This is the April 2020 edition of the Columbia Basin Economic Indicators containing employment and unemployment rate data for March 2020. Our March data was collected prior to major economic changes related to COVID-19. Monthly employment estimates and unemployment rates are calculated based on the week that includes the 12th of the month. Most local impacts from COVID-19 began during the week of March 15, one week after our reference period. However, we have decided to continue publishing these estimates on the regularly scheduled release dates in order to be consistent. This information will offer a valuable baseline for comparison and the April release on May 27th will more accurately capture the short-term effects of COVID-19.

Unemployment insurance claims data is being included in the economic indicators at this time in order to present data that does give an indication of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Oregon and its counties.

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Due to Oregon’s social distancing measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic, weekly unemployment insurance (UI) claims surged throughout the state in record numbers. During the week of April 12-18 the Oregon Employment Department received 36,700 initial claims for UI benefits. Since public health measures began the week starting March 15, Oregon has received about 333,700 claims for unemployment insurance.

The chart above shows the number of initial claims processed weekly for Umatilla and Morrow counties combined. The week of March 29-April 4 saw 832 claims processed, a 20 percent increase over the 693 claims processed during the week of March 22-28. There were 715 claims processed the week of April 5-11, a 14 percent decrease from the previous week, and 493 claims processed the week of April 12-18, a 31 percent decrease.

Since the week ending March 21, Umatilla County has seen 2,767 initial claims processed and Morrow County has had 216.

For more information, and the latest available data, please visit our website’s COVID-19 page..

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