



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, February 1, 2019

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CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT CLIMBS BY 52,000 IN JANUARY TO 11-YEAR PEAK; INDUSTRY WORKWEEK HITS ALL-TIME HIGH AS UNEMPLOYMENT FALLS TO LOW

Government Data on Construction Spending, Association Survey Find Demand for All Project Types; Officials Call for More Funds for Training and Education, Immigration Reform to Keep Work on Track

Construction employment increased by 52,000 jobs in January and by 338,000 jobs, or 4.7 percent, over the past year, while the latest reading on construction spending showed moderate increases in all major categories, according to an analysis of new government data by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials urged government officials to strengthen career and technical education programs and facilitate immigration for workers with construction skills before a worker shortage stalls completion of needed infrastructure.

“There has been no letup in demand for construction projects—or workers,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “Even though the industry added employees at more than double the pace of the overall economy in the past year, the average workweek in construction reached an all-time high and unemployment in construction hit a series low, indicating that contractors would hire even more workers if they were available.”

Construction employment totaled 7,464,000 in January, the most since January 2008. A report on construction spending—delayed a month by the partial government shutdown—showed an increase of 0.8 percent from October to November and 4.5 percent year-to-date for the first 11 months of 2018 combined compared to the same period in 2017. Year-to-date spending rose by 3.9 percent for residential construction, 3.5 percent for private nonresidential construction and 7.0 percent for public construction.

Average weekly hours in the industry increased to 39.9 hours in January, the highest since the series began in 2006, the economist noted. Average weekly hours of production and nonsupervisory employees, a series that dates back to 1947 and covers construction trades, set a record of 40.6 hours, Simonson added.

The unemployment rate for jobseekers with construction experience in January was 6.4 percent, down from 7.3 percent in January 2018. The number of such workers fell to 638,000 from 707,000 a year earlier. Both figures were the lowest for January since those series began in 2000, Simonson pointed out.

In a [survey](#) the association released in January, more contractors reported they expect the dollar volume of projects available to bid on to expand than to shrink in 2019 in each of 13 project categories. In addition, 79 percent of construction firms reported that they expect to add employees in 2019. However, nearly as many—78 percent—reported they were having trouble filling some positions and 68 percent said they expected that hiring would remain difficult or become harder. Association officials cautioned, however, that contractors’ expansion plans could be thwarted if Washington officials fail to fund more career and technical education to prepare more individuals for construction careers and to allow firms that document a shortage of qualified workers to bring in workers from outside the U.S.

“The pool of unemployed workers with construction experience has virtually evaporated, and everyone in the industry is working longer hours than ever,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “The only way to satisfy the demand is to provide more people with the skills needed to work in construction and to expand the nation’s labor force with qualified workers from outside our borders.”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 8, 2019

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, April 5, 2019

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CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES BY 16,000 IN MARCH AND 246,000 FOR THE YEAR AS WEEKLY HOURS HIT NEW HIGH AND UNEMPLOYMENT A NEW LOW FOR MARCH

Hiring Rebounds from Losses in February, Suggesting Demand for Construction Remains Strong; Association Calls for Career Training Funding and Immigration Reform to Continue Growth

Construction employment increased by 16,000 jobs in March and by 246,000 jobs, or 3.4 percent, over the past year, according to an analysis of new government data today by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials called on federal officials to double funding for career and technical training programs and facilitate immigration for workers with construction skills before a worker shortage stalls future infrastructure projects.

“Construction employment rebounded in March, indicating that the dip in February was probably related to extreme weather conditions and not the beginning of a slump,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “In fact, the construction industry has added jobs at twice the rate of the overall economy in the past year.”

Construction employment totaled 7,447,000 in March, an increase of 246,000, or 3.4 percent, since March 2018. The growth rate was double the 1.7 percent gain in total nonfarm payroll employment, the economist noted. Average hourly earnings in construction – a measure of all wages and salaries – increased 3.3 percent over the year to \$30.45. That figure was nearly 10 percent higher than the private-sector average of \$27.70.

