

News Release

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Arkansas' Unemployment Rate At 4.8 Percent

Little Rock, Arkansas – Labor force data, produced by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and released today by the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), shows Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose one-tenth of a percentage point from February 2006 to 4.8 percent in March 2006. The United States' jobless rate, at 4.7 percent, was one-tenth of a percentage point below last month's rate of 4.8 percent.

In March 2006, Arkansas' total employment climbed 9,300 to 1,336,400. The number of unemployed Arkansans increased 1,800 to 66,900.

DWS Communications Director Kimberly Friedman said, "Significant seasonal activity is underway in Arkansas bringing increased employment to the state. Unemployment is also up; this combination of gains triggered a slight rise in the jobless rate for March." Despite the rise between months, Arkansas' unemployment rate remains below its rate of 4.9 percent for March 2005, she said.

Table 1
ARKANSAS CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE SUMMARY
 (Seasonally Adjusted)

Item	March	February	March	Net Change From	Net Change From
	2006	2006	2005	February 2006	March 2005
Civilian Labor Force	1,403,300	1,392,200	1,348,700	11,100	54,600
Employment	1,336,400	1,327,100	1,282,500	9,300	53,900
Unemployment	66,900	65,100	66,200	1,800	700
Unemployment Rate	4.8	4.7	4.9	0.1	-0.1
U.S. Unemployment Rate	4.7	4.8	5.1	-0.1	-0.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Note: Unemployment rates were computed from unrounded data.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

Arkansas' nonfarm payroll employment (not seasonally adjusted) rose 12,200 between February and March to 1,188,200. Additions were posted in all major sectors and driven largely by seasonal factors. The largest monthly expansion occurred in **trade, transportation and utilities** (+3,100), where retail and wholesale trade raised industry employment to 246,300.

Over the year, nonfarm payroll jobs in Arkansas advanced 15,200. Four of the ten sectors that reported growth had gains of 3,500 or more jobs.

Monthly Employment Activity February 2006 to March 2006

Employment in **trade, transportation, and utilities** rose 3,100 to 246,300 in March as preparations got underway for upcoming spring and summer buying.

The number of jobs in the **leisure and hospitality** sector advanced 2,600 to total 94,200. Accommodations and food services (+2,100) experienced robust hiring. A number of special events sparked hiring in the arts, entertainment, and recreation segment, boosting the job count by 500.

Professional and business services employment rose 2,000 to 114,600. The majority of the increase was attributed to administrative and support services (+1,900).

Employment in **construction** saw impressive gains of 1,600 over the month to total 54,100. New projects were underway in a number of locations.

Government added 900 jobs over the month. The increase was traced mainly to state and local government.

Educational and health services gained 700 jobs in the health care and social assistance segment.

Other services increased by 400 workers.

Manufacturing employment rose 300 to 196,000. Durable goods added 200 while nondurable goods edged up 100.

Job totals in the **natural resources-mining, information, and financial activities** sectors grew by 200, each.

Yearly Employment Activity March 2005 to March 2006

Employment in the **government** sector rose 5,100 over the year. Both state and local government noted sizeable advances.

Professional and business services expanded, adding 4,100 jobs. The most notable increase (+3,000) was in the administrative and support services category.

Employment in **trade, transportation, and utilities** rose 3,600. The greatest concentration of new hires was in retail trade (+2,500).

The health care and social assistance segment (+4,200) was responsible for the gain in the **educational and health services** sector (+3,500).

An increase of 1,600 was posted in **construction**. The largest contribution came from specialty trade contractors (+1,200).

The number of jobs in the **financial activities** sector grew by 1,100. Finance and insurance companies were responsible for the growth.

Leisure and hospitality added 700 jobs. Hiring in the arts, entertainment and recreation category accounted for 57 percent of the increase. Regional events became the drawing card for many Arkansans over the year.

The mining industry attracted 500 additional jobs to the **natural resources and mining** sector.

The number of jobs in **other services** and **information** rose 400 and 100, respectively.

Closings and layoffs over the year contributed to the loss of 5,500 jobs in **manufacturing**. Employment in the nondurable goods sector decreased 3,400. The largest reduction occurred in the food manufacturing segment (-1,800). Jobs in durable goods dropped 2,100.

Table 2
NON-FARM PAYROLL JOBS
STATE OF ARKANSAS
(Not Seasonally Adjusted)

