



November Jobs Report

By Stephen Levy

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The California economy continues to recover. The state added 74,400 jobs over the past two months (44,300 in November) and the unemployment rate declined from 8.9 percent to 8.5 percent. State Employment Development Department surveys report a gain of 226,200 jobs (+1.6 percent) over the past 12 months, but we know from the complete payroll data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on Wednesday that the actual gains were at least 100,000 higher.

The Southern California region led the state in job gains in November. Los Angeles County accounted for almost half of the statewide gains, and combined with Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties the region accounted for the majority of state job gains in the past two months. As a result, unemployment rates in all Southern California counties are below 10 percent.

The industry pattern of job growth was mixed in November. On the plus side were gains of more than 5,000 jobs each in construction and manufacturing. On the other hand a large portion of November job growth in the state was in retail trade.

The inland areas did better in November and over the past year. Gains near or above the state average were seen in the large inland metro areas including Fresno, Kern, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties and the Sacramento region. Still, it is true that the largest sustained growth is in the coastal areas led by tech centers in Silicon Valley, San Francisco, and Orange County.

The future is looking brighter, particularly in Southern California, which was hard hit by the recession and housing crash. Construction is up, port activity is growing again, and tech centers are emerging in the region. No longer is the Bay Area the only center of job growth in California.