

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 19, 2019

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Tony Wendel, Workforce Analyst  
(541) 667-7027  
Tony.A.Wendel@Oregon.gov

## **Employment in Eastern Oregon: October 2019**

### **Union County drops to Record Low Unemployment Rate of 5.0 Percent**

In October, Union County dropped to a record low unemployment rate of 5.0 percent, in comparable records dating back to 1990. Its unemployment rate had been flirting with this record low by posting 5.1 percent rates during July, August, and September of this year and in several months during the prior two years. But, until October, the rate had never dropped to 5.0 percent. Perhaps the county's rate will drop into the 4-percent range; stay abreast of the local press releases in upcoming months to find out. The other five counties in Eastern Oregon experienced small changes in their unemployment rates between September and October, with most counties seeing near-record low rates for their counties' histories.

Meanwhile, seasonally adjusted total nonfarm payroll employment was up slightly in five counties, and down by 130 in Malheur County. Not to worry though, as Malheur County's employment has been choppy from month to month during the second half of the year. And, since October 2018, Malheur County's nonfarm employment is up by 40 jobs, reaching 11,800 in October of this year.

Baker County's nonfarm payroll employment dropped by 60 since October 2018. The private sector cut 60 jobs while the public sector was flat over the year. Retail trade cut the most, as it shed 40 jobs since October of last year. Retail employment has been trending downward statewide over the past two years. In Baker County, retail trade averaged 800 jobs in 2017 and 810 in 2018, so it has been essentially unchanged during those years following substantial gains in the prior two years. So far in 2019, retail trade has been consistent with the same months in 2018; however, the October preliminary figure didn't ramp up seasonally like was seen the prior year. Perhaps the holiday hiring will show up with the November numbers to be released in five weeks. An industry that has been growing nationally is transportation, warehousing and utilities—this industry employed 240 in October for Baker County, which was flat over the year. Construction employment was flat at 290 jobs in October, and down 20 jobs over the year. Construction grew rapidly in 2016 through 2018, but has essentially leveled off during much of this year. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged in October at 5.1 percent, which was essentially unchanged since at least May. Baker County's unemployment rate has

been historically low for three years, but is somewhat higher than the statewide October unemployment rate of 4.1 percent and the national rate of 3.7 percent.

Grant County's nonfarm payroll employment increased by 50 over the year. The private sector gained only 10 jobs while the public sector gained 40. The only major industry with an over-the-year job change of more than 10 was local government, which added 40 jobs since October 2018. Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm payroll employment, a comprehensive gauge of local economic activity, stood at 2,400 jobs in October. This measure of jobs bottomed at close to 2,200 in certain months of 2012 and 2013 and has since risen moderately over the past five years. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged in October at 7.0 percent. The county's unemployment rate has been fluctuating near its historic lows in recent years, ranging from 6.4 percent in October 2017 to 8.0 percent early this year.

Harney County's nonfarm payroll employment increased by 40 jobs over the year. The private sector added 60 jobs while the public sector dipped by 20. Most industries were within plus or minus 10 jobs over the year. The exceptions were the following three industries which each added 20 jobs since October 2018: trade, transportation, and utilities; professional and business services; and leisure and hospitality. For overall nonfarm payroll employment, the macroeconomic trend is still one of moderate expansion over the past six years, as seasonally adjusted payrolls grew to 2,360 in October and continued to march higher since bottoming at 2,060 jobs in November 2013. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dipped 0.2 percentage point over the month to 5.5 percent. This was near the county's record low—in comparable figures dating back nearly 30 years—of 5.4 percent reached in December 2016.

Malheur County's nonfarm payroll employment increased by 40 over the year. The private sector added 10 jobs while the public sector added 30. Manufacturing employment is up 100 jobs since October 2018, when there was a short-term drop in employment. At 1,070 jobs in October, manufacturing is close to its average employment of 1,060 during 2017 and 2018. Over the past three years, Malheur County hasn't seen much overall growth in nonfarm payroll employment. On a seasonally adjusted basis, nonfarm jobs have generally stayed within a range of 11,750 to 12,000. This followed a rapid increase in 2015 and 2016. Transportation, warehousing, and utilities bounced up by 40 jobs between September and October, putting the industry at 410 jobs. This was close to its annual average headcount for each year dating back to 2011. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged over the month at 4.5 percent; this was very close to Oregon's statewide rate of 4.1 percent. Malheur County's unemployment rate has closely mirrored the statewide rate over the past 10 years.

Union County's total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 120 over the year. The private sector gained 120 jobs while the public sector was flat. Gains were widespread in the private sector, with six industries each adding between 20 and 40 jobs. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged down to 5.0 percent in October from 5.1 percent in September. The October rate was Union County's lowest unemployment rate on records dating back to 1990.

