

MONTANA Economy at a Glance

Editor: Robert C. Marvin

County Fliers Updates

The Research & Analysis Bureau is updating our county fliers to provide you with the most timely and local economic and demographic information. The county fliers provide information on the local labor force, population by age, race, and gender, employment by industry, per capita personal income, number of farms and ranches by category, and more.

Our most recently updated fliers include Stillwater and Cascade Counties. Informational fliers for Beaverhead, Big Horn, Carbon, Madison, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, and Valley Counties, as well as a statewide flier, are also available. Fliers for Park, Glacier, and Yellowstone Counties will follow shortly.

To download these fliers, visit our website at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org, and click on "State & County Fliers," on the left sidebar menu. This will bring up a list of updated fliers, as well as location quotients for selected counties. If you need information on a county that has not yet had its flier updated, please contact the Research and Analysis Bureau at (800) 541-3904.

Unemployment by Statistical Area

Not seasonally adjusted

Metropolitan Statistical Areas

	March 2005*	March 2004
Billings	4.1%	3.8%
Great Falls	5.1%	4.8%
Missoula	5.0%	4.6%

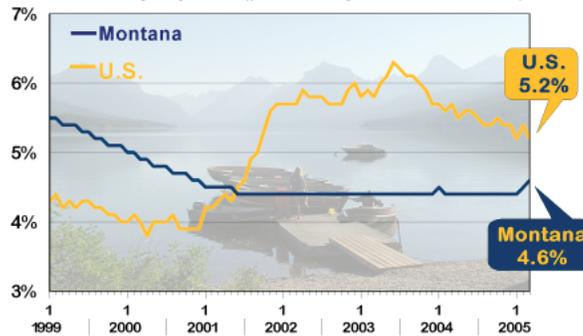
Micropolitan Statistical Areas

	March 2005*	March 2004
Bozeman	3.8%	4.2%
Butte-Silver Bow	6.0%	6.3%
Havre	5.8%	5.2%
Helena	5.2%	4.8%
Kalispell	7.1%	7.5%

* 2005 rate preliminary

Unemployment

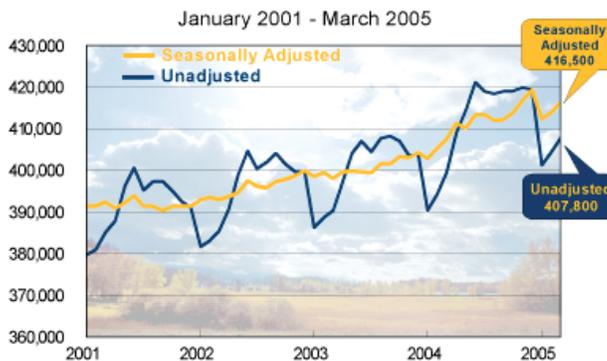
Seasonally adjusted (preliminary March 2005 data)



Montana's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.6% in March 2005 from 4.5% in February 2005. The U.S. rate fell to 5.2% in March 2005 from 5.4% in February 2005.

Nonfarm Employment Series

January 2001 - March 2005



Montana's seasonally-adjusted nonagricultural payroll employment was up 2,600 jobs (0.6%) over-the-month for March 2005. The largest gains were in Leisure and Hospitality, which was up by 1,000 jobs (1.8%); Construction, up 800 jobs (3.1%); and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, up 500 jobs (0.6%).

Employment by Industry

Over-the-year change - Not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment (in thousands)	March 2005	March 2004	Net Change	Percent Change
Total Non-Agricultural	407.8	399.4	8.4	2.1%
Natural Resources & Mining	7.7	6.6	1.1	16.7%
Construction	23.1	21.1	2.0	9.5%
Manufacturing	18.9	18.7	0.2	1.1%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	84.1	84.3	-0.2	-0.2%
Information	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0%
Financial Activities	21.2	20.8	0.4	1.9%
Professional & Business Services	32.6	31.6	1.0	3.2%
Education & Health Services	54.8	54.3	0.5	0.9%
Leisure & Hospitality	53.3	50.1	3.2	6.4%
Other Services	16.9	16.6	0.3	1.8%
Total Government	87.5	87.6	-0.1	-0.1%

