

The Dallas Morning News

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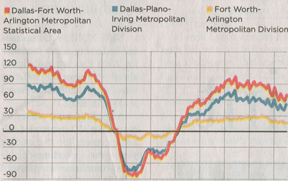
Section D

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D-FW job gains and losses

The North Texas economy suffered during the tech bust earlier this decade but has been steadily adding jobs in recent years. Year-over-year change in total non-farm employment for the Dallas-Fort Worth area:



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

KYLE ALCOTT/Staff Artist

ECONOMY

No. 1 in job growth

But outlook for D-FW unclear, says Labor Department economist

By BRENDAN M. CASE
Staff Writer
bcase@dallasnews.com

Dallas-Fort Worth added the most jobs of any U.S. metropolitan area during the 12 months ending in July, according to preliminary data released Wednesday by the U.S.

Department of Labor.

Another Texas city, Houston, came in second. Dallas also edged out Houston in percentage growth.

"Houston had actually led Dallas since August 2005 through June of this year," said Cheryl Abbot, a Labor Department economist in Dallas. "Now they're both growing at about the same rate."

Meanwhile, the nation as a whole lost 174,000 jobs, not

seasonally adjusted, during the 12-month period. With the national economy slogging through an increasingly painful downturn, the outlook for the local job market over the next 12 months appears hazy.

"There's definitely a slowdown," Ms. Abbot said. "Job growth has slowed, and the [area's] unemployment rate increased a little bit."

Between July 2007 and July 2008, the Dallas-Fort Worth

area added 68,000 nonfarm jobs, growing 2.3 percent — the highest growth rate among the nation's 12 largest metropolitan areas.

Five of the 12 metro areas suffered job losses during that time.

Even looking at the 37 other U.S. metro areas with total nonfarm employment over 750,000 in 2007, only one

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grew more quickly than Dallas-Fort Worth — Charlotte, N.C., which saw a 3 percent growth rate.

After Dallas, the next best growth rates were in Houston, San Antonio and Seattle, Wash., which all posted growth of 2.2 percent during July 2007 and last month.

Houston trailed D-FW by more than 10,000 new jobs, adding 57,100 during the 12 months. Seattle grew by 38,900 jobs and Washington, D.C., created 35,400.

The job growth came against a backdrop of a 0.1 percent drop in U.S. employment, without adjusting for seasonal factors. (While the Labor Department adjusts national employment numbers for seasonal factors, it does not do the same for the metropolitan numbers.)

From a historical perspective, the Dallas-Fort Worth area's job gains still fall below those of the mid- and late 1990s.

Back then, the area often generated more than 100,000 jobs in a 12-month period, and sometimes added more than 120,000 — or almost double the gains in the recent 12-month period. The annual job growth rate topped 5 percent for a time.

Since the 2001 recession, the area's largest employment increase during a 12-month period came between May 2005 and May 2006, when it added 102,500 jobs.

The Dallas side of the area job market outweighed the Fort Worth side in the new numbers. Between July 2007 and July 2008, the Dallas region accounted for 71 percent of the area's workforce and generated 76 percent of the new jobs, ac-

ording to the Labor Department.

The Fort Worth side, with 29 percent of the workforce, added 24 percent of the new jobs.

Overall, the largest job gains in sheer numbers came in education and health services; government; and natural resources, mining and construction.

Economists say Texas is apt to continue outperforming the nation, thanks to strong exports, the state's oil and gas activity and, perhaps most important, a relatively mild housing downturn.

But that doesn't mean the state will be booming.

"Over the past year or so, a series of storms has broken out over the U.S. economy," researchers Laila Assanie and Raghav Virmani wrote in another study appearing Wednesday, this one in *Southwest Economy*, a publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

"Texas entered 2008 with its economy on the wane, largely because of the drags from the nation's slowing business activity," they wrote. "During the first half of the year, more signs of weakness have emerged in Texas and the U.S., but the state is still doing better than the nation."

Jobs in the U.S.

Change in total employment from July 2007 to July 2008:

City/area	Change
United States	-0.1%
Dallas-Fort Worth	2.3%
Houston	2.2%
Washington	1.2%
Boston	0.8%
New York	0.3%
Philadelphia	0.1%
Chicago	0%
Atlanta	-0.2%
Miami	-0.5%
San Francisco	-0.6%
Los Angeles	-0.8%
Detroit	-1.9%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

KYLE ALCOTT/Staff Artist