Wallowa County's nonfarm payroll employment slipped by 30 jobs from October 2018 to October 2019. The private sector was flat while the public sector dipped by 30. Over the month, total nonfarm employment dropped by 90. Leisure and hospitality shed 60 jobs. The industry is highly seasonal in the county, typically ranging from a high of about 400 jobs in the summer months, to a low of less than 200 in the first three months of the year. Employment has been close to the same monthly levels this year as last year. In October, local government picked up 30, primarily in education. This industry's seasonal pattern is counter to leisure and hospitality, with employment dropping during the school summer break. Local government employment was 500 jobs in October, about the same as the October headcount over most years dating back to 2002. Wallowa County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ticked down 0.1 percentage point for the month to 6.5 percent.

**Next Press Releases**

The Oregon Employment Department plans to release the November county and metropolitan area unemployment rates on Tuesday, December 24th and the statewide unemployment rate and employment survey data for November on Tuesday, December 17th.

## Baker County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	September 2019	October 2018
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	7,004	6,938	7,077	66	-73
Unemployed	292	295	327	-3	-35
Unemployment rate	4.2%	4.3%	4.6%	-0.1	-0.4
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.1%	5.1%	5.4%	0.0	-0.3
Employed	6,712	6,643	6,750	69	-38
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	5,570	5,570	5,630	0	-60
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5,460	5,440	5,520	20	-60
Total private	4,380	4,410	4,440	-30	-60
Mining, logging, and construction	330	330	350	0	-20
Mining and logging	40	40	40	0	0
Construction	290	290	310	0	-20
Manufacturing	560	570	570	-10	-10
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,120	1,120	1,170	0	-50
Wholesale trade	70	70	80	0	-10
Retail trade	810	810	850	0	-40
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	240	240	240	0	0
Information	50	50	50	0	0
Financial activities	170	170	170	0	0
Professional and business services	330	320	300	10	30
Education and health services	980	980	970	0	10
Leisure and hospitality	650	680	640	-30	10
Other services	190	190	220	0	-30
Government	1,190	1,160	1,190	30	0
Federal government	200	220	220	-20	-20
State government	200	200	200	0	0
Local government	790	740	770	50	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.

## Grant County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	September 2019	October 2018
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	3,164	3,241	3,108	-77	56
Unemployed	150	146	157	4	-7
Unemployment rate	4.7%	4.5%	5.1%	0.2	-0.4
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>7.0%</i>	<i>7.0%</i>	<i>7.4%</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>-0.4</i>
Employed	3,014	3,095	2,951	-81	63
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	2,490	2,510	2,440	-20	50
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>2,400</i>	<i>2,380</i>	<i>2,350</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>50</i>
Total private	1,330	1,340	1,320	-10	10
Mining, logging, and construction	210	200	210	10	0
Mining and logging	130	130	130	0	0
Construction	80	70	80	10	0
Manufacturing	110	110	120	0	-10
Trade, transportation, and utilities	300	300	300	0	0
Wholesale trade	30	30	20	0	10
Retail trade	220	220	230	0	-10
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	50	50	50	0	0
Information	40	40	50	0	-10
Financial activities	70	60	60	10	10
Professional and business services	110	110	100	0	10
Education and health services	200	200	190	0	10
Leisure and hospitality	230	250	230	-20	0
Other services	60	70	60	-10	0
Government	1,160	1,170	1,120	-10	40
Federal government	320	350	310	-30	10
State government	140	150	150	-10	-10
Local government	700	670	660	30	40

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.

## Harney County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	September 2019	October 2018
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	3,428	3,503	3,423	-75	5
Unemployed	130	146	160	-16	-30
Unemployment rate	3.8%	4.2%	4.7%	-0.4	-0.9
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.5%	5.7%	5.9%	-0.2	-0.4
Employed	3,298	3,357	3,263	-59	35
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	2,410	2,450	2,370	-40	40
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	2,360	2,350	2,320	10	40
Total private	1,370	1,390	1,310	-20	60
Goods-producing	110	110	130	0	-20
Trade, transportation, and utilities	450	450	430	0	20
Wholesale trade	60	60	50	0	10
Retail trade	340	340	330	0	10
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	50	50	50	0	0
Information	10	10	10	0	0
Financial activities	70	70	70	0	0
Professional and business services	110	120	90	-10	20
Education and health services	230	230	220	0	10
Leisure and hospitality	320	330	300	-10	20
Other services	70	70	60	0	10
Government	1,040	1,060	1,060	-20	-20
Federal government	250	280	260	-30	-10
State government	100	100	100	0	0
Local government	690	680	700	10	-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.

