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Do Claimants Stay on Workers' Compensation Longer During Tough Economic Times?

by: Patrick Manning, Principal Economist

The research presented in this article tests the hypothesis from the Research & Planning (R&P) section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services that participants in the workers' compensation system may have incentives to stay on workers' compensation longer in a sluggish economy than during times of economic expansion.

Several studies conducted since the recent Great Recession have analyzed the effect of providing additional weeks of unemployment insurance (UI) eligibility. Researchers attempted to identify the effect of extended benefits on two outcomes:

1. Do workers stay on unemployment longer because the duration of payments is increased, and

2. Do workers stay on unemployment because there is no employment available?

Mazumder (2011) found that the extension of unemployment insurance benefits during the recent economic downturn can account for a roughly 1 percentage point increase in the unemployment rate, with a preferred estimate of 0.8 percentage points. Mazumder added, "this effect is also likely to be reversed over the coming years, as the extensions are removed in response to an improving labor market."

The Research & Planning (R&P) section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services found that re-employment rates in Wyoming decreased during the state's economic downturn in 2009 (Leonard, 2010). The re-employment rate for men fell from 77.2% in 2005 to 57.8% in 2009, suggesting that male workers had difficulty finding re-employment.

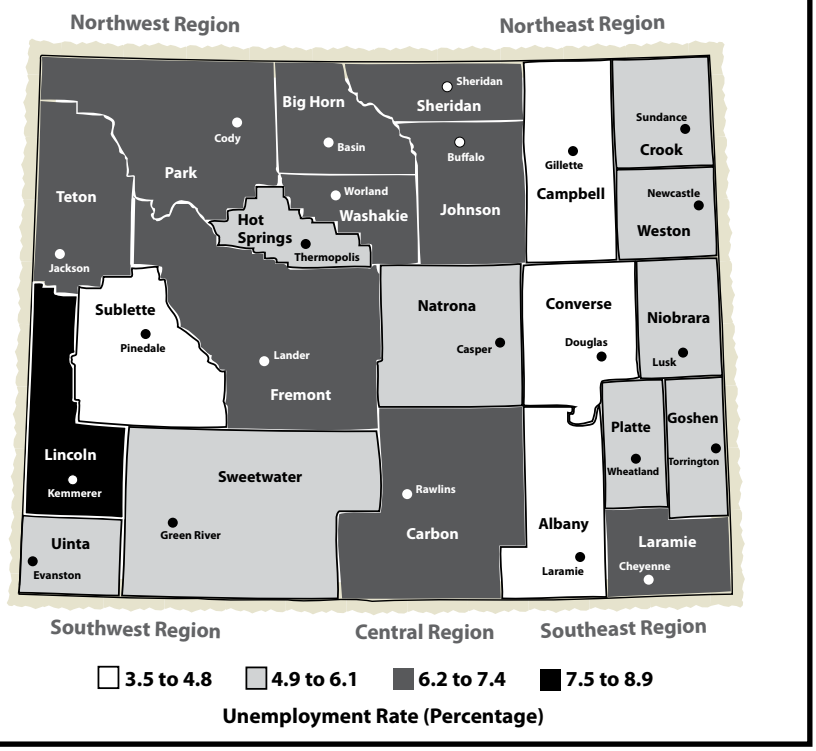
The research presented in this article by R&P considers a similar issue with the workers' compensation program and tests the hypothesis that claimants stay on workers' compensation longer in a

(Text continued on page 3)

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Of the top 10 jobs with the highest number of annual openings from 2011 to 2021, 6 require a high school education or less. …** ***page 10***

Unemployment Rate by Wyoming County, March 2012 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



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sluggish economy than during times of economic expansion. This discussion primarily focuses on the incentives of workers' compensation claimants; other factors influencing the duration and cost of workers' compensation claims will be discussed in a later article.

Unlike the duration of participation in the unemployment compensation program, under which the federal government provided additional emergency benefits during the economic downturn, workers' compensation duration is independent of economic conditions. The maximum duration of eligibility for the various types of workers' compensation benefits changes very rarely. Therefore, the maximum duration of benefits is considered fixed for any given workers' compensation claim (although there are rare exceptions).

The research also considers whether the age of a worker during the time of injury influences the duration of the claims. The null hypothesis is that age at the time of injury does not influence the duration of claims. Because of the advanced age of Wyoming's workforce (Liu, 2012, and Gallagher, 2011), this may have important policy implications regarding the cost of the program to employers, the workers' compensation fund, and the impact of lost wages on the workers.

Workers' Compensation Program Background

Workers' compensation programs were designed to provide benefits to injured workers while employers would face limited liability. Generally, payments to injured workers are structured so "that the total disability benefits paid are not a disincentive for recovery and return to work" (Clayton, 2003). Wyoming is one of four monopolistic states where employers can purchase insurance only through the state workers' compensation fund. There are also industry subsectors that are not required to carry workers' compensation insurance, such as food & beverage stores, telecommunications, and legal services.

Example 1:
Medical-only Claims
A worker gets a minor cut on a finger, receives medical attention, and misses no days of work.

The overwhelming majority of workers' compensation claims are medical only claims, meaning there is no disability or impairment compensation paid on the claim (see Example 1). From first quarter 2004 (2004Q1) to second quarter 2010 (2010Q2), 81.7% of workers' compensation claims were medical only claims.

Types of Claims

Only temporary total disability and temporary partial disability claims are examined in this article. The methodology used in this analysis can be found online at http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/trends/0512/toc.htm.

Temporary total disability (TTD) payments are made when injured individuals are totally unable to work, and they are generally paid two-thirds of their monthly salary. There are exceptions:

- Workers with higher than the statewide average wage can only receive a maximum of the statewide average wage.

During 2012Q1, Wyoming's statewide average monthly wage was $3,549.

