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## Employment in the Columbia Gorge: March 2020

### Initial Unemployment Claims Detail COVID-19 Impacts

During the week of April 5 to April 11, the Oregon Employment Department received 53,800 initial claims for unemployment insurance benefits. That's in addition to a revised total of 243,000 initial claims filed during the prior three weeks.

During the week of March 29 to April 4, the Employment Department paid \$23 million in benefits to Oregonians. During the week of April 5 to April 11, that more than quadrupled to \$97 million in benefits paid. More benefits measures are on the agency's COVID-19 page.

[https://govstatus.egov.com/ORUnemployment\\_COVID19](https://govstatus.egov.com/ORUnemployment_COVID19)

### Oregon Unemployment Insurance Weekly Initial Claims by Sector

Sector	Week Beginning		Change
	March 8	March 15	
<b>Natural Resources and Mining</b>	156	225	69
<b>Construction</b>	858	1,246	388
<b>Manufacturing</b>	428	1,313	885
<b>Trade, Transportation, and Utilities</b>	614	2,312	1,698
Retail Trade	299	1,359	1,060
Wholesale Trade	108	227	119
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	207	726	519
<b>Information</b>	112	319	207
<b>Financial Activities</b>	155	276	121
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	539	1,296	757
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	396	2,695	2,299
Educational Services	78	561	483
Health Care and Social Assistance	318	2,134	1,816
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	599	10,654	10,055
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	78	654	576
Accommodation and Food Services	521	10,000	9,479
<b>Other Services</b>	144	915	771
<b>Unclassified</b>	21	49	28

Source: Oregon Employment Department

Industry details are not available for all processed claims.

The Employment Department has detailed information for 47,700 of the initial claims processed during the week starting April 5. The leisure and hospitality sector, which includes hotels and restaurants, continued to see the greatest number of initial claims for unemployment benefits (12,300). This reflects ongoing impacts of public health and safety measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 15, there have been about 52,900 initial claims filed in the leisure and hospitality sector. Health care and social assistance (25,800) and retail trade (19,700) are other sectors with large totals of initial weekly claims in the past four weeks, but every sector has seen additional claims activity.

Here in the Columbia Gorge, the number of initial unemployment claims processed during the week of April 5 dialed back somewhat to about 530, a drop of around 150 compared with the week of March 29. Over the four-week period from March 21 to April 11, the Columbia Gorge amassed close to 2,000 initial claims. However, the actual number of claims filed by Columbia Gorge residents was likely significantly higher than the 2,000 claims processed.

Accommodation and food services represented 27 percent of the region's initial claims, followed by health care with one out of five. Retail trade (11%); manufacturing (8%); construction (6%); other services (5%); and arts, entertainment, and recreation (4%) together represented one out of three initial claims.

In March, prior to the economic effects of COVID-19, Hood River County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage point to 2.8 percent. Hood River County's rate ranked second in Oregon (out of 36 counties), trailing Benton County (2.6%) but tied with Washington County. Over the year, Hood River County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped by 0.9 percentage point.

Hood River County's nonfarm employment fell by 110 jobs in March to total 11,870. Private industry dropped to 10,470 jobs, a loss of 80, while government cut 30, falling to 1,400. Leisure and hospitality pulled back in February, cutting 90 jobs and falling to 2,530.

Hood River County's private industry employment fell by 120 jobs over the year ending in March, a loss of 1.1 percent. Professional and business services cut 40 jobs, and accommodation and food services also shed 40. Government increased its total by 20 jobs, with local government rising by 10 and federal government chipping in 10.

Wasco County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage point in March to 3.8 percent, ranking 16<sup>th</sup> among Oregon counties, trailing Wheeler's 3.7 percent. Wasco County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in March 2019, at 4.7 percent.

Wasco County gained 100 nonfarm jobs in March, rising to 10,040. Private industry rose by 90 jobs to reach 8,070 and government rose by 10 to 1,970.

Over the year ending in March, Wasco County's private industry employment fell by 60 jobs (-0.7%). Information produced private industry's largest gain, rising by 60 jobs to total 230. Manufacturing cut

70 jobs, falling to 560, a loss of 11.1 percent. Professional and business services lost 60 jobs, cutting its total to 520. In the public sector, local government rose by 60 jobs to reach 1,450.