“The average workweek in construction is at a record high for March and the number of unemployed jobseekers with construction experience is at all-time lows,” Simonson added. “These data suggest that contractors are having a hard time finding qualified workers even though the industry pays better than the private sector as a whole.”

All construction industry employees averaged 39.9 hours of work per week in March, the highest March rate in the 14-year history of the series, Simonson observed. Meanwhile, the number of unemployed jobseekers whose last job was in construction totaled 490,000 in March, a steep decline from the 696,000 such workers in March 2018 and the lowest March total since the series began in 2000. The unemployment rate for those jobseekers amounted to just 5.2 percent, down sharply from the 7.4 percent rate in

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Association officials said that growth in the construction industry was dependent on finding qualified construction workers and that a lack of skilled workers would hold back businesses and infrastructure projects. They called on federal officials to double investments in career and technical education programs to expose more high school students to construction opportunities and to allow a contractor to bring in foreign workers for specific projects when the firm can demonstrate it was unable to hire U.S. workers.

“Our member firms continue to worry about finding enough workers to fulfill the demand for construction.” said

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 3, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION JOBS INCREASE BY 33,000 IN APRIL AND 256,000 OVER 12 MONTHS AS
INDUSTRY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS TO 4.7 PERCENT, LOWEST EVER FOR APRIL**
*Average Hourly Earnings in Construction Top Private Sector Average by 10 Percent but Association Survey Shows
Workers are Hard to Find; Officials Urge Expanding Career and Technical Education to Boost Supply*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, June 7, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION JOBS INCREASE BY 4,000 IN MAY AND 215,000 OVER 12 MONTHS AS INDUSTRY
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS TO RECORD-SETTING LOW OF 3.2 PERCENT**

*Average Hourly Earnings in Construction Top Private Sector Average by 10 Percent; Association Officials Call for
Doubling Career and Technical Education Funding, Immigration Relief to Attract Needed Workers*

Construction employment increased by 4,000 jobs in May and by 215,000, or 3.0 percent, over the past 12

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, July 5, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION JOBS INCREASE BY 21,000 IN JUNE AND 224,000 DURING THE PAST YEAR
AS THE SECTOR'S**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 2, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES BY 4,000 IN JULY AND 202,000 OVER THE PAST YEAR
AS THE SECTOR'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES FROM 3.4 TO 3.8 PERCENT**

*Average Hourly Earnings in Construction Top Private Sector Average by 9.9 Percent as Construction Firms
Continue to Boost Pay to Attract Limited Pool of Available, Qualified Workers*

Construction employment increased by 4,000 jobs in July and by 202,000, or 2.8 percent, over the past 12 months, while the number of unemployed jobseekers with construction experience rose, according to an analysis of new government data by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials noted that many firms likely would have added more employees last month if more were available. -

rate since the series began in 2000.

“Despite these recent signs of a slowdown or pause in construction hiring, companies continue to find qualified workers, and the latest government data on construction job openings reached another record high in May,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s president. “The downturn.”

Average hourly earnings in construction—a measure of all wages and salaries—rose this year to \$30.75. That figure was 9.9 percent higher than the private-sector average, Sandherr noted.

Association officials noted that construction firms continue to boost pay and offer benefits to attract more people into the industry. They added that most firms report having a hard time finding people to hire, which is likely holding back broader employment gains in the sector. The association measures to boost career and technical education and make students studying in those fields at technical colleges eligible for federal Pell Grants.