Unemployment by County

Not seasonally adjusted

	March 2005*	March 2004
UNITED STATES	5.4%	6.0%
MONTANA	5.6%	5.5%
Beaverhead	5.5%	4.5%
Big Horn	12.0%	11.4%
Blaine	6.9%	5.8%
Broadwater	5.7%	5.4%
Carbon	4.3%	4.3%
Carter	3.5%	3.7%
Cascade	5.1%	4.8%
Chouteau	5.3%	4.9%
Custer	5.3%	5.3%
Daniels	4.8%	6.2%
Dawson	5.0%	5.3%
Deer Lodge	7.8%	7.8%
Fallon	4.0%	3.6%
Fergus	7.8%	7.1%
Flathead	7.1%	7.5%
Gallatin	3.8%	4.2%
Garfield	5.9%	5.1%
Glacier	10.5%	10.2%
Golden Valley	6.3%	9.4%
Granite	7.5%	7.0%
Hill	5.8%	5.2%
Jefferson	5.4%	5.3%
Judith Basin	7.0%	5.5%
Lake	7.6%	7.9%
Lewis & Clark	5.2%	4.7%
Liberty	6.7%	5.8%
Lincoln	12.6%	13.9%
McCone	5.7%	6.3%
Madison	5.8%	4.5%
Meagher	5.6%	6.8%
Mineral	8.3%	8.0%
Missoula	5.0%	4.6%
Musselshell	5.2%	5.2%
Park	5.2%	6.1%
Petroleum	6.0%	7.4%
Phillips	6.2%	6.9%
Pondera	7.1%	7.2%
Powder River	5.8%	6.5%
Powell	9.0%	8.2%
Prairie	7.2%	9.1%
Ravalli	6.4%	6.6%
Richland	6.0%	6.1%
Roosevelt	8.0%	7.1%
Rosebud	6.7%	6.1%
Sanders	8.2%	8.9%
Sheridan	4.9%	5.9%
Silver Bow	6.0%	6.3%
Stillwater	4.3%	4.4%
Sweet Grass	3.0%	3.9%
Teton	5.6%	5.1%
Toole	4.4%	4.0%
Treasure	5.7%	5.4%
Valley	5.9%	5.1%
Wheatland	5.8%	5.9%
Wibaux	4.0%	5.5%
Yellowstone	4.0%	3.8%

* March 2005 rate preliminary

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

Phone: (406) 444-2430 Fax: (406) 444-2638 TDD: (406) 444-0532

March 2005

Montana Economy at a Glance

Montana's Hottest Job Skills

By Robert C. Marvin

The days when a career was a lifetime commitment are long over. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that Americans will have an average of 3.5 different careers in their lives, and work for ten employers, keeping each job for 3.5 years.¹ This refers not to specific jobs, but entire career paths. When entering an entirely new field, in which one has little to no experience, the skills acquired through unrelated jobs and life experiences can be a major selling point on a resume. But which skills are Montana employers looking for in applicants?

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau has compiled a list of the most marketable skills in Montana's fastest-growing high-wage jobs. For the purposes of this article, "fastest-growing" means those occupations which have experienced 20% growth or higher from 2000 to 2003. "High wage" is defined as an annual wage of \$35,000 or higher. Only skills having an importance level of 70 or greater were included in the study.² It is important to note that the list of high-wage, high-growth occupations is based on Bureau of Labor Statistics listings, which include only wage and salary jobs. The self-employed are not represented, which may account for the absence of many healthcare occupations on the list.

"It is the kiss of death, career wise, to fail to keep up your skills. It requires lifetime, continual learning not just to advance, but just to keep a job in this economy."

Donald Asher³

The Basics:

Unsurprisingly, basic skills top the list, since they are required for most jobs. **Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking, Critical Thinking, and Writing** occupy the top 5 spots. A person will acquire some skill in the basics from high school and work experience. However, since the occupations included in the study rate these skills as being of above average importance, postsecondary education will give

¹ From "Get Smart! About Modern Career Development" (2001) by Michelle Casto. Excepts available at: www.theallineed.com/ad-self-help-2/self-help-007.htm.

² Skills rated using O*Net's importance rankings. To see complete list of skills for an occupation, visit O*Net using the link on R&A's website at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.

³ Donald Asher from his interview with Quintessential Careers, www.quintcareers.com/tips/career_change_tips.html.

#1 Reading Comprehension

Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

#2 Active Listening

Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

#3 Speaking

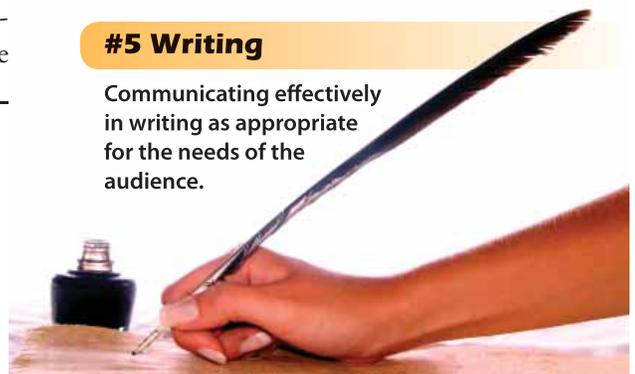
Talking to others to convey information effectively.

