

25 STATES SEE CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT INCREASE



A bit of good news was released by the Associated General Contractors of America of Labor Department last week when data was released that employment in the construction industry rose in half of the states and the District of Columbia. The bad news is that employment in the construction industry also dropped in half of the states over the past year. This data almost matches the country's unemployment data to a tee. The reason for the even split is that the construction of apartments and private nonresidential construction is offsetting the declining public market and the single-family home industry. "Construction employment gains are likely to remain spotty for months to come," said Ken Simonson, the association's chief economist. "Local factors, rather than regional or industry trends, seem to dictate whether a state has rising or falling construction employment in a given month." For the states and District of Columbia that saw an increase in construction employment, North Dakota ranked number one from October of 2010 to October of 2011. North Dakota added 4,100 jobs, for a 19 percent increase. The second-ranked state is Oklahoma, which increased by 8.1 percent with 5,500 jobs. The District of Columbia jumped up 4.8 percent with an additional 500 jobs and Texas added the highest number of jobs with 17,500, which is good for a 3.1 percent. California added 17,100 jobs for a 3.1 percent increase. The state of Georgia saw the largest decline in jobs over the past year, losing 13,800 construction jobs for a 9.5 percent decline. New Mexico lost 4,100 jobs, which was a 9.2 percent drop while Wisconsin lost 8,100 jobs for an 8.6 percent decline. The state of Florida suffered 11,600 construction job losses for a 3.4 percent decline while Arkansas saw no change in construction employment for the previous 12 months. There were 23 states that lost jobs in the construction industry from September to October of this year. Of those 23 states, Nevada suffered the largest loss in one month, losing 2,600 jobs for a 4.6 percent decline. Alabama lost 2,700 jobs in one month, a 3.2 percent decline, and Michigan lost 3,900 jobs for a 3 percent decline. Even though Texas lost 12,800 construction jobs in one month, its percentage decline was only 2.1 percent. Officials for the Associated General Contractors of America of Labor Department claim that the congressional super committee's failure to reach a deal to cut the United States deficit has hurt the construction industry. As employment continues to change throughout the country, the construction industry is working hard towards adding more jobs each month. "Allowing water, transportation and energy networks to deteriorate will hurt construction employment and force taxpayers to spend more later, to fix broken infrastructure," said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association's chief executive officer. "Neglecting the fundamental systems needed to support our economy and quality of life is no way to balance the budget or boost employment."

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