“Other than construction careers, few other jobs in today’s economy pay as well as construction pay for a costly college education,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s president. “Washington can help put more young adults into high-paying construction careers by supporting career and technical education.”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 6, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES BY 14,000 IN AUGUST AND 177,000 OVER THE PAST
YEAR AS THE SECTOR'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS THE SECOND-LOWEST IN AUGUST**
Average Hourly Earnings in Construction Top Private Sector Average by 9.7 Percent as Construction

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 4, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES BY 7,000 IN SEPTEMBER AND 156,000 IN 12 MONTHS;
HIRING SLOWDOWN LIKELY REFLECTS TIGHT LABOR MARKET, NOT SLUMP IN DEMAND**

*Industry's Job Gains and Average Hourly Earnings Outpace Broader Economy as Association Survey Finds
Contractors Expect to Keep Hiring; Officials Urge Boost to Career and Technical Education, Immigration*

Construction employment increased by 7,000 jobs in September and by 156,000, or 2.1 percent, over the past 12 months, while the number of unemployed jobseekers with construction experience reached a record low for September, according to an analysis of new government data by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials said the modest increase in employment likely reflects tight labor conditions and urged federal officials to increase funding for career and technical education and pass immigration reform.

“Contractors foresee plenty of projects to bid on, and nearly three-fourths of firms expect to add workers during the next twelve months, but most are finding it hard to find qualified workers to pt6)1 (e) 1.3s

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, November 1, 2019

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**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES IN OCTOBER BUT SPENDING DROPS IN LATEST 12 MONTHS
AS GAINS IN HOMEBUILDING AND PUBLIC OUTLAYS OFFSET PRIVATE NONRESIDENTIAL DIP**
*Trade Fights Appear to be Undermining Demand for Many Types of Private-Sector Projects; Association Officials Urge
the Trump Administration to Quickly Resolve Disputes with China, the European Union and Other Countries*

Construction employment increased by 10,000 jobs in October and by 148,000, or 2.0 percent, over the past 12 months, while construction spending decreased by 2.0 percent from September 2018 to September 2019, according to an analysis of new government data by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials said demand for construction is being undermined by uncertainty and tariffs that are part of a series of trade disputes with China, European Union and other countries.

“The construction industry is still adding workers at a faster clip than the overall economy, but growth has slowed as private nonresidential and multifamily construction spending shrinks,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “At the same time, public investment and a recent pickup in single-family homebuilding have helped employment to grow.”

Simonson observed that the 2.0 percent growth in construction employment between October 2018 and October 2019 is the slowest in almost seven years but that the rate remained well above the 1.4 percent increase in total nonfarm payrolls.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, December 6, 2019

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, January 10, 2020

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CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT INCREASES BY 20,000 IN DECEMBER AND 151,000 IN 2019; CONTRACTORS EXPECT TO HIRE IN 2020 BUT ANTICIPATE DIFFICULTY FILLING SLOTS
Survey Finds Optimism about 2020 along with Even Tighter Labor Supply Construction Unemployment Sets Record December, Association Calls for Government to Boost Career Opportunities Immigration

Construction employment increased 20,000 jobs in December and by 151,000, or 2.0 percent, in all of 2019, according to an analysis of new government data by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials noted that its recent survey found three out of four contractors expect to keep adding workers in 2020, but even more respondents find it difficult to fill positions in 2019, and a majority anticipate it will be as hard or harder to do so in 2020. Officials called on the federal government to increase funding for career and technical education and expand employment-based immigration for workers whose skills are in short supply.

“More than four out of five respondents to our survey said they were having a hard time filling salaried or hourly craft positions in 2019,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “Nearly two-thirds of the firms say that hiring will be hard or harder this year. In light of those staffing challenges, costs have been higher than anticipated for 44 percent of respondents and projects took longer than anticipated for 40 percent of them. As a result, 41 percent of respondents have put higher prices into their bids or contracts and 23 percent have put in longer completion times.”

Simonson observed that both the number of unemployed workers with recent construction experience (489,000) and the unemployment rate for such workers (5.6 percent) were the lowest ever for December in the 20-year history of those series. He said these figures support the survey’s finding that experienced construction workers are hard to find.

“Contractors are confident that there will be plenty of projects in 2020,” Simonson added. “Our survey found that for each of 13 project types, more contractors expect an increase in 2020 than a decrease in the dollar value of projects they compete for.”