



Local job market continues expanding

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By William Pack

San Antonio's labor market continued its steady expansion in April, creating 3,700 new jobs and knocking the area's unemployment rate to an eight-year low.

San Antonio's unemployment rate fell to 3.6 percent, three-tenths of a point below March's number and the lowest April reading since the same 3.6 percent rate was recorded in 2000. The number of unemployed decreased by almost 3,000 during the month to almost 34,000.

Chakib Chehadi, executive director of Workforce Solutions Alamo (formerly Alamo WorkSource), said the low unemployment rate would create opportunities for workers but would force employers to be more innovative to attract the people they need.

The unemployment rate for Texas in April matched a record low at 4.1 percent, three-tenths of a point below the level a year ago. That rate would have been lower if the state rate, like local unemployment numbers, were not adjusted for seasonal trends.

Chehadi said April's numbers show the local work force "continues to buck national trends with job growth and opportunities across various industries." That has become a dependable theme in a city that has become known for its economic diversity.

Nationwide, 20,000 jobs were lost in April, the fourth consecutive month of reductions. About 260,000 jobs were eliminated in that time, fueling concerns that the economy had slipped into recession. The national unemployment rate fell slightly last month to 5 percent.

On the Web

- [Workforce Solutions Alamo](#)
- [Texas Workforce Commission](#)

In San Antonio, jobs were added across numerous sectors, the biggest growth coming in the business services sector and among hotels and restaurants. Each of those sectors added more than 1,000 jobs last month.

Comparing totals from April 2007 to April 2008, 19,200 jobs were added in San Antonio. That amounts to 2.3 percent growth, which Workforce Solutions analysts considered healthy.

The construction sector, which has been ailing nationally, added 2,800 jobs in San Antonio as commercial projects moved forward during the past year.

Two sectors that include hospitals, health services, schools and government offices produced 9,400 jobs over 12 months.

The only sectors losing positions over the year were information, which shed 100 jobs, and manufacturing, which shrank by 700 jobs and has been shrinking for four months.

John Dewey, immediate past chairman of the San Antonio Manufacturers Association, said local factories have been weakened by the national economic slowdown, but he senses that business is picking up.

“In May, we've seen several large orders,” said Dewey, a vice president at ITM Inc., which makes machinery for other manufacturers.

Online at:

http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/stories/MYSA051708.4D.april_jobs.2d6f336.html