



Ohio Job Growth Stills Lags, Ohioans Losing Confidence

Four years after the recession began in March 2001, Ohio employment is down 179,700, or 3.2 percent, according to the latest seasonally adjusted payroll numbers issued April 15 by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS). At this point after the early 1990s recession started, 167,800 nonfarm wage and salary jobs had been created in Ohio, an increase of 3.4 percent.

This is according to JobWatch, an ongoing project of the Economic Policy Institute (www.epinet.org), which tracks current trends in the U.S. labor market and offers up-to-date readings on its status.

Policy Matters Ohio, a nonprofit research institute, assists in the evaluation and release of the data in Ohio. A detailed description of the JobWatch project can be found at <http://www.jobwatch.org/>.

Month-to-month data can vary and each month's statistics are later revised, so it is unwise to put too much weight in a single month's statistics. The ODJFS adjusted its February count of non-farm wage and salary employment upward by 8,400. The number of jobs in the state grew from 2003 lows to a high last summer, but then plateaued and dropped through January. With the March increase of 300 jobs, employment is above where it was a year ago but below the recent high of last August, Policy Matters said.

The ODJFS also reported from a separate survey of households that the Ohio unemployment rate dropped to 6.3 percent in March, down from 6.4 percent the previous month. The number of unemployed workers in Ohio was estimated at 373,000, a decline of 6,000 from February.

The state has yet to recover all of the jobs lost since the recession officially ended in November 2001. At the comparable point after the end of the early 1990s recession, the state had gained almost

255,200 jobs, a gain of 5.3 percent, compared to the loss of 75,100 or 1.4 percent, since November 2001. The latest ODJFS employment report showed the number of manufacturing jobs remained basically flat, near the low last June.

If Ohio continues producing jobs at the rate it has over the past year, when it gained a total of 10,200, it will be more than 17 years before Ohio has as many jobs as it did when the recession began, the study found.

In a separate study, released Monday by Spherion Corp., 76 percent of state residents surveyed said the economy is either getting weaker or staying the same, an increase of seven percentage points from a survey done last month.

But the news isn't all bad -- only one in five Ohio workers believes his own job is likely to be eliminated in the next 12 months and nearly two-thirds are confident in the future of their employer.

Robert Schulte, Spherion, told the Cincinnati Business Courier, "With Ohio's key industries still in the doldrums, workers are justifiably concerned about job availability. On the macroeconomic side, rising energy costs and inflation worries may be feeding negative worker sentiment. Still, one in three workers say they may start job hunting soon, and we are seeing some evidence of stepped up hiring in our business, especially for contingent labor."

Petro Rejects Casino Initiative Language, Again

Attorney General Jim Petro on Friday rejected the proposed summary language on an initiative ~~to Ohio's Constitution~~ to allow casino gambling, saying it does not comply with state law and cannot be certified as a fair and truthful statement of the measure to be submitted to voters for signature. (continued)