- Workers who make equal to or less than 30% of the statewide average wage receive 100% of their usual wage (Schuetz and Warton, 2012).

Workers are eligible for a maximum of 24 months of temporary total disability payments, although exceptions are made in some cases that may extend this limit up to 36 months.

Temporary partial disability (TPD) payments are made when an employee returns to light duty work at reduced wages. Workers' compensation will pay 80% of the difference between the pre-injury wage and the light duty wage (see Example 2).

Claimants are generally eligible for 24 months of temporary total disability, or a combination of temporary total disability and temporary partial disability payments; under certain circumstances, this eligibility can be increased to 36 months. If a claim only has total partial disability payments, then the worker is restricted to a maximum of 12 months of eligibility.

Example 2:
A Claimant's Pay

An employee earns $1,000 per month before the accident, then comes back to work in a restricted capacity at $300 per month. Workers' compensation will pay 80% of the $700 difference.

Total monthly payment:
$300 + 0.8*$700 = $860.

Workers' compensation payments are not taxed. Therefore, even if a worker is earning two-thirds of his usual salary, his actual take home pay will not drop by one-third. In some cases, a worker's take home pay may actually increase.

It is common for a claim to have both temporary total disability and temporary partial disability payments (see Table 1). For example, a worker may be on temporary total disability for several weeks after an accident and then return to work on light duty (temporary partial disability). After medical treatment and rehabilitation, the worker is able to return to work at his or her pre-accident level.

Table 1: **Example of Typical Wyoming Workers' Compensation Claims Paid to a Hypothetical Worker in Wyoming**

Payment Number	Payment Date	Claim type	Payment Amount
1	02/24/04	Total Temporary Disability (TTD)	$1,415.17
2	03/29/04	TTD	$1,465.71
3	04/27/04	TTD	$1,465.71
4	05/06/04	TTD	$236.40
5	06/25/04	TTD	$1,465.71
6	07/12/04	TTD	$709.21
7	07/27/04	TTD	$756.50
8	08/12/04	TTD	$709.21
9	08/26/04	TTD	$756.50
10	09/13/04	TTD	$732.86
11	11/24/04	Permanent Partial Impairment (PPI)	$1,409.66
12	12/28/04	PPI	$1,626.53
13	01/24/05	PPI	$1,257.85

Incentives of Participants

The majority of workers will experience a decrease in wages while receiving workers' compensation disability payments. This provides an incentive to return to work as soon as workers are medically cleared to do so. Also, workers who are receiving workers' compensation payments may not be eligible for employer-sponsored benefits,

Example 3: Claimants Returning to Work

A worker is injured and is receiving temporary total disability payments. His employer informs him a month into his rehabilitation that there is no longer a position for him. If the employment outlook is poor, the worker may have an incentive to stay on workers' compensation as long as possible. However, if job opportunities are plentiful, there is more of an incentive to re-enter the job market quickly.

such as health insurance; this also provides an incentive to return to work.

Higher-wage workers have a greater incentive to return to work as soon as possible because their loss of earnings during temporary total disability is proportionally greater than lower wage workers.

Conversely, those workers earning 30% or less of the statewide average wage have little financial incentive to return to work quickly. Their take-home pay may actually increase because workers' compensation payments are not taxed, and many workers in this wage range are not receiving any benefits from their employer.

The employer has an incentive to get the employee back to work in a limited capacity because the employer's insurance premium rate will not be affected. If an employee refuses a legitimate offer to return to work in a limited capacity, TTD payments will be reduced by two-thirds.

In Wyoming, there is no requirement that the employer must maintain a position for the worker to return to once the worker has recovered from the injury. The Family Medical Leave Act does require that the employer provide 12 weeks of job-protected leave (DOL, 2012). Therefore, workers of all salary ranges have an incentive to return to work as soon as possible if there is uncertainty regarding the worker's job security.

Claimants face several factors that affect their decision to return to employment, and the claimant may not have total control over these circumstances. For example, medical professionals certify whether a claimant receives disability payments, set and update the period in which disability payments are received, and decide when a claimant can return to work in limited or full capacity. The Workers' Compensation Division of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has the right to make a final determination on eligibility for TTD benefits.

The claimant does have control over some factors, however. For example, a claimant may attempt to rehabilitate more or less vigorously depending on his motivation regarding returning to work (see Example 3).

Alternative explanations exist for an increase in the duration of workers' compensation claims, such as job availability, age, and severity of injury. Also, changes in statutes affecting compensation could adjust participants' incentives.

Doctors may have an incentive to keep workers in the workers' compensation program to maintain patient levels and revenue. Research of the Louisiana health care market by Bernacki and Xuguang (2008) concluded that workers' compensation claims managed by a particular statewide provider network were lower in cost and duration than providers not in that network. Bernacki and Xuguang found that after accounting for lost time, claims with attorney

involvement exhibited "consistently higher medical, indemnity, and claims handling costs, as well as increasing claim duration." Butler, Hartwig, and Gardner (1997) found "that doctors in health maintenance organizations (HMOs) have a greater tendency to classify claims as compensable under workers' compensation than do other physicians."

Finally, workers' compensation insurance agencies (particularly in states that provide state-run workers' compensation programs) cannot quickly change the number of claim analysts in response to changes in initial claim requests, thereby affecting the time in which claims are expedited. Workers' compensation funds follow industry standards for processing claims in a timely manner.

Claims and the Economic Downturn

Wyoming entered into an economic downturn in November 2008, which lasted until December 2009. Total non-farm employment has not recovered since the end of this downturn. In October 2008 (the month before Wyoming's downturn began) total non-farm employment in Wyoming was 300,400. In February 2012, total non-farm employment was only 288,600, a 3.9% decrease.

The only industries that showed a substantial increase in employment were education and health services (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Therefore, while Wyoming's economic downturn has technically ended, employment prospects in the majority of industries have not returned to pre-downturn levels.