#4 Critical Thinking

Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

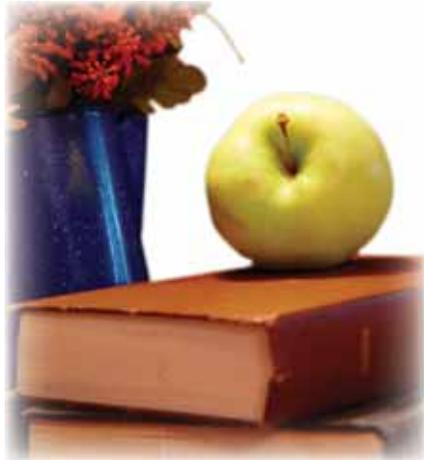
#5 Writing

Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.



an applicant a competitive edge, regardless of major. College experience also shows a willingness to learn, fulfilling the **Active Learning** skill.

Mathematics and **Science** also rank high on the list. Many high-wage occupations require a degree in math or science. For instance, Accountants and Auditors, Financial Examiners, Chemists, Microbiologists, and Wildlife Biologists all require varying levels of postsecondary education in math and science.



Learning Strategies and **Instructing** skills can also be acquired in college, especially in Masters and Doctoral programs which give the opportunity for graduate students to teach lower level courses. Even if one is pursuing a career other than teaching, experience in a teaching assistantship proves valuable on a resume, since many professional positions require employees to train other employees, or to instruct the public. Some Dieticians and Nutritionalists, for example, travel to schools, workplaces, and other institutions, giving presentations on how to eat smart and stay healthy. Most employers encourage lifetime learning, which may include personal research. Lawyers need to be highly skilled in **Learning Strategies**, since much of their work requires research, and they must keep current with the latest laws and legal precedents.

Monitoring is a skill useful for people in management and analysis occupations such as Management Analysts, Medical and Health Services Managers, Natural Science Managers, Compensation, Benefits, Job Analysis Specialists, Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts, and Market Research Analysts. However, the ability to assess the performance of oneself and others has applications in a wide variety of jobs. Educational, Vocational, and School Counselors, Postsecondary English and Literature Teachers, and Compliance Officers all benefit from this skill.

#6 Active Learning

Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.

#7 Judgment & Decision Making

Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

#8 Mathematics

Using mathematics to solve problems.

#9 Science

Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.

#10 Complex Problem Solving

Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.

#11 Learning Strategies

Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.

#12 Instructing

Teaching others how to do something.

#13 Monitoring

Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

#14 Operations Analysis

Analyzing needs and product requirements to create a design.

#15 Coordination

Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

Montana's Hottest Job Skills (continued)

Operations Analysis is the only technical skill to make the top fifteen. High importance is placed on this skill in occupations ranging from Computer Software Engineers and Network Systems Analysts to Natural Science Managers and Foresters. Operations Analysis made the list because it is required not only in high technology occupations, but in many other management and science fields. Occupations in technology tend to require high levels of other technical skills that did not make the list, such as **Programming** and **Technology Design**.

Some occupations require high skill levels in many of the top skills. For Network Systems and Data Communicators, 14 of the top 15 skills rate 70 or higher on the importance scale. Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists, Medical and Health Services Managers, and Physical Therapists also need a wide base of skills. Other occupations require high levels in a narrower range of skills. In the field of microbiology, for example, **Science** scores 100 on the importance scale, and the basic skills of **Writing** and **Reading**

Comprehension weigh in at 90 points each, while none of the other skills categories rate 70 or above.

Who knows what new career paths the future will bring? The best source of job security in the new economy is the individual development of skills. Identifying the skills valued most by employers will help individuals to invest their training time wisely, and allow colleges and vo-techs to develop curriculums which will best benefit students seeking employment and businesses that need a labor force trained in the most applicable skills.

Now more than ever, the key to a successful career lies in careful planning. The Montana Career Information System (MCIS) can help you plan your career with information on nearly 500 occupations, Montana wages, and job outlook data. MCIS is available at your local Job Service Workforce Center. Also check out our website at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org for labor market information, such as current and projected employment in various Montana industries.

MAIL OR E-MAIL?

If you would like us to e-mail you a reminder and a link to this publication on our website each month, e-mail us at: mediaccontacts4rad@mt.gov. Please include your mailing address as it appears on this publication and your e-mail address.



2,800 copies of this publication were produced at a unit cost of .567 cents per copy for a total cost of \$1,587.00 which includes \$1,124.00 for printing and \$463.00 for distribution.

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

Return in 5 days to:
Research & Analysis Bureau
Workforce Services Division
Montana Department of
Labor & Industry
P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT 59624-1728