## Malheur County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	September 2019	October 2018
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	12,504	12,473	12,761	31	-257
Unemployed	415	482	508	-67	-93
Unemployment rate	3.3%	3.9%	4.0%	-0.6	-0.7
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.5%	4.5%	4.8%	0.0	-0.3
Employed	12,089	11,991	12,253	98	-164
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	12,100	11,990	12,060	110	40
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	11,800	11,930	11,760	-130	40
Total private	8,620	8,600	8,610	20	10
Mining, logging, and construction	410	430	450	-20	-40
Manufacturing	1,070	1,050	970	20	100
Trade, transportation, and utilities	2,870	2,830	2,980	40	-110
Wholesale trade	540	520	590	20	-50
Retail trade	1,920	1,940	1,900	-20	20
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	410	370	490	40	-80
Information	200	200	190	0	10
Financial activities	310	310	320	0	-10
Professional and business services	480	460	460	20	20
Education and health services	1,700	1,720	1,710	-20	-10
Leisure and hospitality	1,220	1,240	1,200	-20	20
Other services	360	360	330	0	30
Government	3,480	3,390	3,450	90	30
Federal government	220	240	210	-20	10
State government	1,180	1,190	1,170	-10	10
Local government	2,080	1,960	2,070	120	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.

## Union County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	September 2019	October 2018
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	11,982	11,864	11,998	118	-16
Unemployed	474	518	558	-44	-84
Unemployment rate	4.0%	4.4%	4.7%	-0.4	-0.7
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.0%	5.1%	5.5%	-0.1	-0.5
Employed	11,508	11,346	11,440	162	68
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	10,690	10,450	10,570	240	120
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	10,520	10,510	10,400	10	120
Total private	8,150	8,170	8,030	-20	120
Mining, logging, and construction	570	580	550	-10	20
Mining and logging	30	30	40	0	-10
Construction	540	550	510	-10	30
Manufacturing	1,300	1,310	1,300	-10	0
Trade, transportation, and utilities	2,220	2,190	2,180	30	40
Wholesale trade	260	260	240	0	20
Retail trade	1,490	1,460	1,460	30	30
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	470	470	480	0	-10
Information	90	100	110	-10	-20
Financial activities	300	300	330	0	-30
Professional and business services	550	570	510	-20	40
Education and health services	1,760	1,750	1,720	10	40
Leisure and hospitality	1,070	1,080	1,040	-10	30
Other services	290	290	290	0	0
Government	2,540	2,280	2,540	260	0
Federal government	250	290	270	-40	-20
State government	330	340	360	-10	-30
Local government	1,960	1,650	1,910	310	50

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.



## Wallowa County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	October 2019	September 2019	October 2018	September 2019	October 2018
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	3,343	3,470	3,387	-127	-44
Unemployed	145	143	154	2	-9
Unemployment rate	4.3%	4.1%	4.5%	0.2	-0.2
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	6.5%	6.6%	6.2%	-0.1	0.3
Employed	3,198	3,327	3,233	-129	-35
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	2,660	2,750	2,690	-90	-30
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	2,580	2,540	2,610	40	-30
Total private	1,980	2,070	1,980	-90	0
Mining, logging, and construction	240	250	260	-10	-20
Mining and logging	70	70	90	0	-20
Construction	170	180	170	-10	0
Manufacturing	140	150	160	-10	-20
Trade, transportation, and utilities	480	490	480	-10	0
Wholesale and retail trade	380	390	370	-10	10
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	100	100	110	0	-10
Information	20	20	20	0	0
Financial activities	190	190	160	0	30
Professional and business services	120	120	130	0	-10
Education and health services	400	400	390	0	10
Leisure and hospitality	300	360	280	-60	20
Other services	90	90	100	0	-10
Government	680	680	710	0	-30
Federal government	90	110	100	-20	-10
State government	90	100	90	-10	0
Local government	500	470	520	30	-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.

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.

You can subscribe to receive notification of new articles and publications from [www.QualityInfo.org](http://www.QualityInfo.org). To subscribe, go to [www.qualityinfo.org/p-sofrm](http://www.qualityinfo.org/p-sofrm), enter your email address and click Sign In. In the Publication section, click on the + sign next to a report type category and then click on the geography(s) you are interested in. Take some time to browse the other publications on the page and see if there are some you'd like to receive an email notification for. You can receive notifications on a daily, weekly, or monthly schedule – whichever is most convenient for you. You can change your selected preferences – or unsubscribe – at any time.

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.

For help finding jobs and training resources, visit one of the state's WorkSource Oregon Centers or 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.