The average duration of claims (temporary total and temporary partial disability portion) across all industries from November 2008 to December 2009 was 16.2 weeks and the median duration was 7.0 weeks (see Figure 1). The mean and median duration of claims peaked during the period of economic downturn and subsequently began to drop, although not to pre-

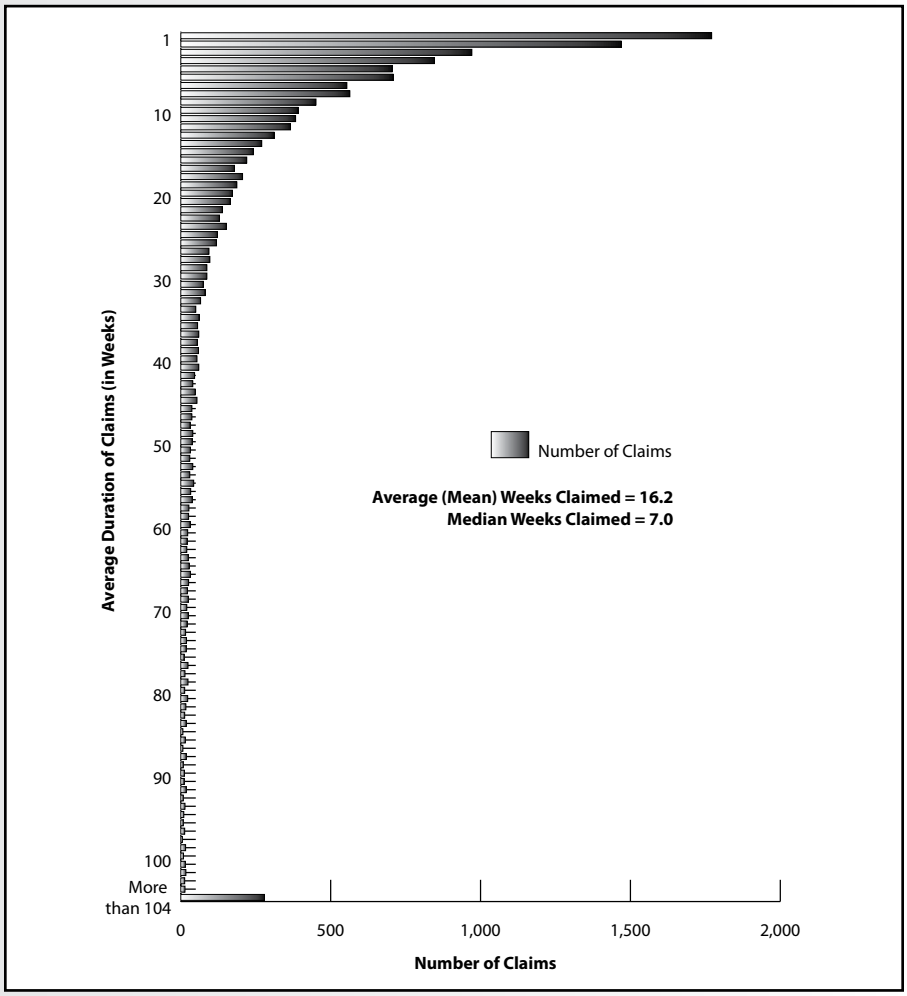

Figure 1: Number and Duration of Workers' Compensation Claims in Wyoming, November 2008 to December 2009

downturn levels (see Figure 2).

Table 2: Number and Duration of Wyoming Workers' Compensation Claims by Industry Supersector, 2008Q4-2009Q4

Supersector	Number of Claims	Mean Weeks	Median Weeks
Natural Resources & Mining	2,117	18.4	9.0
Construction	2,788	17.5	8.0
Manufacturing	1,111	15.0	6.0
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	3,518	15.7	6.0
Information	113	15.1	7.0
Financial Activities	198	19.0	6.0
Professional & Business Services	758	15.8	7.0
Educational & Health Services	2,509	15.7	6.0
Leisure & Hospitality	1,335	14.7	7.0
Other Services	348	17.8	7.0
Public Administration	924	13.9	6.0
Unclassified	2	18.0	18.0
Total	**15,721**	**16.2**	**7.0**

Table 2 displays the mean and median duration of workers' compensation claims by major industrial sector during the recent economic downturn. The financial activities, information, and unclassified sectors were excluded from this analysis because fewer than 200 cases were observed in these categories. The natural resources & mining sector had the highest duration of claims (18.4 weeks), while public administration experienced the lowest duration (13.9 weeks).

Figure 3 (see page 8) shows the mean duration of workers' compensation claims was significantly higher during the period of economic downturn (19.2 weeks) than during the period prior to the downturn (15.4 weeks). The duration of claims following the downturn (18.3 weeks) was not significantly different from the duration

