

September 10, 2008

Where the jobs are and aren't

Texas made the national news today when **thousands of Texans** in **Brazoria County** were urged to evacuate, and officials contemplated ordering a mandatory evacuation of one million people in a second county, as **Hurricane Ike** gathered strength in the Gulf of Mexico on its way toward the state. If the mandatory exodus is ordered, this would be the first large-scale evacuation in South Texas history.

Texas also made today's news when three of its major cities—Houston, Austin, and Dallas-Fort Worth—were named in a **BizJournal article** as the top three hot job markets in the U.S.

The U.S. has lost 394,000 private-sector jobs since mid-2007—7,570 each week—and the unemployment rate has risen a full point from 4.7 percent in mid 2007 to the current 5.7 percent. During this time, the three Texas markets have added 107,200 private sector jobs, keeping their unemployment rates below 5 percent.

Why are these cities hot job markets? What are the other hot cities? And in which cities are you least likely to find a job?

According to BizJournal, Texas' impressive performance, ironically enough, is partially the result of higher energy costs, the same factor that has bedeviled much of the rest of the nation.

"The state's natural resources and mining industry, helped by higher oil prices, posted an annual employment growth rate of 6.4 percent from June 2007 to June 2008 and ranked first among Texas industries in employment-growth rate," said a **midyear report from the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University**.

The Shell Oil corporate Web site lists **230 job openings**, many of which are in Houston.

Marathon Oil's Web site lists 100 jobs for "experienced professionals."

What about manufacturing jobs in Texas? In a June article about Texas manufacturing, Reuters cited a **Manufacturers' News report**, which stated that Texas gained 4,579 industrial jobs from April 2007 to April 2008, a smaller increase than posted by the state in previous years, but still ahead of the losses suffered by much of the U.S. over the year.

"Manufacturing output is higher than ever, but employment is stagnant," said Tom Dubin, president of Manufacturers' News. "So much of Texas' principal industries such as metal fabricating and electronics production, has become automated and made more efficient through technology that fewer employees are needed to produce these products."

Manufacturers' News reported that Texas is home to 24,273 manufacturers that employ 1,225,585 workers, making it 2nd in the nation for the number of manufacturing jobs and plants, just behind California. The state accounts for 62 percent of the Southwest's manufacturing jobs and 55 percent of the region's manufacturers.

Following Houston, Austin, and Dallas-Fort Worth, the remaining hottest job markets in the top 10 are Raleigh, N.C., Seattle, San Antonio, Charlotte, N.C., Oklahoma City, Durham, N.C., and Salt Lake City—not a rust belt city in the lot. However, plenty can be found in the cities with the coldest job markets.

The No. 10 coldest job market is Youngstown, Ohio, where 2,200 jobs slipped away between the summers of 2005 and 2006, followed by 2,300 in 2006 through 2007, and 900 in the most recent year. Thinking positively, the decline has slowed.

In the countdown to No. 1 are Los Angeles (9), where the unemployment rate is 6.6 percent; Cleveland (8), which has lost 11,200 jobs in the past two years and has an unemployment rate (7.7 percent) among the nation's five worst; Oxnard-Thousand Oaks, Calif. (7); Dayton, Ohio (6); Lansing, Mich. (5); Toledo, Ohio (4); Providence, R.I. (3), where unemployment has skyrocketed from 4.9 percent a year ago to 7.3 percent now; and Bradenton-Sarasota, Fla. (2).

The No. 1 coldest job market in the U.S. is—you guessed it—Detroit. The city's unemployment rate now stands at 9.7

percent.

If you're thinking of heading to Texas to find work, wait a few days. Despite the thriving energy companies and the relatively rosy employment picture in Texas, Texans aren't resting easy today as they watch and prepare for Ike to make landfall later this week. This notice was posted on Exxon Mobile's career Web site:

Due to the uncertainty of Hurricane Ike, the pre-employment test for Saturday, September 13, 2008, in Robstown, TX (Corpus Christi area) has been postponed to Saturday, October 25, 2008. Additional information is being mailed to individuals who are registered for the test.

Posted At : 2:19 PM. | Posted By : Vicki Bell