

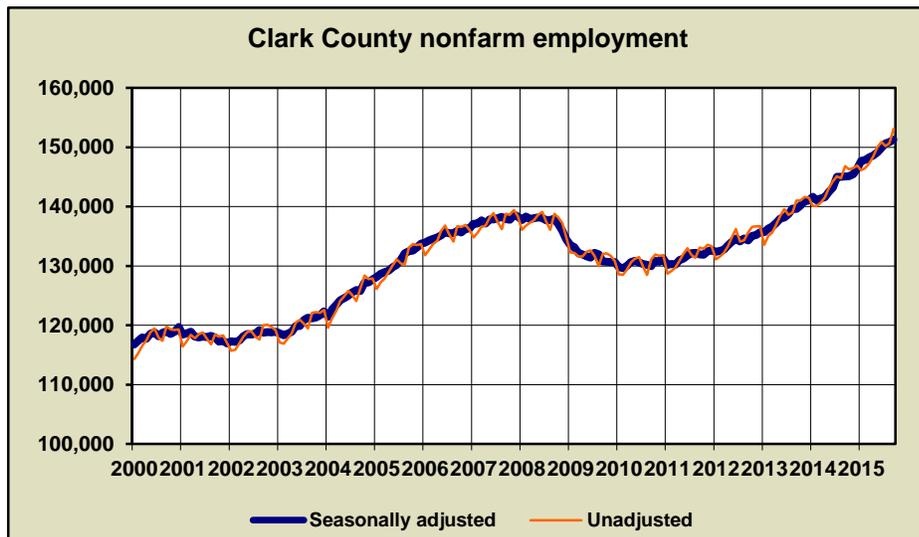
Monthly Update—September 2015

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Clark County

Clark County's labor market continued to improve in September. Seasonally-adjusted nonfarm employment rose by 400 jobs over the month, while unemployment continued to decline.

Unadjusted employment rose by 2,400 jobs. The start of the school year led to the usual jumps in education employment: 1,200 jobs in public K-12s, 200 at the state level, 100 in private education, and another 100 in social services related to childcare programs. Arts, entertainment and recreation jumped by 600 jobs (happens every September) while manufacturing and retail were both +200 jobs.



Over the year:

- Job growth over the year was 6,300, or 4.3 percent. Comparison rates: U. S., 2.0 percent; state of Washington, 2.8 percent; state of Oregon, 3.2 percent; Portland Metro, 3.6 percent.
- The big three industries for job creation have shifted: trade, transportation & utilities (+1,300 jobs, 4.8 percent) continues to lead, while professional & business services (+500 jobs, 2.8 percent) and education & health services (+500, 2.0 percent) have slowed. Picking up the slack: construction & mining (+1,100, 10.6 percent), leisure & hospitality (+800, 5.6 percent) and financial services (+700, 9.6 percent).
- Manufacturing improved to +600 (4.5 percent), despite the loss of 300 in transportation equipment over the year.
- Every major sector was once again up over the year. Information services edged back into the black (+100, 3.3 percent), along with other services (+100, 1.8 percent). Government (+600, 2.6 percent) was up, all at the local level.

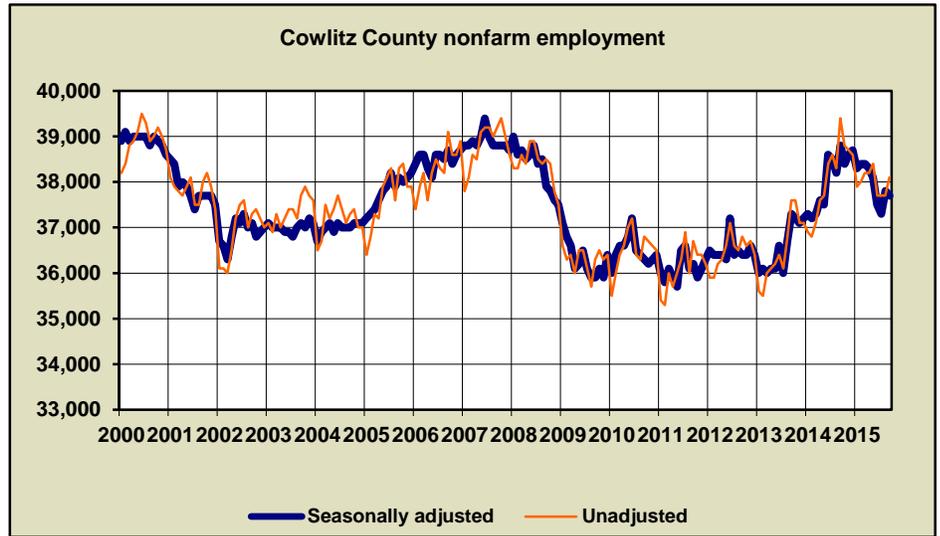
The unemployment rate was estimated at 5.7 percent in September, more than a point below the 7.0 percent recorded a year earlier. This was the lowest rate since November 2007. Initial unemployment claims were unchanged over the month, while continued claims dipped to their lowest level on record (going back to 2006).

Cowlitz County

According to the latest estimates prepared by the federal government, Cowlitz County nonfarm employment rose by 400 jobs in September to a total of 38,100 jobs. The increase was due entirely to the start of the new school year. Both state and local government added 200 in educational services. Employment in other industries was little changed. On a seasonally-adjusted basis, county employment fell by 100 jobs.

Over the past twelve months, employment has declined by 1,300 jobs. The losses include 600 in construction, 200 in manufacturing, and 800 in the non-published all other services. Leisure & hospitality has gained 200 jobs, and trade, transportation & utilities was up 100. These preliminary estimates will be revised next month.

The county unemployment rate was estimated at 7.0 percent, more than half a point lower than last September's 7.6 percent. Around 3,000 county residents were jobless and seeking work. The number of initial unemployment claims rose sharply, while continued claims continued a slight upward trend, but remained at a low level by historical standards.



Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County nonfarm employment was little changed in September at 760 jobs—10 more than in August, and 10 more than a year ago.

Unemployment was estimated at 7.4 percent, significantly below the 8.6 percent September 2014. About 100 county residents were jobless and actively seeking work, versus 120 a year ago. Both initial and continued unemployment claims trended upward during the month, but remained at low levels.