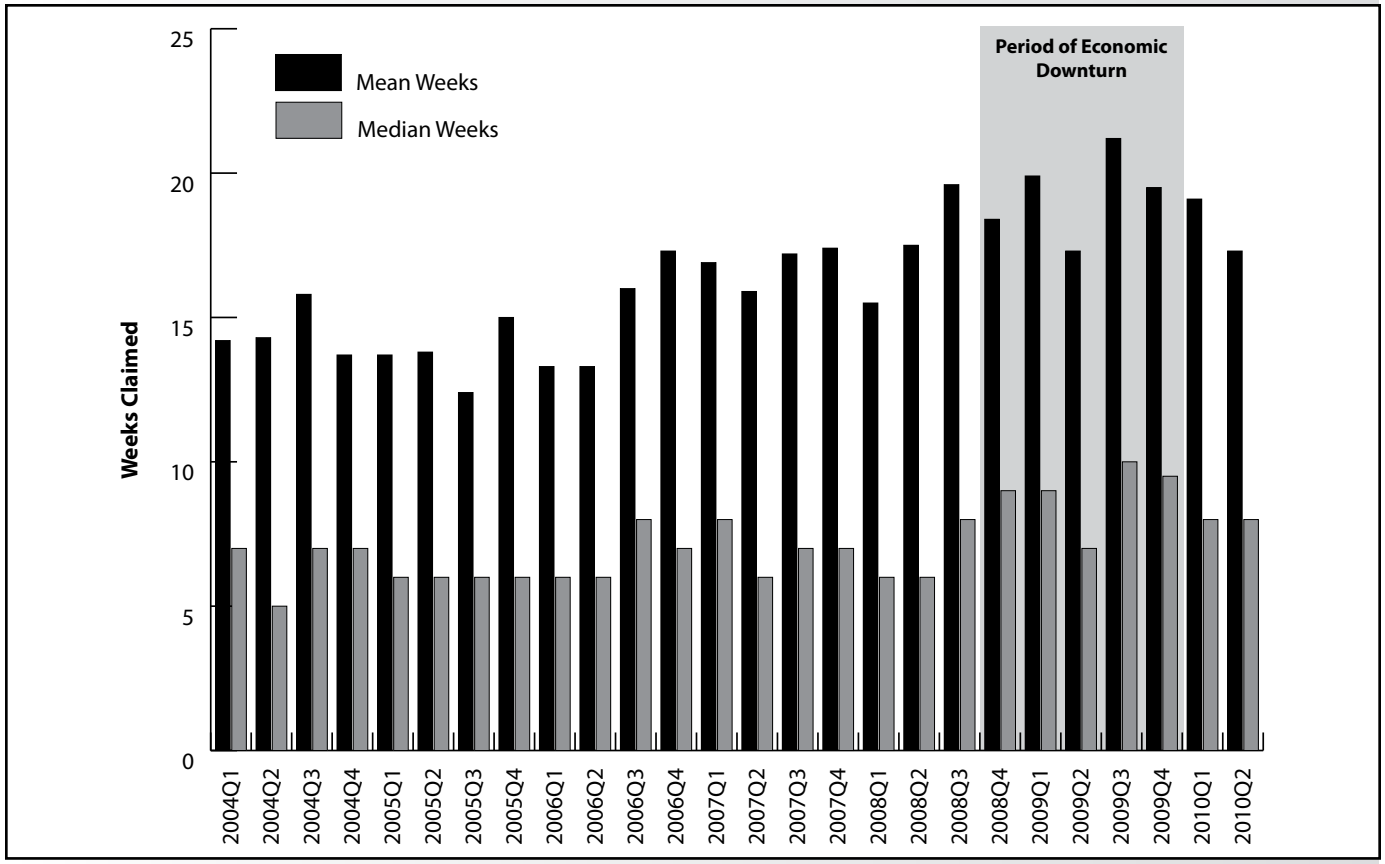

Figure 2: Mean and Median Duration of Workers' Compensation Claims (in Weeks) by the Year and Quarter of Injury in Wyoming, 2004Q1 to 2010Q2

during the downturn. This is not surprising, given the large drop in employment opportunities during the downturn and in the post-downturn period to some extent. For example, since the end of Wyoming's economic downturn (January 2010) through February 2012, the state has lost 1,700 construction jobs.

Two industries that experienced major decreases in employment from October 2008 to February 2012 were construction (-38.9%) and natural resources & mining (-25.3%). These two sectors were combined for this portion of the analysis to provide at least 200 observations in each time interval. From 2004Q1 to 2008Q3, the average duration of claims in the natural resources & mining and construction industries was 17.0 weeks (see Figure 4). During the period of economic downturn, the average duration increased to 21.9 weeks, and then dropped back down to 17.5 weeks during the first two quarters of 2010.

The only industry that did not show a significant increase in mean claims duration during the economic downturn was educational and health services (see Figure 5, page 9). This was the only major industry to experience steady gains in employment during Wyoming's economic downturn.

Age of Workers' Compensation Claimants

Another objective of this research was to examine the impact of a worker's age at the time of injury on mean claim duration. As anticipated, the mean duration of workers' compensation claims tended to increase with age (see Figure 6, page 9). Given the advanced age of Wyoming's workforce, these findings have implications for the workers' compensation fund (possible funding shortfalls), employers (higher workers' compensation rates), and

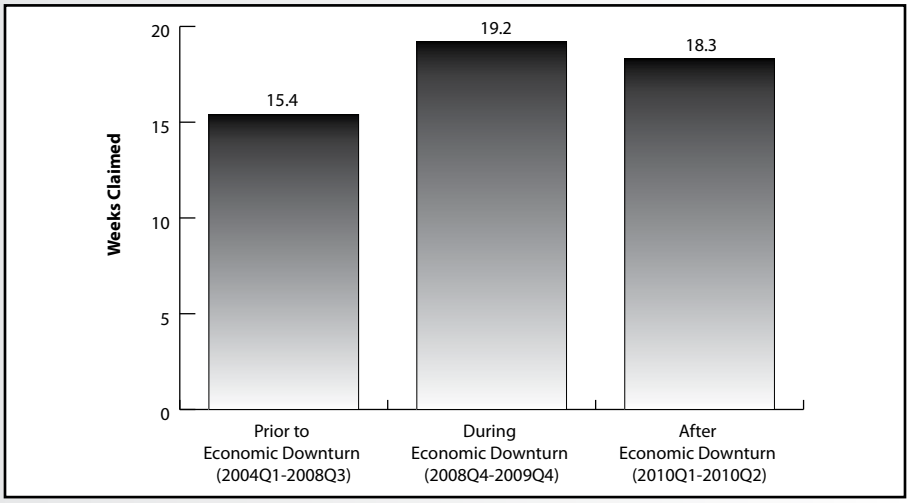

Figure 3: Average Duration of Workers' Compensation Weeks Claimed in Wyoming Across All Industries, 2004Q1-2010Q2

