

February 2010 Monthly Economic Snapshot

Employment Services of Weld County

The total civilian labor force in Weld County for December 2009 was 116,606, of which 106,602 were employed and 10,004 were unemployed. The unemployment rate was 8.6 percent.

Workforce Boulder County

The total civilian labor force in Boulder for December 2009 was 172,308, of which 162,536 were employed and 9,772 were unemployed. The unemployment rate was 5.7 percent.

Sunflower Farmers Market plans to open a new store in the old Albertson's spaces in Lafayette's Waneka Marketplace. Sunflower Farmers Market is a chain of full-service grocery stores offering consumers natural and organic products at value prices.

Irrigation Water Technologies America has moved its headquarters from Colorado Springs to Longmont. The sprinkler system is 100 percent underground and uses 70 percent less water than traditional systems, according to David Hunter, the company's president. His company brought 10 employees with him from Colorado Springs. "Our plans say that we're going to hire eight to 10 more over the course of 2010," he said.

In 2009, Longmont lost 819 net primary jobs, according to the Longmont Area Economic Council's annual report of primary employer activity. "It was a little worse than I expected," said John Cody, the Longmont Area Economic Council's president. "Roughly a half of the total losses came from five companies." While Cody wouldn't disclose which of the 199 primary employers were impacted the most, he said the data-storage sector was hit hardest with 400 jobs lost. Next were contract manufacturers, which was down by 175 jobs, and biotechnology, which lost 120 jobs. On the flip side, electrical equipment gained 146 jobs - the sector that saw the most growth.

Oracle completes \$7.4 billion acquisition of Sun Microsystems. It was unclear how the deal, hiring plans and expected layoffs would affect Sun's local 2,800-person work force. Sun, which has a seven-building campus in Broomfield and has a smaller lab in Louisville, is the largest private-sector employer in Boulder and Broomfield counties.

Abound Solar Inc., a manufacturer of thin-film photovoltaic solar panels, will receive a \$12.6 million tax credit from the U.S. Department of Energy for additional manufacturing capacity at its factory near Longmont.

Larimer County Workforce Center

The total civilian labor force in Larimer County for December 2009 was 172,252, of which 161,665 were employed and 10,587 were unemployed. The unemployment rate was 6.1 percent.

Funky Monkey Crepe Café closed

The Funky Monkey Crepe Café has closed after less than six months in business. After opening in July, the crepe shop at 130 S. College Ave. has closed for unknown reasons.

Historic event hall opening in downtown Fort Collins

Fort Collins' oldest event hall will be an event hall once again as the owners of the historic downtown property announce plans to restore the more than century old facility. Husband and wife, Amy Satterfield, owner of Wadoo Furniture and Gifts, and Paul Jensen, owner of One Tribe Creative, both located at 314 E. Mountain Ave. plan to transform a portion of the property into the Armory Event Hall. The historic building first served as the National Guard Armory in 1907. The drill hall doubled as an event hall for Northern Colorado's social events at the time.

Cellular Junction to close

The economy has claimed another long-standing Northern Colorado business, this time in the telecommunications industry. Cellular Junction, a cellular telephone company with locations in Fort Collins and formerly Loveland, will shut its doors next week after 19 years in business.

CSU among top 100 Kiplinger's public college values

Colorado State University has been named among the nation's top 100 public colleges for 2010 by Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine. CSU placed No. 99 on the list, up from No. 100 last year. It was one of three Colorado universities making the list, including Colorado School of Mines in Golden (No. 69) and the University of Colorado at Boulder (No. 74). Kiplinger's said it based its rankings on measures of academic quality, tuition costs and financial aid availability. More than 500 public four-year colleges and universities were compared in the rankings. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ranked No. 1 in the 2010 ratings, followed by the University of Florida, University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary in Virginia and New York's Binghamton University.

NoCo renewable energy projects receive grants

Eleven grants totaling \$500,000 have been awarded through the state Department of Agriculture's Advancing Colorado's Renewable Energy program, including \$75,000 to assist in the implementation of a waste-to-energy plant in LaSalle and \$50,000 to Colorado State University to assess energy efficiency on various agricultural settings. Heartland Renewable Energy in Weld County received a project participation grant to assist with the purchase or lease of equipment, construction costs and land costs for the waste-to-energy plant.

Larimer County Workforce Center (continued)

Sportscaster Bar and Grill Closes Abruptly

Sportscaster Bar and Grill, 165 E. Boardwalk Drive, has apparently shut down with no warning to customers. The bar, owned by David C. Stott and StottGracey LLC, is in the middle of a federal lawsuit brought by J & J Sports Productions for allegedly broadcasting the welter-weight fight between Oscar De La Hoya and Manny Pacquiao at the bar Dec. 6, 2008.

Ingredient to Open in Old Town

The 100-year-old building at the corner of Mountain and South College avenues that has served as the town grocery store, hardware store, bank and drug store will now house a new fast-casual restaurant. Ingredient, part of an independently owned chain of five stores in Kansas and Missouri, plans to open its first Colorado restaurant in the old City Drug building by summer. The restaurant, which uses the phonetic spelling, bills itself as a gourmet, fast-casual restaurant similar to a Panera-type of establishment. As its name implies, the restaurant focuses on fresh ingredients, customizable salads with about 80 different choices, homemade dressings, brick-oven pizzas, wraps and desserts, all made from scratch. It plans an outdoor patio that wraps around the building from College to Mountain avenues and the iBar, a coffee/wine/beer and dessert bar, chef and co-founder Steve Kerner said.