Gilliam County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage point in March to 4.1 percent, ranking 20<sup>th</sup> out of 36 Oregon counties, tied with Sherman and Umatilla. Gilliam County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in March 2019, at 4.7 percent. Gilliam County's nonfarm employment rose to 825 jobs in March, an increase of five jobs. Over the year, Gilliam County's private industry total fell by 130 jobs, a loss of 18.3 percent, to total 580. Gilliam County's over-the-year loss reflected the completion of a windfarm construction project. Government rose by five jobs over the year to total 245 jobs.

Sherman County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage point in March to 4.1 percent to rank 20<sup>th</sup>. Last year, Sherman County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ranked sixth in Oregon at 3.9 percent. Sherman County's nonfarm employment rose by 30 jobs in March to 935. Private industry rose by five jobs to reach 580, while government reached 355, an increase of 25. Over the year ending in March, private industry rose by 50 jobs (+9.4%) and government managed an increase of 15.

Wheeler County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 0.3 percentage point in March to 3.7 percent, ranking 13<sup>th</sup>, tied with Morrow. Wheeler County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ranked as Oregon's 11<sup>th</sup> lowest in March 2019, at 4.6 percent. Nonfarm employment totaled 315 jobs in March, with private industry rising by five and government holding steady. Over the year ending in March, private industry rose by 10 jobs to 175 and government chipped in five to reach 140.

### Next Press Releases

The Oregon Employment Department plans to release the April 2020 county and metropolitan area unemployment rates on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the statewide unemployment rate and employment survey data for April on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The Oregon Employment Department and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) work cooperatively to develop and publish monthly payroll employment and labor force data for Oregon's metropolitan areas and counties. The estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. The estimates of unemployment are based on a survey of households and other sources.

The Oregon Employment Department payroll employment estimates are revised quarterly using information from unemployment insurance tax records. All department publications use data from this *official Oregon series* unless noted.

The department also makes the BLS-produced nonfarm payroll employment series for metropolitan areas available. These are revised annually by BLS.

The pdf version of the news release, including tables and graphs, can be found at [www.qualityinfo.org/press-release/](http://www.qualityinfo.org/press-release/). To obtain the data in other formats such as in Excel, visit [www.QualityInfo.org](http://www.QualityInfo.org), select *Economic Data*, and choose *LAUS* or *CES*. To request the press release as a Word document, contact the person shown at the top of this press release.

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To file an Unemployment Insurance claim, visit our online claims system or call our contact centers, where Employment Department staff are ready to help by phone, at 1-877-FILE-4-UI (1-877-345-3484). For coronavirus questions related to employer and job seeker programs and services, visit [Govstatus.egov.com/ORUnemployment\\_COVID19](http://Govstatus.egov.com/ORUnemployment_COVID19). For help finding jobs and training resources, go to: [www.WorkSourceOregon.org](http://www.WorkSourceOregon.org)

Equal Opportunity program — auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact: (503) 947-1794. For the deaf and hard of hearing population, call 711 Telecommunications Relay Services.

### Gilliam County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	February 2020	March 2019
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	899	905	981	-6	-82
Unemployed	44	52	41	-8	3
Unemployment rate	4.9%	5.7%	4.2%	-0.8	0.7
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.1%	4.0%	4.7%	0.1	-0.6
Employed	855	853	940	2	-85
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	825	820	950	5	-125
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	830	825	955	5	-125
Total private	580	575	710	5	-130
Trade, transportation, and utilities	130	130	135	0	-5
Professional and business services	255	250	230	5	25
Education and health services	65	65	60	0	5
Leisure and hospitality	40	40	35	0	5
Government	245	245	240	0	5
Federal government	10	10	10	0	0
State government	10	10	10	0	0
Local government	225	225	220	0	5

The most recent month is preliminary, the prior month is revised. Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence.  
Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants.  
Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.