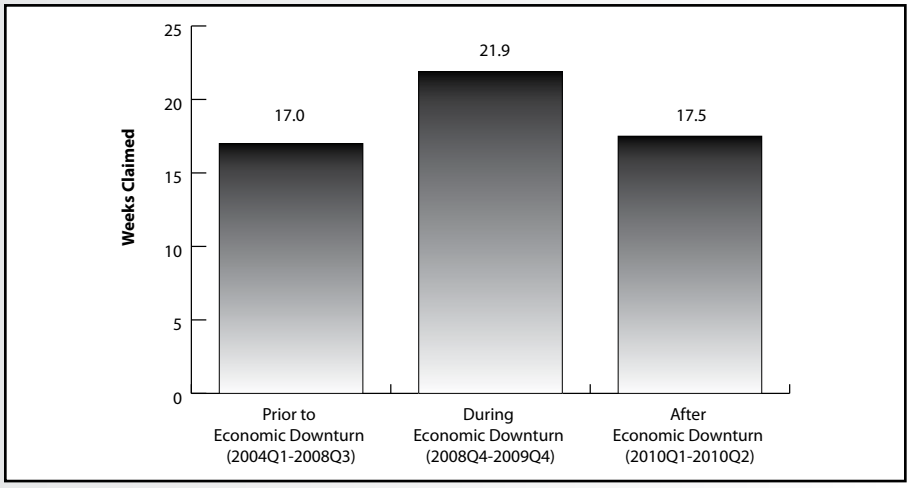

Figure 4: Average Duration of Workers' Compensation Weeks Claimed in Wyoming's Natural Resources & Mining and Construction Industries, 2004Q1-2010Q2

employees (an increase in lost wages due to the longer duration of claims).

Future Research

R&P plans to follow this introductory paper with further analysis in order to examine the relationship between workers' tenure with an employer, or within the industry, on the frequency, duration, and cost of workers' compensation claims.

Future studies by R&P may examine whether an employee who files a workers' compensation claim is more or less likely to be retained. Future research may also compare the duration of claims for workers with multiple claims over their work history to the duration of claims for people with single claims.

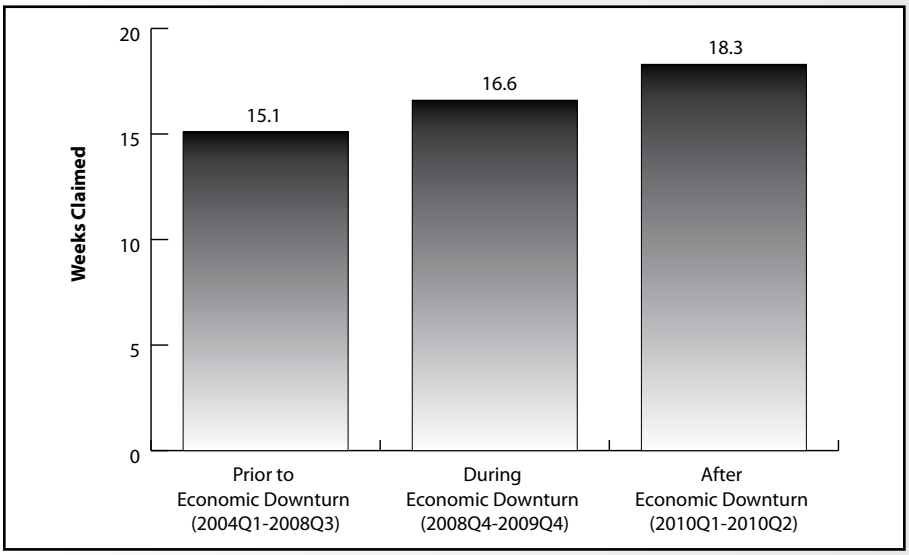

Figure 5: Average Duration of Workers' Compensation Weeks Claimed in Wyoming's Educational & Health Services Industry, 2004Q1-2010Q2

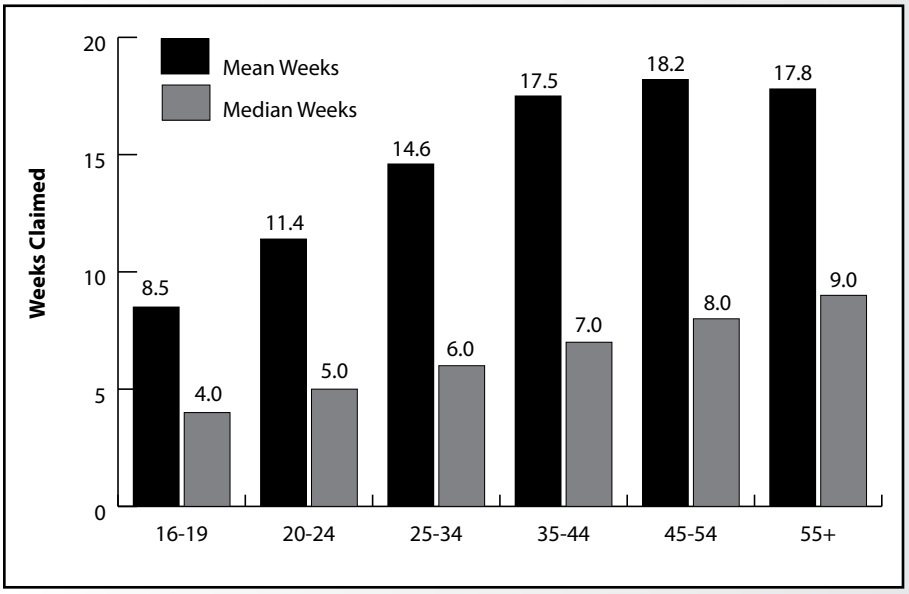

Figure 6: Average Duration of Workers' Compensation Weeks Claimed in Wyoming by Age Group, 2004Q1-2010Q2

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Long-Term Occupational Projections: 2011 to 2021

by: Michael Moore, Associate Editor

Wyoming is projected to add 40,874 jobs from 2011 to 2021, but the greatest opportunity for employment will be driven by the need to replace workers who leave the state's workforce over the next 10 years.

