



For Release: Thursday, May 09, 2013

13-877-KAN

MOUNTAIN-PLAINS INFORMATION OFFICE: Kansas City, Mo.

Technical information: (816) 285-7000 BLSInfoKansasCity@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mountain-plains

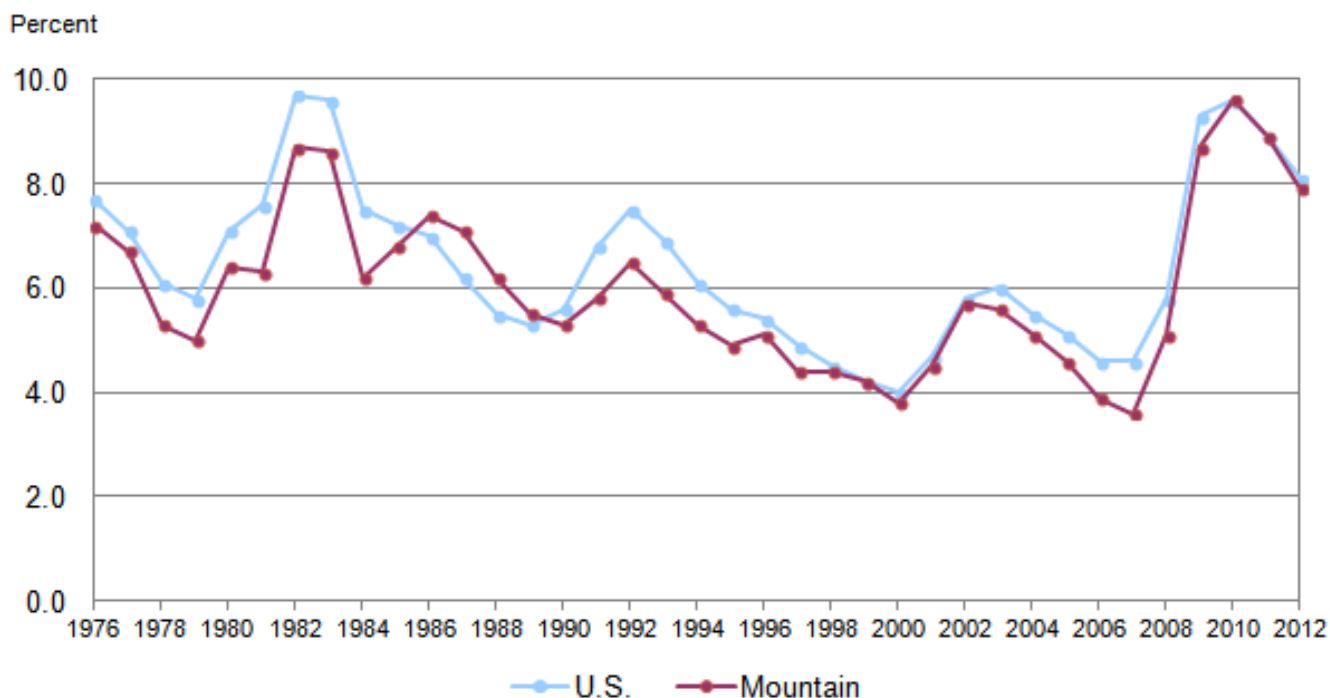
Media contact: (816) 285-7000

Mountain Division and State Unemployment – 2012

Mountain recorded jobless rate similar to that of the nation

The unemployment rate in the Mountain division declined 1.0 percentage point over the year to 7.9 percent in 2012, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, the U.S. jobless rate was 8.1 percent, down 0.8 percentage point from the prior year. (See [table 1.](#)) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that the Mountain’s unemployment rate was not significantly different than that of the national figure and has not exceeded the U.S. average since 1989. (See [chart 1.](#) All division and state series begin in 1976.)

Chart 1. Unemployment rates for the U.S. and Mountain census division, 1976–2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Mountain division is one of nine geographic divisions in the United States. Jobless rates in the divisions ranged from a low of 5.6 percent in the West North Central to a high of 9.8 percent in the Pacific in 2012. Three divisions—West North Central, West South Central, and New England—had rates significantly below the national figure. Two divisions, the Pacific and the Middle Atlantic, recorded annual average unemployment rates that were significantly above the U.S. average. (See [table 2](#).)

Eight of the nine geographic divisions reported statistically significant over-the-year unemployment rate decreases in 2012. The largest of these occurred in the East South Central (-1.3 percentage points) and Pacific (-1.2 points) divisions.

Of the eight states that make up the Mountain division, five had jobless rates that were significantly lower than that for the nation —Wyoming (5.4 percent), Utah (5.7 percent), Montana (6.0 percent), New Mexico (6.9 percent), and Idaho (7.1 percent). By contrast, Nevada was the only state in the division that had an unemployment rate significantly above the national average. At 11.1 percent, Nevada recorded the highest jobless rate in the nation, exceeding the national average by 3.0 percentage points. Rates in Arizona and Colorado were not appreciably different from the U.S. rate.

For the third consecutive year, Nevada's unemployment rate (11.1 percent) was the highest in the nation. Two additional states reported unemployment rates of 10.0 percent or more in 2012 – California (10.5 percent) and Rhode Island (10.4 percent). North Dakota registered the lowest jobless rate among the states for the fourth year in a row, 3.1 percent, followed by Nebraska, 3.9 percent, and South Dakota, 4.4 percent. Overall, 27 states had unemployment rates that were significantly lower than the U.S. rate of 8.1 percent, while 13 states and the District of Columbia recorded rates significantly above it. (See [chart 2](#).)

Seven of the eight states in the Mountain division posted statistically significant jobless rate decreases from 2011. Nevada (-2.1 percentage points) had the largest over-the-year rate decline in the division, followed by Idaho and Utah (-1.2 points each) and Arizona (-1.1 points). Wyoming posted a decline of 0.7 percentage point and Colorado and Montana each registered a decrease of 0.6 point over the year. The unemployment rate in 2012 for New Mexico was not appreciably different from that of the prior year.

Nationally, 41 states and the District of Columbia posted statistically significant unemployment rate decreases in 2012, the largest of which were in Nevada (-2.1 percentage points), Florida (-1.7 points), and Missouri (-1.5 points). Twelve additional states and the District of Columbia experienced decreases greater than 1.0 percentage point. The remaining nine states reported annual average unemployment rates for 2012 that were not appreciably different from those of the previous year, though some had changes that were at least as large numerically as the significant changes. (See [chart 3](#).)

Technical Note

This release presents labor force and unemployment data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. Estimates for the U.S. are obtained directly from the CPS, which is a monthly sample survey of approximately 60,000 households nationwide that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the Census Bureau. All subnational estimates presented in this release were derived from updated time-series models with monthly benchmarking to national Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates. Subnational data reflect revised population controls and model reestimation. Historical data were revised back to 2006. Data for regions, divisions, states, and the District of Columbia are available back to 1976.

The LAUS program produces data for the nine geographic divisions in the United States: New England, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, East North Central, West North Central, Mountain, and Pacific. Data for all divisions, as well as the 50 states, are available in the Regional and State Unemployment release at www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#news.

Analysis in this news release reflects the use of model-based error measures when making comparisons with the U.S. and the prior year. BLS uses a 90-percent confidence level in determining whether changes or differences in subnational unemployment rates are statistically significant. Model-based error measures are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/lau/lastderr.htm.

Additional information

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population for the U.S., Mountain, and Mountain states, 2011–12 annual averages (Numbers in thousands)

Area	Civilian labor force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment rate		Error range of rate, 2012 ⁽¹⁾
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	
United States ⁽²⁾	153,617	154,975	139,869	142,469	13,747	12,506	8.9	8.1	8.0 - 8.2
Mountain.....	11,011	11,029	10,030	10,161	981	867	8.9	7.9	7.6 - 8.2
Arizona.....	3,049	3,030	2,762	2,779	287	252	9.4	8.3	7.6 - 9.0
Colorado.....	2,723	2,743	2,490	2,524	233	220	8.6	8.0	7.5 - 8.5
Idaho.....	767	773	703	719	64	55	8.3	7.1	6.3 - 7.8
Montana.....	499	508	466	477	33	31	6.6	6.0	5.3 - 6.7
Nevada.....	1,392	1,379	1,208	1,226	184	152	13.2	11.1	10.4 - 11.7
New Mexico.....	932	936	862	871	70	65	7.5	6.9	6.2 - 7.6
Utah.....	1,347	1,354	1,254	1,276	93	77	6.9	5.7	5.2 - 6.2
Wyoming.....	303	306	285	290	18	16	6.1	5.4	4.9 - 5.9

Footnotes:

(1) Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level and are based on unrounded data.

(2) Data for the U.S. are obtained directly from the national Current Population Survey.

Note: Data refer to place of residence. Unemployment rates are in percent and are based on unrounded levels. Data for subnational areas reflect revised population controls and model reestimation.

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by region and division, 2011–12 annual averages (Numbers in thousands)

Census region and division ⁽¹⁾	Civilian labor force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment rate		Error range of rate, 2012 ⁽²⁾
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	
Northeast.....	28,208	28,389	25,887	26,066	2,321	2,324	8.2	8.2	8.0 - 8.4
New England.....	7,735	7,720	7,134	7,161	601	560	7.8	7.2	6.9 - 7.5
Middle Atlantic.....	20,473	20,669	18,753	18,905	1,720	1,764	8.4	8.5	8.3 - 8.8
South.....	56,160	56,525	51,237	52,174	4,923	4,351	8.8	7.7	7.5 - 7.9
South Atlantic.....	29,753	30,008	26,999	27,538	2,754	2,469	9.3	8.2	8.0 - 8.4
East South Central.....	8,709	8,678	7,894	7,978	814	700	9.4	8.1	7.6 - 8.5
West South Central.....	17,698	17,840	16,343	16,658	1,354	1,182	7.7	6.6	6.4 - 6.9
Midwest.....	34,265	34,149	31,405	31,631	2,860	2,518	8.3	7.4	7.2 - 7.6
East North Central.....	23,282	23,200	21,144	21,300	2,139	1,899	9.2	8.2	7.9 - 8.5
West North Central.....	10,982	10,949	10,261	10,330	721	618	6.6	5.6	5.4 - 5.9
West.....	35,897	35,986	32,167	32,665	3,730	3,321	10.4	9.2	9.0 - 9.4
Mountain.....	11,011	11,029	10,030	10,161	981	867	8.9	7.9	7.6 - 8.2
Pacific.....	24,885	24,957	22,137	22,504	2,748	2,453	11.0	9.8	9.6 - 10.1

Footnotes:

(1) Regions are defined as the four Census regions, comprised as follows: Northeast Region includes the New England Division - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and the Middle Atlantic Division - New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. South Region includes the South Atlantic Division - Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central Division - Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; and West South Central Division - Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Midwest Region includes the East North Central Division - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; and the West North Central Division - Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. West Region includes the Mountain Division - Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and the Pacific Division - Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

(2) Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level and are based on unrounded data.

Note: Data refer to place of residence. Unemployment rates are in percent and are based on unrounded levels. Data for subnational areas reflect revised population controls and model reestimation. As a result, they will not add to U.S. totals.

