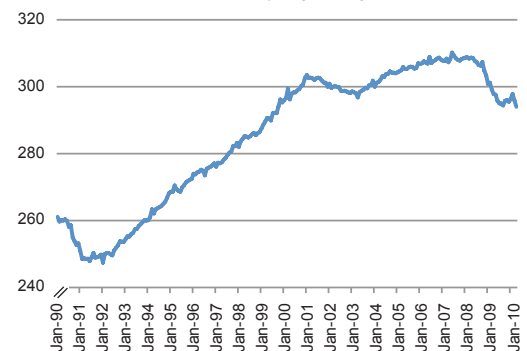
Despite recent fluctuations, Vermont employers have been slowly adding jobs since late summer of 2009. Nevertheless, a new forecast by the New England Economic Partnership (NEEP) estimates it will be 2012 or 2013 before Vermont gains back all the jobs lost during the recession. There were about 308,000 non-farm jobs in Vermont in 2007. Since then, that number has dropped to a low of about 295,000. According to the NEEP spring forecast released on Thursday, Vermont’s non-farm jobs should rise to about 305,000 in 2012 and 310,000 in 2013.

Another Sign of the Times: Homelessness

Thanks to the recession, Vermonters have increasingly turned to the state for help. Demand for food stamps is up, and more families are relying on Vermont’s Reach Up program. Homelessness also has grown during this recession. For the last three years, the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness has conducted a census one day each year. According to preliminary figures from this year’s count, the number of homeless Vermonters has risen to almost 2,800. That’s an increase of about 500 people—or 20 percent—since January 2008, just after the official start of the recession. The Coalition’s [full report](#) should be available by mid-June.

Jobs Are Still Below 2001 Recession

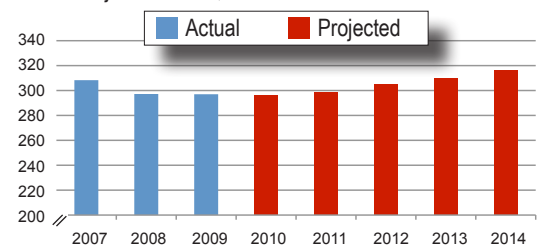
Vermont non-farm, seasonally adjusted jobs in thousands



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Job Growth Will Be Slow

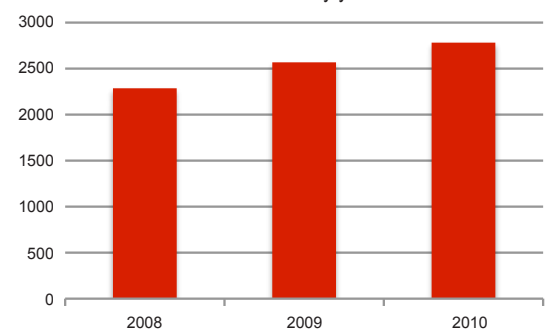
Non-farm jobs forecast, in thousands



Source: New England Economic Partnership, spring forecast, May 20, 2010

More Vermonters Are Without a Home

Number of homeless Vermonters by year



Source: Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness