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Government sector drives down job numbers

According to data from Arizona's Office of Economic Opportunity, the Cochise County economy lost 500 jobs in the 12 months ended August for job growth of -1.5 percent. In the 14 months from July last year through August this year, Cochise County saw year-over-year job declines in six months, gains in four months, and stabilization in four months. That followed persistent job losses over the previous seven and a half years (from the beginning of 2009 through the middle of last year).

Overall job losses in the 12 months ended August were led by sharp declines in government employment. Countywide, the government-sector shed 900 jobs (-7.9 percent) with the loss of 200 federal government jobs (-4.0 percent) and 700 state and local government jobs (-10.9 percent).

Cochise County's private sector added 400 jobs in the 12 months ended August, for job growth of 1.8 percent. All of the private-sector job gains were service jobs, which were up by a net 400 (1.9 percent) with the addition of 300 educational and health services jobs (6 percent), 200 financial activities jobs (20 percent), and 200 leisure and hospitality jobs (5.6 percent) partly offset by the loss of 200 jobs in professional and business services (-5.3 percent) and 100 trade, transportation, and utilities jobs (-1.7 percent). Job numbers stabilized in the information and other services industries in the 12 months ended August.

Elsewhere in the private sector, the number of goods-producing jobs stabilized in the 12 months ended August with job numbers flat across manufacturing, construction, and mining.

In month-to-month comparisons, Cochise County gained 700 jobs from July to August, in line with seasonal expectations. The government sector added 500 jobs, all of which were in state and local government and impacted heavily by the start of the new school year (and fall semester for Cochise College). Cochise County's federal government job numbers stabilized from July to August.

Cochise County's private sector gained 200 jobs from July to August, all of which were service jobs with the addition of 100 professional and business services jobs and 100 jobs in leisure and hospitality. All other private-sector service industries countywide (trade, transportation, and utilities; information; financial activities; educational and health services; and other services) saw job numbers stabilize at July levels in August. Job numbers in Cochise County's goods-producing sector also held steady with stabilization across manufacturing, construction and mining.

According to OEO figures, Cochise County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined from 5.4 to 5.3 percent from July to August. The August rate was down from 6 percent in August last year. Unadjusted city-level unemployment rates for August were: Benson, 4.8 percent; Bisbee, 3.9 percent; Douglas, 7.3 percent; Huachuca City, 6.8 percent; Sierra Vista, 5.3 percent; Tombstone, 1.7 percent; and Willcox, 5.8 percent.

Arizona's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dipped from 5.1 to 5.0 percent from July to August (down from 5.1 percent in August 2016). The national unemployment rate inched upward from 4.3 to 4.4 percent in August (down from 4.9 percent in August last year).

COCHISE COUNTY NONFARM EMPLOYMENT

	August 2017	July 2017	1-Month Change	August 2016	12-Month Change	12-Month Job Growth Rate
Total Nonfarm Jobs	33,600	32,900	700	34,100	-500	-1.5%
Total Private Sector Jobs	23,100	22,900	200	22,700	400	1.8%
Goods Producing Jobs	2,000	2,000	0	2,000	0	0.0%
Construction and Mining	1,300	1,300	0	1,300	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	700	700	0	700	0	0.0%
Service Providing Jobs	31,600	30,900	700	32,100	-500	-1.6%
Private Service Providing Jobs	21,100	20,900	200	20,700	400	1.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	5,900	5,900	0	6,000	-100	-1.7%
Information	400	400	0	400	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	1,200	1,200	0	1,000	200	20.0%
Professional and Business Services	3,600	3,500	100	3,800	-200	-5.3%
Educational and Health Services	5,300	5,300	0	5,000	300	6.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	3,800	3,700	100	3,600	200	5.6%
Other Services	900	900	0	900	0	0.0%
Government Jobs	10,500	10,000	500	11,400	-900	-7.9%
Federal Government	4,800	4,800	0	5,000	-200	-4.0%
State and Local Government	5,700	5,200	500	6,400	-700	-10.9%
Note. Numbers rounded to nearest 100. Sources: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity and Cochise College Center for Economic Research						

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

	August 2017	July 2017	August 2016
United States	4.4	4.3	4.9
Arizona	5.0	5.1	5.1
Cochise County	5.3	5.4	6.0
Benson	4.8	5.1	5.4
Bisbee	3.9	4.1	4.4
Douglas	7.3	7.7	8.2
Huachuca City	6.8	7.3	7.7
Sierra Vista	5.3	5.3	5.3
Tombstone	1.7	1.9	1.9
Willcox	5.8	6.2	6.6

Note. US and Arizona rates are seasonally adjusted; Cochise County and city rates are not seasonally adjusted. Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity

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