## Hood River County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	February 2020	March 2019
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	13,545	13,366	13,724	179	-179
Unemployed	419	408	587	11	-168
Unemployment rate	3.1%	3.1%	4.3%	0.0	-1.2
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	2.8%	2.9%	3.7%	-0.1	-0.9
Employed	13,126	12,958	13,137	168	-11
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	11,870	11,980	11,970	-110	-100
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	11,940	12,050	12,050	-110	-110
Total private	10,470	10,550	10,590	-80	-120
Mining, logging, and construction	460	450	460	10	0
Manufacturing	1,770	1,770	1,770	0	0
Trade, transportation, and utilities	2,000	2,000	2,010	0	-10
Wholesale trade	440	460	470	-20	-30
Retail trade	1,370	1,360	1,340	10	30
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	190	180	200	10	-10
Information	140	140	150	0	-10
Financial activities	340	330	350	10	-10
Professional and business services	1,050	1,050	1,090	0	-40
Education and health services	1,760	1,760	1,780	0	-20
Leisure and hospitality	2,530	2,620	2,570	-90	-40
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	970	1,090	1,050	-120	-80
Accommodation and food services	1,560	1,530	1,520	30	40
Accommodation	410	410	420	0	-10
Food services and drinking places	1,150	1,120	1,100	30	50
Other services	420	430	410	-10	10
Government	1,400	1,430	1,380	-30	20
Federal government	110	100	100	10	10
State government	120	120	120	0	0
Local government	1,170	1,210	1,160	-40	10
Local education	680	700	660	-20	20
Local government excluding educational services	490	510	500	-20	-10

The most recent month is preliminary, the prior month is revised. Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence.

Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants.

Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.

## Sherman County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	February 2020	March 2019
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	955	930	898	25	57
Unemployed	49	46	38	3	11
Unemployment rate	5.1%	4.9%	4.2%	0.2	0.9
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.1%	4.0%	3.9%	0.1	0.2
Employed	906	884	860	22	46
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	935	905	870	30	65
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	940	945	875	-5	65
Total private	580	575	530	5	50
Trade, transportation, and utilities	250	250	215	0	35
Retail trade	95	90	80	5	15
Leisure and hospitality	75	70	105	5	-30
Government	355	330	340	25	15
Federal government	125	125	125	0	0
State government	40	40	40	0	0
Local government	190	165	175	25	15

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Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence. Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants. Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.

## Wasco County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	February 2020	March 2019
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	12,281	12,233	12,396	48	-115
Unemployed	584	583	691	1	-107
Unemployment rate	4.8%	4.8%	5.6%	0.0	-0.8
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	3.8%	3.9%	4.7%	-0.1	-0.9
Employed	11,697	11,650	11,705	47	-8
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	10,040	9,940	10,050	100	-10
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	10,240	10,210	10,250	30	-10
Total private	8,070	7,980	8,130	90	-60
Mining, logging, and construction	400	390	380	10	20
Mining and logging	60	60	70	0	-10
Construction	340	330	310	10	30
Manufacturing	560	550	630	10	-70
Trade, transportation, and utilities	2,050	2,020	2,040	30	10
Wholesale trade	170	160	160	10	10
Retail trade	1,640	1,630	1,650	10	-10
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	240	230	230	10	10
Information	230	210	170	20	60
Financial activities	340	340	340	0	0
Professional and business services	520	530	580	-10	-60
Education and health services	2,350	2,360	2,360	-10	-10
Ambulatory health care services	450	450	440	0	10
Nursing and residential care facilities	560	560	580	0	-20
Leisure and hospitality	1,260	1,230	1,250	30	10
Accommodation and food services	1,210	1,180	1,160	30	50
Other services	360	350	380	10	-20
Government	1,970	1,960	1,920	10	50
Federal government	280	280	280	0	0
State government	240	240	250	0	-10
Local government	1,450	1,440	1,390	10	60
Indian tribal	10	10	10	0	0
Local education	760	750	720	10	40
Local government excluding education and tribal	680	680	660	0	20

The most recent month is preliminary, the prior month is revised. Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence. Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants. Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.

## Wheeler County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	February 2020	March 2019
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	747	741	729	6	18
Unemployed	25	27	38	-2	-13
Unemployment rate	3.3%	3.6%	5.2%	-0.3	-1.9
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	3.7%	4.0%	4.6%	-0.3	-0.9
Employed	722	714	691	8	31
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	315	310	300	5	15
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	310	315	295	-5	15
Total private	175	170	165	5	10
Trade, transportation, and utilities	40	35	40	5	0
Leisure and hospitality	20	20	25	0	-5
Government	140	140	135	0	5
Federal government	5	5	10	0	-5
State government	0	0	0	0	0
Local government	135	135	125	0	10

The most recent month is preliminary, the prior month is revised. Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence. Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants. Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.