Texas Economic Indicators

Summary
The Texas economy continues to expand, with employment growing at a 3.7 percent annualized rate in December. Overall job creation was broad-based in 2014, and the unemployment rate declined further. The Texas Leading Index edged down in November, suggesting continued positive growth but at a slower pace.

Employment Growth
Month-over-month percent change, annualized*

- Texas employment grew at a 3.7 percent annualized pace in December, outperforming the nation’s 2.2 percent increase. Texas gained 35,200 jobs in December after adding 29,200 jobs in November. Current Texas employment stands at 11.7 million, according to the payroll survey (CES).

Employment by Sector
Jobs added year to date

- Texas saw strong job gains of 3.6 percent in 2014. The professional and business services sector, which includes lawyers, accountants, architects, engineers and other IT professionals and makes up 13.4 percent of total Texas employment, added the most jobs last year—94,600 jobs. The construction sector, accounting for about 6 percent of total Texas employment, recorded the fastest pace of increase in 2014, growing 8.1 percent.

Unemployment
Percent *

- The Texas unemployment rate fell to 4.6 percent in December. The Texas rate continues to be lower than the U.S. rate, which fell to 5.6 percent in December. Texas’ unemployment rate has fallen 1.4 percentage points since the beginning of 2014 and is at a six-year low.
Crude Oil Prices

The West Texas Intermediate crude oil price fell from $54.14 per barrel for the week ending Jan. 2 to $45.92 for the week ending Jan. 16 and was down 50.2 percent year over year.

Natural Gas Prices

Natural gas prices rose to $3.06 per million Btu for the week ending Jan. 16, a 1.2 percent increase from its Jan. 2 level. The price was 30.1 percent lower than year-earlier levels.

Texas Rig Count

The Texas rig count dropped from 840 in the week ending Jan. 2 to 766 during the week ending Jan. 16 and was down 8.9 percent from last year’s level.

Texas Leading Index with Components

The Texas Leading Index, which uses key economic indicators to forecast employment growth, edged down 0.9 percent from September to November as half of its components declined during the period.

Construction Contract Values

The five-month moving average of total Texas construction contract values fell 7.6 percent in November to $7,148 million but was up 20.8 percent year over year. The drop in November was due to sharp declines in both nonresidential and nonbuilding construction.

NOTE: Data may not match previously published numbers due to data revisions.


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