According to the latest projections from the Research & Planning section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Wyoming will need to fill 27,747 jobs during each of the next 10 years due to replacement need. These job openings are due to workers exiting Wyoming's labor force because of retirement, death, family obligations, or other reasons. By comparison, Wyoming is projected to add 4,087 new jobs annually during this period.

Several Wyoming industries are reliant upon workers ages 55 and older who will reach the traditional retirement age of 65 over the next 10 years. In educational services, 27.7% of all workers fall in this age group (Research & Planning, 2012). The reliance on older workers can also be seen in health care & social assistance, where 20.4% are 55 and older, and public administration, where 24.7% of all workers are in this age group.

As more of these workers reach the traditional retirement age of 65 over the next 10 years, there will be a substantial need to fill positions as they are vacated. For example, the educational services industry is projected to add 811 new jobs annually, but will need to fill 2,556 openings annually due to replacement need.

Educational Requirements

Of the top 10 jobs with the highest number of annual openings, 6 require a high school education or less (see Table 1). These include jobs such as truck drivers, heavy & tractor trailer; bookkeeping, accounting, & auditing clerks; and nursing aides, orderlies, & attendants. Of these top 10 jobs, only registered nurses require an associate's degree, and only general & operations managers require a bachelor's degree. General & operations managers ($87,270) and registered nurses ($60,929) receive higher annual wages on average than any others in this top 10.

In general, jobs that require some form of postsecondary education are paid higher wages than those that require a high school education or less. The average annual wage for jobs requiring a high school education or less was $33,749, compared to $58,946 for jobs requiring a bachelor's degree (see Table 2, page 12). Of the top five occupations with the highest number of annual openings that required a high school education or less, two were paid average annual wages under $40,000. By comparison, of the top five occupations that required a bachelor's degree, all but one were paid more than $40,000 annually, on average.

Detailed short-term (2011-2013) and long-term (2011-2021) occupational projections by industry are available online at http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections.htm.

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Table 1: **Occupations with the Highest Number of Average Annual Openings in Wyoming, 2011 to 2021**

Occupation	Annual Openings: Growth	Annual Openings: Replacement Need	Annual Openings: Total	Typical Education	Average Annual Wage
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	114	706	820	High School or Less	$43,266
Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	89	585	674	Some College or Certificate	$30,456
Registered Nurses	133	522	654	Associate's Degree	$60,929
General & Operations Managers	69	555	625	Bachelor's Degree	$87,270
Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	151	447	598	High School or Less	$47,929
Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	61	509	571	High School or Less	$34,920
Office Clerks, General	61	463	524	High School or Less	$29,683
Teacher Assistants	109	333	441	Some College or Certificate	$25,469
Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, & Mining	99	334	433	High School or Less	$46,984
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	81	342	423	High School or Less	$27,566

Table 2: Top 5 Occupations by Projected Growth for Each Level of Educational Requirement in Wyoming, 2011 to 2021

Occupation	Employment 2011	Employment 2021	Employment Change	Annual Openings Growth	Annual Openings Replacement Need	Average Annual Wage
Total, All Education Levels	**272,210**	**313,084**	**40,874**	**4,087**	**27,747**	**$42,514**
High School or Less						
Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	5,678	7,193	1,514	151	447	$47,929
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	6,264	7,402	1,139	114	706	$43,266
Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, & Mining	2,644	3,630	986	99	334	$46,984
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants	3,208	4,016	807	81	342	$27,566
Personal & Home Care Aides	1,619	2,278	659	66	215	$22,043
Total, All Occupations	**167,314**	**188,188**	**20,874**	**2,087**	**17,667**	**$33,749**
Some College or Certificate						
Teacher Assistants	3,798	4,883	1,085	109	333	$25,469
Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	5,858	6,746	888	89	585	$30,456
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2,024	2,552	528	53	183	$58,628
Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	1,706	2,212	505	51	143	$54,399
Electricians	2,664	3,166	502	50	266	$52,287
Total, All Occupations	**38,484**	**45,488**	**7,004**	**700**	**3,722**	**$42,683**
Associate's Degree						
Registered Nurses	5,132	6,458	1,325	133	522	$60,929
Dental Hygienists	407	525	118	12	45	$66,556
Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	415	519	104	10	42	$52,149
Power Plant Operators	410	500	89	9	26	$62,155
Respiratory Therapists	284	369	85	9	30	$54,771
Total, All Occupations	**9,743**	**12,032**	**2,289**	**229**	**977**	**$54,902**
Bachelor's Degree						
Elementary School Teachers, Exc. Special Education	2,987	3,824	838	84	250	$57,442
General & Operations Managers	5,254	5,948	693	69	555	$87,270
All Other Teachers, Primary, Secondary, & Adult	2,503	3,194	691	69	210	$34,557
Secondary School Teachers, Exc. Spec. & Voc. Ed.	1,913	2,455	542	54	162	$58,016
Middle School Teachers, Exc. Spec. & Voc. Ed.	1,185	1,525	340	34	99	$60,024
Total, All Occupations	**44,535**	**52,616**	**8,081**	**808**	**4,247**	**$58,946**
Master's Degree						
Educational, Vocational, & School Counselors	621	789	168	17	53	$58,581
Physical Therapists	430	564	134	13	48	$78,574
Education Admin., Elementary & Secondary School	448	575	127	13	38	$87,399
Speech-Language Pathologists	315	414	99	10	32	$64,462
Occupational Therapists	263	349	85	9	29	$64,364
Total, All Occupations	**6,977**	**8,538**	**1,561**	**156**	**642**	**$63,958**
Doctoral or Professional Degree						
Postsecondary Teachers, All Other	491	616	125	12	43	$64,715
Family & General Practitioners	407	522	116	12	41	$187,538
Lawyers	757	864	106	11	73	$90,344
Physicians & Surgeons, All Other	254	315	61	6	25	$213,276
Dentists, General	170	220	49	5	18	$150,587
Total, All Occupations	**5,158**	**6,222**	**1,064**	**106**	**492**	**$107,776**

