IOWA NONFARM EMPLOYMENT

NONFARM EMPLOYMENT DECLINES FOR SECOND MONTH

Iowa’s total nonfarm employment trended down in December and shed 3,100 jobs. This is the second consecutive month that firms trimmed payrolls following a loss of 2,300 jobs in November. Goods producing sectors were lifted by unusual hiring in the construction sector, but private services declined again this month. Government lost 900 jobs in December but remains up 2,000 jobs versus one year ago.

Manufacturing posted the largest loss in December (-1,400) and has now pared jobs in six consecutive months following a recent high in June. Durable goods factories have been most affected with 1,900 jobs shed over the past three months. Professional and business services were down in December (-1,200) due primarily to cutbacks in professional, scientific, and technical services. This decline follows a drop of 900 jobs last month. Truck transportation looked especially weak in December and transportation, warehousing, and utilities combined shed 1,400 jobs. On the other hand, construction posted an unusual increase in activity to end the year (+1,500). Most of these gains were in specialty trade contractors. Despite losses in October and November construction has generally been positive through much of the year. Leisure and hospitality also fared well to end the year (+1,200). Growth was split between entertainment and accommodations and food services.

Over the past twelve months, total nonfarm employment has edged down (-2,400). Trade, transportation, and utilities leads all sectors with 3,300 jobs shed. These losses are nearly even between retail trade and transportation and warehousing. Professional and business services have also been trending down recently (-2,900) with administrative support and waste management positions being most affected. Both financial services and manufacturing have shed 1,600 jobs annually. Alternatively, those sectors that have advanced compared to last December are construction (+4,500), other services (+1,500), and leisure and hospitality (+300).

Nationally, total nonfarm employment added 145,000 jobs in December. The largest gains were in retail trade, health care, and leisure and hospitality. Over the past twelve months, 2.1 million jobs have been added equating to a 1.4 percent growth rate.

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Production workers in Iowa’s goods-producing sector averaged $988.04 a week in December, up $10.53 compared to November and $41.84 more than one year ago. The annual increase is due to an hourly pay increase of $1.24 on average; production workers in general are working slightly less per week versus 2018. Construction workers earned $1,132.56 per week in December while manufacturing workers averaged $864.68.

Among service sectors, retail workers have seen little movement in weekly earnings as hourly rate increases have been offset by a decrease in weekly schedules. Overall, retail workers earned $407.88 per week in December. Finance workers fared better with gains in both hourly earnings and hourly worked and averaged $1,057.96 per week.
Total nonfarm employment in the Ames area shed 1,600 jobs. This loss was largely expected as education firms took a break for the holiday season. State government shed 700 jobs, as did private services. Goods producing industries decreased by 200 jobs.

Annually, Ames has generally trended up throughout the year and now rests 800 jobs higher than last year. Goods producing industries have fared the best with 400 jobs gained. Both private services and government are up 200 jobs.

The Cedar Rapids metropolitan statistical area pared 1,300 jobs in December, driven by job losses in both service-providing and goods producing industries. Mining, logging and construction experienced a seasonal loss of 300 jobs as winter weather made its debut. Professional and business services trimmed 300 jobs. Manufacturing, educational and health services, leisure and hospitality, and government each shed 200 jobs. Information shaved 100 jobs from its total employment.

The only industries with jobs gains this month were trade, transportation and warehousing and financial activities, each adding 100 jobs.

Over the year, area employment has increased by 600, and stands at 145,800 jobs. Professional and business services and government each added 400 jobs, outperforming all other sectors. Trade, transportation and warehousing experienced the greatest loss, trimming 500 jobs, all in retail trade.
Employers in the Des Moines Metro seasonally shed 1,100 jobs from payrolls in December, lowering total nonfarm employment to 382,400 jobs. Typically, jobs are shed as the metro area reaches the end of the year, although this month’s loss is larger than expected and follows another surprising loss in November. Much of this month’s estimate was driven by a seasonal loss in construction (-1,000) with specialty trade contractors paring 700 jobs. Other sectors trimming jobs this month were light and included professional and business services (-300) and education and health services (-300).

Monthly job gains this month were limited to only a few sectors. Leisure and hospitality gained 400 jobs and was partially fueled by hiring within eating and drinking establishments. Retail trade trended up this month (+200) and has fared well in 2019 despite struggles that are plaguing the rest of the state. Overall, the trade, transportation, and utilities super sector gained 300 jobs in December.

Annually, the Des Moines Metro has advanced by 7,000 jobs. The growth rate of 1.9 percent easily exceeds that of other metro areas and the state. Leisure and hospitality leads all sectors with 2,700 jobs added versus last year. Construction has gained 1,500 jobs and trade, transportation, and utilities are up 1,400 jobs. The only sectors trailing last year’s mark are education and health services (-600) and information (-100).

The Dubuque Metro seasonally shed 300 jobs in December and now rests at 62,000 jobs. All the movement stemmed from construction firms seasonally trimming payrolls as the winter weather moves in. Both private services and government showed little movement compared to November.

Over the past twelve months the Dubuque Metro has added 600 jobs. The Metro has continued to slowly add jobs with private services leading the way (+300). Goods producing industries have added 200 jobs and government is up a slight 100 jobs.
Employment in the Iowa City metropolitan statistical area decreased by 1,300 jobs from last month with a split between private service providing industry losses and losses in government. Local government pared 200 jobs over the month while state government shed 500 jobs. Leisure and hospitality and professional and business services each trimmed 100 jobs. Goods producing employment is down 300 jobs. The metro area has pared 800 jobs from one year ago, with a minimal gain in in just one industry, leisure and hospitality (+200). Trade, transportation and warehousing is unchanged. Government trimmed 100 jobs with a gain of 100 in state government partially offsetting losses of 100 in both federal and local government.

Employment in the Sioux City MSA is down 1,100 jobs from November, with only government (+100) and trade, transportation and warehousing (+100) adding jobs through the month. Goods producing industries have shed 1,000 jobs from last month, including a loss of 100 jobs in manufacturing. Professional and business services trimmed 200 jobs. Overall, area employment is down 700 jobs from one year ago with all job losses centered in goods producing industries. Manufacturing is unchanged overall, although non-durable goods manufacturing added 100 jobs. Trade, transportation and warehousing gained 1,000 jobs and leisure and hospitality added 100 jobs.

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The Waterloo/Cedar Falls metropolitan statistical area’s total nonfarm employment pared 900 jobs from the previous month and stands at 91,700. Overall, goods producing industries shed 700 jobs, with 300 of those jobs in durable goods manufacturing. Professional and business services, leisure and hospitality and government each trimmed 100 jobs. Trade, transportation and warehousing and educational and health services each added 100 jobs.

Over the year, the area pared 1,000 jobs. Non-durable goods manufacturing and government served as the only bright spots, adding just 100 jobs each. Durable goods manufacturing has pared 1,800 jobs, placing the industry at a historical low of 9,800 jobs and the manufacturing sector at its lowest employment level since February 2010. Trade, transportation and warehousing trimmed 200 jobs. Financial activities and professional and business services each trimmed 100 jobs.

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Unemployment Insurance Benefit Paid by County

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Each month, CES surveys approximately 142,000 businesses and government agencies, representing approximately 689,000 individual worksites.

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