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Nevada's Unemployment Rate Rose to 5.4 Percent in November

Nevada's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose two-tenths of a percentage point to 5.4 percent in November, the highest since May 2003, said Bill Anderson, chief economist with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation. Meanwhile, the national unemployment rate remained at 4.7 percent.

The state's three metropolitan areas saw increases in their unemployment rates, while the Elko micropolitan area (Elko and Eureka counties) reported a low 3.5 percent unemployment rate in November.

"This was a reflection of the strength of the state's mining industry," Anderson said. "With gaming dominating the economy, other important industries like mining are often forgotten. However, in tough times, such industries are mainstays that support our economic standing."

Anderson said construction continued to lose jobs in November, down 2,500 jobs from October to November. The construction industry has lost an estimated 7,300 jobs in the past 12 months, resulting from the continuing housing slump.

Overall, Nevada's economy added 3,800 jobs in November, but the retail trade sector accounted for the entire net job gain, Anderson said. The usual seasonal retail hiring was supplemented by the openings of Town Square in Clark County and Cabela's in Reno.

"Heading into the holiday shopping season, there were concerns both in Nevada and nationally over the willingness of consumers to spend money," Anderson said. "With the wealth effect of the housing boom a distant memory, would consumers head to the stores with their usual gusto? Recent trends are not encouraging."

In Nevada, taxable sales were reported below year-ago levels in each month from April through September (the latest data available), he said. Sales were down 3.3 percent

statewide in the third quarter compared to the same quarter of 2006. Revenue reports from Nevada's gaming industry provide somewhat better news than the taxable sales figures, but there is considerable disparity from market to market, Anderson said.

"Nevada's economic slowdown is expected to last at least through the first half of the year," Anderson said. "Nevada is still experiencing modest job growth, but nothing like we are used to. We have a number of casinos coming online in 2009, but the housing market still holds the key. There is no indication we can expect it to turn around soon."



DETR is comprised of the Employment Security Division, Equal Rights Commission, Rehabilitation Division, the Information Development and Processing Division and the Research and Analysis Bureau.

DETR works in partnership with the Nevada JobConnect System to connect businesses and workers.