Wyoming Unemployment Rate Falls to 5.3% in March 2012

by: David Bullard, Senior Economist

The Research & Planning section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has reported that the state's seasonally adjusted[1] unemployment rate fell from 5.4% in February to 5.3% in March. Wyoming's jobless rate has decreased for seven consecutive months and is significantly lower than the current U.S. rate of 8.2%. Seasonally adjusted employment of Wyoming residents was basically unchanged from February to March, but increased significantly from a year earlier (a gain of 5,532 individuals, or 1.9%).

Most county unemployment rates remained fairly stable from February to March. Jobless rates edged upward in Big Horn (up from 6.6% to 7.0%) and Sublette (up from 3.2% to 3.5%) counties while decreasing slightly in Johnson (down from 7.8% to 7.3%), Platte (down from 6.5% to 6.1%), Hot Springs (down from 5.3% to 5.0%), and Fremont (down from 7.4% to 7.1%) counties.

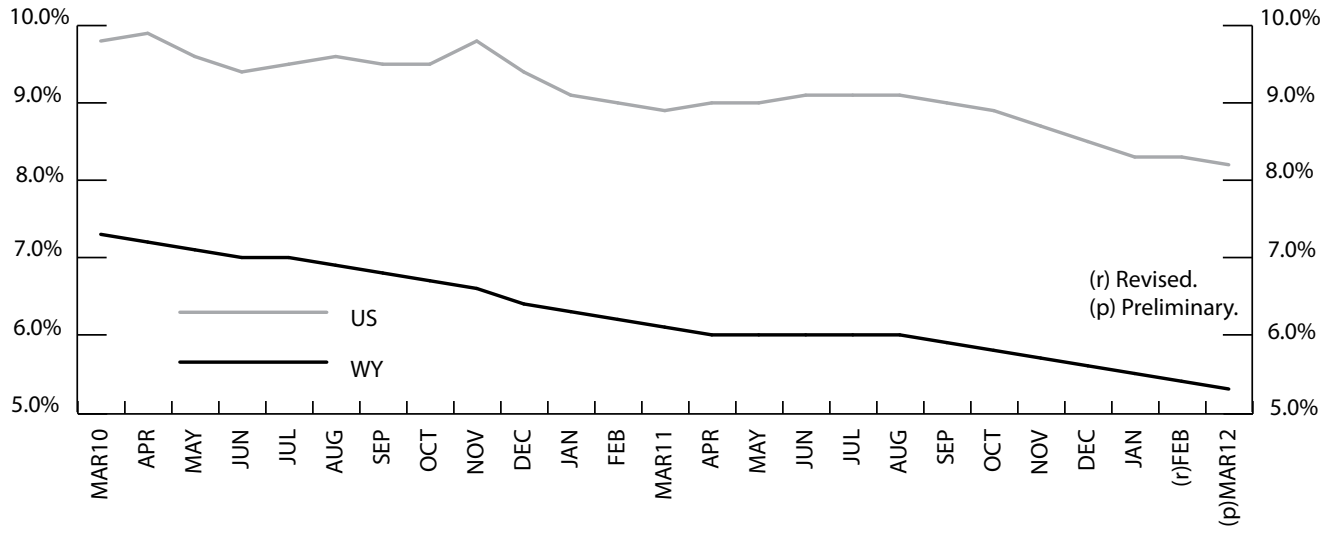
Sublette County reported the lowest jobless rate in March (3.5%). It was followed by Campbell (4.6%), Albany (4.7%), and Converse (4.8%) counties. The highest unemployment rates were found in Lincoln (8.9%), Johnson (7.3%), and Sheridan (7.2%) counties.

Compared to a year earlier, unemployment rates fell in most counties, suggesting modest improvement in the state's economy. The largest decreases occurred in Johnson (down from 9.0% to 7.3%), Big Horn (down from 8.6% to 7.0%), and Natrona (down from 6.6% to 5.3%) counties.

Total nonfarm employment (measured by place of work) increased from 278,000 in March 2011 to 280,400 in March 2012, a gain of 2,400 jobs (0.9%).

[1] Seasonal adjustment is a statistical procedure to remove the impact of normal regularly recurring events (such as weather, major holidays, and the opening and closing of schools) from economic time series to better understand changes in economic conditions from month to month.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



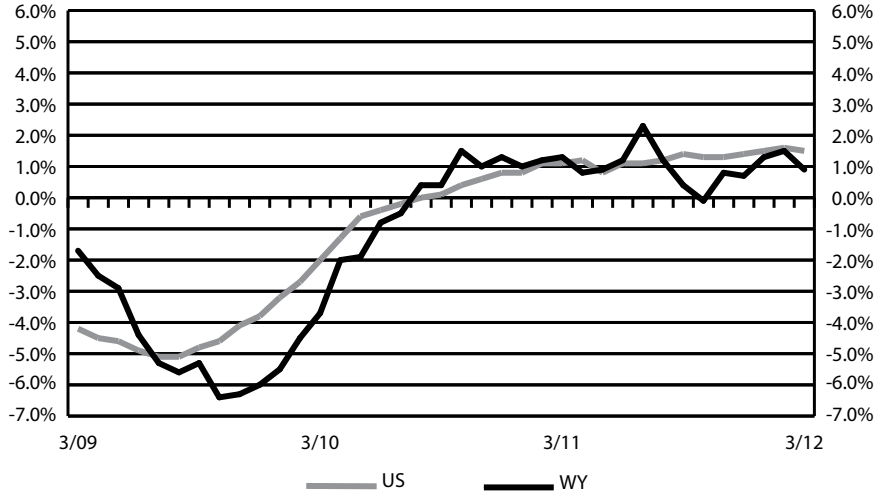
Current Employment Statistics (CES) Estimates and Research & Planning's Short-Term Projections, March 2012