Moe's Original BBQ to Open in Old Town

Moe's Original Bar B Que will open its 11th location, fourth in Colorado, at 181 N. College Ave. Moe's touts its award-winning "Bama-style BBQ" which is smoked over hard wood and served with two sauces.

Popular downtown Loveland eatery closes

The owners of Loveland's Monaco Trattoria announced today the restaurant at 218 E. Fourth St. is closing. An announcement written by Tammy Hiatt Monaco on the restaurant's Web site states: "It is with our heartfelt and sincerest regret that we are closing Monaco Trattoria. We thank all of our loyal and caring customers that have supported us since our opening on April 25, 2005. You enriched our lives and made it possible for us to share Authentic Italian Dining. Thank you and I will miss you." Monaco Trattoria billed itself as a restaurant devoted to authentic Italian dining and featured the popular Acqua Lounge.

Larimer County Workforce Center (continued)

Mad Greens to open new restaurant in former Waffle House

A Denver-based soup, salad and sandwich shop announced Thursday that it will be opening a Fort Collins location in the former Waffle House location on College Avenue. Mad Property LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Denver-based Mad Greens, plan to open its ninth Mad Greens location, second in Fort Collins, in March at 616 S. College Ave. The fast casual restaurant group, known for its made to-order salads, soups and grilled to order panini sandwiches, purchased the former Waffle House on Jan. 12 for \$675,000. Construction on building improvements will begin next week. This is the first building the company has purchased in its five-year history. After slated building improvements, the 2,100 square foot restaurant will seat 65 people inside and 18 to 24 on its patio. "Fort Collins has embraced our Harmony Road location," said Marley Hodgson, CEO of Mad Greens, in a prepared statement. "We jumped at the chance to open a new location and invest in this great community." Mad Greens currently operates eight restaurants in Denver, Boulder and Fort Collins and plans to add two to three additional locations in the next 14 months.

40 Sam's Clubs workers lose jobs in Fort Collins, Loveland

Nearly 40 employees at Sam's Club stores in Loveland and Fort Collins lost their jobs Sunday as part of Wal-Mart Stores Inc.'s decision to outsource its product demonstrations. The manager at the Fort Collins Sam's Club, 4700 Boardwalk, referred all questions to its media hotline, which offered only a recorded message. It said the cuts applied to every Sam's Club in the U.S. affecting about 18 demonstration product associates and two new business membership associates at each store. Wal-Mart, which operates 15 Sam's Clubs in Colorado, announced Sunday it had hired Shopper Events, a third-party marketing company, to run its demo program. In a notice to employees, Sam's Club President and CEO Brian Cornell said "We do not make these decisions lightly, and know that this is a difficult development for the members of our Sam's Club family who will be leaving the company. I also know that this will be a hard time for others in the club who have worked with these associates and, in many cases, formed close relationships." All employees losing their jobs can apply to Shopper Events, which is expected to hire about the same number of product demonstrators.

Cheyenne Workforce Center

The Research & Planning section of the Wyoming Department of Employment reported today that the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose from 7.2% in November to 7.5% in December (not a statistically significant change). Despite this increase, Wyoming's unemployment rate remained significantly lower than the U.S. rate of 10.0%. Over-the-year job losses were seen in all but two sectors (educational & health services and government). From November to December Wyoming lost 1,600 jobs, or 0.6%. This stands in contrast to the normal seasonal increase of approximately 1,200 jobs, or 0.4%. Larger than normal seasonal employment decreases were seen in construction (-3,100 jobs, or -13.1%) and professional & business services (-700 jobs, or -4.1%). Seasonal employment gains occurred in retail trade (400 jobs, or 1.3%), leisure & hospitality (1,700 jobs, or 5.8%), and government (300 jobs, or 0.4%). Laramie county's unemployment rate increased from 7.0 in November to 8.2% in December. Albany county's unemployment rate increased slightly from 4.1% in November to 4.6% in December.

Big 5 Sporting Goods Corporation will be opening a retail establishment in Cheyenne with an approximate opening date in early March. Big 5 Sporting Goods will be located in the old Rex building off Dell Range Boulevard. Big 5 Sporting Goods will be hosting a job fair at the Cheyenne Workforce Center recruiting for 20 setup crew positions on Feb 2-4. For more information call the Front Desk at 307-777-3700.

Allstate has 20 job openings for Claim Processing Specialists at the Cheyenne Express Claim Center with a starting wage of \$11.35 an hour. The training class begins on March 1, 2010.

The City of Cheyenne is currently on a Hire Freeze with possible layoffs on the horizon. Discussions are on tentative layoffs or offering early retirement packages to employees eligible to retire. The City Council continues to deliberate on these issues due to budget constraints they are facing in this tough economy.

The Cheyenne Workforce Center will be hosting an Open House and Breakfast on February 5, 2010 from 7:30am-9:00am featuring speaker Tom Kilijanek with ACT presenting on the Career Readiness Certificate.

