

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 5, 2026

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Patrick O'Connor, Regional Economist

[Patrick.s.oconnor@employ.oregon.gov](mailto:Patrick.s.oconnor@employ.oregon.gov)

(503) 400-4374

## **Employment in the Columbia Gorge: March 2026**

**Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates remained steady in all five counties.**

Hood River County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.0% in March, essentially unchanged from its revised February rate of 4.1%. Over the year, the county's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up by 0.3 percentage point.

Hood River County's employment losses in March were less than normal; total nonfarm employment was down 10 during the month, when an employment decrease of 40 jobs would be expected. As a result, seasonally adjusted employment was up 30 between February and March. Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment is now down 4.2% from the level in February 2020, or 510 jobs below its pre-pandemic level.

Over the past year Hood River County's seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment has shed 80 jobs or -0.7%.

The private sector overall shed 30 jobs over the month. Leisure and hospitality employment dropped 90 in March. Manufacturing gained 20 jobs in March.

Public sector employment gained 20 jobs in March.

Wasco County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.0% as of March, down from 5.1% in February. Over the year, Wasco County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percentage points.

Wasco County's employment gains in March were smaller than normal; total nonfarm employment was up 90 during the month, when an employment increase of 100 jobs would be expected. As a result, seasonally adjusted employment was down 10 between February and March. Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment is now down 1.3% from the level in February 2020, or 130 jobs below its pre-pandemic level.

Over the past year Wasco County's seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment has shed 60 jobs or -0.6%.

Private sector employment overall was up 70 over the month. Leisure and hospitality gained 40 jobs in March. Manufacturing, retail trade, other services, and private education and health services each added 10 jobs in March.

Public sector employment gained 20 in March. Local government employment grew 10 in March. Federal government added 10 jobs and state government employment was unchanged in March.

Gilliam County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.5% in March, down from February's revised unemployment rate of 5.7%. Over the year, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose by 0.9 percentage points.

Gilliam County's employment losses in March were smaller than normal; total nonfarm employment was down 5 during the month, when an employment decrease of 15 jobs was expected. As a result, seasonally adjusted employment was up 10 between February and March. Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment is now down 2.2% from the level in March 2020, or 20 jobs below its pre-pandemic level.

Sherman County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.9% in March, down from the revised February rate of 5.1%. The unemployment rate increased by 1.0 percentage point over the year. Sherman County's nonfarm employment increased by 30 jobs (+3.4%) in March and now stands at 900. Private-sector employment added 5 jobs over the month, while public-sector employment was up 25 for the month. Over the year ending in March, private industry shed 60 jobs, bringing the total to 570, a 9.5% decrease from the previous year. Public-sector employment lost 25 jobs over the year for a net loss of 85 total nonfarm jobs over the year.

Wheeler County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.7% in March, down from February's rate of 4.8%. Over the year, Wheeler County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was up by 0.4 percentage points. Total nonfarm employment increased by 5 jobs (+1.4%) from February to March and now stands at 355 jobs. Over the year ending in March, total nonfarm employment increased by 15 (+4.4%). The private sector added 15 jobs over the year, while the public sector was unchanged.

### **Next Press Releases**

The Oregon Employment Department plans to release the April county and metropolitan area unemployment rates on Wednesday, May 27 and the statewide unemployment rate and employment survey data on Wednesday, May 20.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

May 5, 2026

**Hood River County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment**

	--Change From--				
	March 2026	February 2026	March 2025	February 2026	March 2025
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	13,586	13,453	13,570	133	16
Unemployed	525	585	570	-60	-45
Unemployment rate	3.9%	4.3%	4.2%	-0.4	-0.3
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.0%	4.1%	3.7%	-0.1	0.3
Employed	13,061	12,868	13,000	193	61
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	11,730	11,740	11,810	-10	-80
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	11,730	11,700	11,810	30	-80
Total private	10,230	10,260	10,280	-30	-50
Mining, logging, and construction	510	490	530	20	-20
Manufacturing	1,740	1,720	1,650	20	90
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,810	1,800	1,800	10	10
Wholesale trade	460	460	350	0	110
Retail trade	1,180	1,180	1,280	0	-100
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	170	160	170	10	0
Information	90	90	80	0	10
Financial activities	340	340	320	0	20
Professional and business services	970	960	940	10	30
Private education and health services	1,950	1,950	1,950	0	0
Leisure and hospitality	2,500	2,590	2,680	-90	-180
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	940	1,040	1,170	-100	-230
Accommodation and food services	1,560	1,550	1,510	10	50
Accommodation	460	450	450	10	10
Food services and drinking places	1,100	1,100	1,060	0	40
Other services	320	320	330	0	-10
Government	1,500	1,480	1,530	20	-30
Federal government	110	100	110	10	0
State government	150	150	140	0	10
Local government	1,240	1,230	1,280	10	-40
Local education	730	730	740	0	-10
Local government excluding educational services	510	500	540	10	-30

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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