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Industry Group	March 2006	February 2006	March 2005	Net Change From February 2006	Net Change From March 2005
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1,188,200	1,176,000	1,173,000	12,200	15,200
Goods Producing	257,300	255,200	260,700	2,100	-3,400
Natural Resources & Mining	7,200	7,000	6,700	200	500
Mining	4,500	4,400	3,900	100	600
Construction	54,100	52,500	52,500	1,600	1,600
Construction of Buildings	12,000	11,700	11,900	300	100
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	10,500	10,000	10,200	500	300
Specialty Trade Contractors	31,600	30,800	30,400	800	1,200
Manufacturing	196,000	195,700	201,500	300	-5,500
Durable Goods	105,000	104,800	107,100	200	-2,100
Wood Products	13,500	13,600	13,400	-100	100
Primary Metals	8,200	8,200	8,100	0	100
Fabricated Metals	18,300	18,200	18,200	100	100
Machinery	13,500	13,400	14,100	100	-600
Electrical Equipment	13,000	12,900	13,100	100	-100
Transportation Equipment	16,200	16,100	16,300	100	-100
Furniture & Related Products	6,700	6,700	7,500	0	-800
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	5,700	5,800	6,100	-100	-400
Nondurable Goods	91,000	90,900	94,400	100	-3,400
Food	49,400	49,500	51,200	-100	-1,800
Paper & Printing	16,200	16,100	16,700	100	-500
Plastics & Rubber Products	12,500	12,500	13,100	0	-600
Service Providing	930,900	920,800	912,300	10,100	18,600
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	246,300	243,200	242,700	3,100	3,600
Wholesale Trade	48,100	47,500	47,300	600	800
Retail Trade	132,700	130,100	130,200	2,600	2,500
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	17,800	17,600	17,600	200	200
General Merchandise Stores	37,800	36,700	36,000	1,100	1,800
Department Stores	8,900	8,900	8,700	0	200
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	65,500	65,600	65,200	-100	300
Utilities	6,700	6,700	6,500	0	200
Truck Transportation	35,400	35,500	34,500	-100	900
Warehousing & Storage	10,000	9,900	9,400	100	600
Information	20,400	20,200	20,300	200	100
Publishing Industries	6,700	6,600	6,700	100	0
Telecommunications	9,000	8,900	8,800	100	200
Financial Activities	52,000	51,800	50,900	200	1,100
Finance & Insurance	38,700	38,600	37,600	100	1,100
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	13,300	13,200	13,300	100	0
Professional & Business Services	114,600	112,600	110,500	2,000	4,100
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	37,000	37,000	36,100	0	900
Management of Companies	23,500	23,400	23,300	100	200
Administrative & Support Services	54,100	52,200	51,100	1,900	3,000
Employment Services	26,900	25,100	25,300	1,800	1,600
Educational & Health Services	149,300	148,600	145,800	700	3,500
Educational Services	12,400	12,400	13,100	0	-700
Health Care & Social Assistance	136,900	136,200	132,700	700	4,200
Ambulatory Health Care	42,300	42,200	40,500	100	1,800
Hospitals	42,500	42,300	41,900	200	600
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	26,800	26,600	25,900	200	900
Social Assistance	25,300	25,100	24,400	200	900
Leisure & Hospitality	94,200	91,600	93,500	2,600	700
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	9,100	8,600	8,700	500	400
Accommodations & Food Services	85,100	83,000	84,800	2,100	300
Accommodation Services	10,900	10,400	10,700	500	200
Food Services	74,200	72,600	74,100	1,600	100
Other Services	42,600	42,200	42,200	400	400
Repair and Maintenance	9,300	9,100	9,300	200	0
Government	211,500	210,600	206,400	900	5,100
Federal Government	20,500	20,400	20,500	100	0
State Government	71,500	71,200	69,500	300	2,000
Local Government	119,500	119,000	116,400	500	3,100

Source: Department of Workforce Services, Monthly Survey of Employers.
 Estimates are based on first quarter 2005 benchmark.
 Current month's data are preliminary; previous month's data are revised.

Metropolitan Statistical Area Labor Force

Due to adjustments to the press release schedule, it has become necessary to change release times for the Metropolitan Statistical Areas. Therefore, employment and unemployment estimates for the Metropolitan Statistical Areas for March 2006 (not seasonally adjusted) will be available on April 25, 2006. Please log on to our website at www.discover.arkansas.gov for MSA and county data at that time.

Unemployment Comparisons: Minority and Youth

Utilizing data from the monthly BLS Current Population Survey, the Department of Workforce Services estimated the March unemployment rate for minorities in Arkansas at 9.1 percent. The jobless rate for whites was 3.9 percent. The youth unemployment rate was estimated at 17.2 percent. The jobless rate for minority youth was 25.2 percent, while the unemployment rate for white youth was 14.9 percent.

Table 4
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR MINORITIES AND YOUTH
ARKANSAS AND UNITED STATES
(Seasonally Adjusted)

	March 2006 Arkansas	March 2006 U.S.	February 2006 Arkansas	February 2006 U.S.	March 2005 Arkansas	March 2005 U.S.
Unemployment Rate	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.1
Minority	9.1	9.3	8.9	9.3	9.3	10.3
White	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.4
Youth (16 to 19)	17.2	15.7	16.9	15.4	17.6	16.9
Minority Youth	25.2	33.1	24.8	30.8	25.8	33.0
White Youth	14.9	12.7	14.6	12.7	15.3	14.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Note: The minority, white, and youth unemployment rates for Arkansas were calculated by the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) by applying ratios from the 2000 Census to data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.