May 5, 2026

### Wasco County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2026	February 2026	March 2025	February 2026	March 2025
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	12,525	12,484	12,485	41	40
Unemployed	687	778	710	-91	-23
Unemployment rate	5.5%	6.2%	5.7%	-0.7	-0.2
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.0%	5.1%	4.5%	-0.1	0.5
Employed	11,838	11,706	11,775	132	63
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	10,070	9,980	10,130	90	-60
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	10,160	10,170	10,220	-10	-60
Total private	7,870	7,800	7,890	70	-20
Mining, logging, and construction	420	420	460	0	-40
Mining and logging	50	50	50	0	0
Construction	370	370	410	0	-40
Manufacturing	490	480	480	10	10
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,980	1,980	1,990	0	-10
Wholesale trade	220	220	180	0	40
Retail trade	1,490	1,480	1,540	10	-50
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	270	280	270	-10	0
Information	260	260	250	0	10
Financial activities	280	280	270	0	10
Professional and business services	530	530	580	0	-50
Private education and health services	2,340	2,330	2,260	10	80
Ambulatory health care services	520	520	510	0	10
Nursing and residential care facilities	590	590	500	0	90
Leisure and hospitality	1,230	1,190	1,290	40	-60
Accommodation and food services	1,170	1,140	1,200	30	-30
Other services	340	330	310	10	30
Government	2,200	2,180	2,240	20	-40
Federal government	280	270	300	10	-20
State government	320	320	330	0	-10
Local government	1,600	1,590	1,610	10	-10
Indian tribal	60	60	60	0	0
Local education	770	770	800	0	-30
Local government excluding education and tribal	770	760	750	10	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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

May 5, 2026

### Gilliam County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2026	February 2026	March 2025	February 2026	March 2025
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	927	941	1,038	-14	-111
Unemployed	48	59	52	-11	-4
Unemployment rate	5.2%	6.3%	5.0%	-1.1	0.2
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.5%	5.7%	4.6%	-0.2	0.9
Employed	879	882	986	-3	-107
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	855	860	995	-5	-140
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	875	865	1,020	10	-145
Total private	580	580	705	0	-125
Trade, transportation, and utilities	100	100	110	0	-10
Professional and business services	225	225	220	0	5
Private education and health services	70	70	75	0	-5
Leisure and hospitality	40	40	35	0	5
Government	275	280	290	-5	-15
Federal government	10	15	10	-5	0
State government	25	25	25	0	0
Local government	240	240	255	0	-15

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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

May 5, 2026

### Sherman County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2026	February 2026	March 2025	February 2026	March 2025
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	927	912	969	15	-42
Unemployed	48	49	45	-1	3
Unemployment rate	5.2%	5.4%	4.6%	-0.2	0.6
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.9%	5.1%	3.9%	-0.2	1.0
Employed	879	863	924	16	-45
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	900	870	985	30	-85
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	895	895	980	0	-85
Total private	570	565	630	5	-60
Trade, transportation, and utilities	355	350	395	5	-40
Retail trade	130	130	135	0	-5
Leisure and hospitality	75	70	85	5	-10
Government	330	305	355	25	-25
Federal government	115	115	150	0	-35
State government	30	30	30	0	0
Local government	185	160	175	25	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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

May 5, 2026

### Wheeler County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	March 2026	February 2026	March 2025	February 2026	March 2025
<b>Labor Force Status</b>					
Civilian labor force	708	706	675	2	33
Unemployed	35	37	31	-2	4
Unemployment rate	4.9%	5.2%	4.6%	-0.3	0.3
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.7%	4.8%	4.3%	-0.1	0.4
Employed	673	669	644	4	29
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Employment</b>					
Total nonfarm employment	355	350	340	5	15
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	360	370	345	-10	15
Total private	170	160	155	10	15
Trade, transportation, and utilities	30	30	35	0	-5
Leisure and hospitality	30	25	30	5	0
Government	185	190	185	-5	0
Federal government	5	5	5	0	0
State government	35	35	35	0	0
Local government	145	150	145	-5	0

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.

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 QualityInfo.org, select Tools, and choose LAUS or CES from the dropdown menu. To request the press release as a Word document, contact the person shown at the top of this press release.

You can subscribe to receive notification of new articles and publications from QualityInfo.org. To subscribe, go to [www.qualityinfo.org/subscribe](http://www.qualityinfo.org/subscribe), 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 preferences – or unsubscribe – at any time.

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 help finding jobs and training resources, go to: [www.WorkSourceOregon.org](http://www.WorkSourceOregon.org)

The Oregon Employment Department (OED) is an equal opportunity agency. Everyone has a right to use OED programs and services. OED provides free help. Some examples are: Sign language and spoken language interpreters, written materials in other languages, braille, large print, audio and other formats. If you need help, please call 971-673-6400. TTY users call 711. You can also ask for help at [OED\\_Communications@employ.oregon.gov](mailto:OED_Communications@employ.oregon.gov).

El Departamento de Empleo de Oregon (OED) es una agencia de igualdad de oportunidades. El OED proporciona ayuda gratuita para que usted pueda utilizar nuestros servicios. Algunos ejemplos son intérpretes de lengua de señas e idiomas hablados, materiales escritos en otros idiomas, letra grande, audio y otros formatos. Para obtener ayuda, por favor llame al 503-947-1444. Usuarios de TTY pueden llamar al 711. También puede enviar un correo electrónico a [OED\\_Communications@employ.oregon.gov](mailto:OED_Communications@employ.oregon.gov).

###