by: David Bullard, Senior Economist

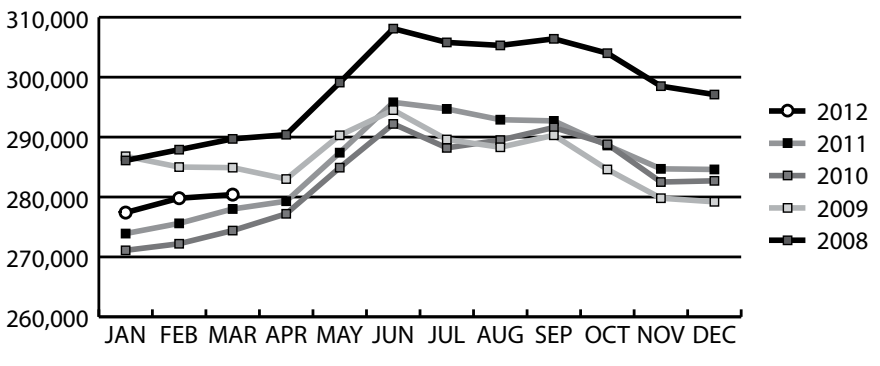
Industry Sector	Research & Planning's Short-Term Projections	Current Employment Statistics (CES) Estimates	N Difference	% Difference
Total Nonfarm Employment	**284,447**	**280,400**	**-4,047**	**-1.4**
Natural Resources & Mining	28,163	27,100	-1,063	-3.9
Construction	19,255	18,500	-755	-4.1
Manufacturing	9,126	8,800	-326	-3.7
Wholesale Trade	9,133	9,100	-33	-0.4
Retail Trade	28,069	28,700	631	2.2
Transportation & Utilities	14,566	14,300	-266	-1.9
Information	3,821	3,900	79	2.0
Financial Activities	10,613	10,600	-13	-0.1
Professional & Business Services	17,432	17,200	-232	-1.3
Educational & Health Services	26,858	26,300	-558	-2.1
Leisure & Hospitality	30,981	28,900	-2,081	-7.2
Other Services	11,806	12,400	594	4.8
Government	74,625	74,600	-25	0.0

Projections run in April 2012 and based on QCEW Data through December 2011.

Nonagricultural Employment Growth
(Percentage Change Over Previous Year)



Wyoming Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment



State Unemployment Rates
March 2012
(Seasonally Adjusted)

State	Unemp. Rate
Puerto Rico	15.0
Nevada	12.0
Rhode Island	11.1
California	11.0
District of Columbia	9.8
North Carolina	9.7
New Jersey	9.0
Mississippi	9.0
Georgia	9.0
Florida	9.0
South Carolina	8.9
Illinois	8.8
Oregon	8.6
Kentucky	8.6
Arizona	8.6
New York	8.5
Michigan	8.5
Washington	8.3
United States	**8.2**
Indiana	8.2
Tennessee	7.9
Idaho	7.9
Colorado	7.8
Connecticut	7.7
Pennsylvania	7.5
Ohio	7.5
Missouri	7.4
Arkansas	7.4
Alabama	7.3
New Mexico	7.2
Maine	7.2
Louisiana	7.1
Texas	7.0
Alaska	7.0
West Virginia	6.9
Delaware	6.9
Wisconsin	6.8
Maryland	6.6
Massachusetts	6.5
Hawaii	6.4
Montana	6.2
Kansas	6.2
Utah	5.8
Minnesota	5.8
Virginia	5.6
Oklahoma	5.4
Wyoming	**5.3**
New Hampshire	5.2
Iowa	5.2
Vermont	4.8
South Dakota	4.3
Nebraska	4.0
North Dakota	3.0

Wyoming Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment

by: David Bullard, Senior Economist

	Employment in Thousands			% Change Total Employment Feb 12	Mar 11
	Mar 12	Feb 12	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 12
CAMPBELL COUNTY					
TOTAL NONAG. WAGE & SALARY EMPLOYMENT	**27.8**	**27.5**	**27.7**	**1.1**	**0.4**
TOTAL PRIVATE	**22.8**	**22.6**	**22.9**	**0.9**	**-0.4**
GOODS PRODUCING	**10.7**	**10.6**	**10.9**	**0.9**	**-1.8**
Natural Resources & Mining	8.2	8.2	8.0	0.0	2.5
Construction	2.0	1.9	2.4	5.3	-16.7
Manufacturing	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0
SERVICE PROVIDING	**17.1**	**16.9**	**16.8**	**1.2**	**1.8**
Trade, Transport., & Utilities	5.4	5.4	5.4	0.0	0.0
Information	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Financial Activities	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0
Professional & Bus. Services	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0
Educational & Health Serv.	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Leisure & Hospitality	2.0	1.9	2.0	5.3	0.0
Other Services	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.0	10.0
GOVERNMENT	**5.0**	**4.9**	**4.8**	**2.0**	**4.2**

	Employment in Thousands			% Change Total Employment Feb 12	Mar 11
	Mar 12	Feb 12	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 12
SWEETWATER COUNTY					
TOTAL NONAG. WAGE & SALARY EMPLOYMENT	**25.4**	**25.1**	**24.6**	**1.2**	**3.3**
TOTAL PRIVATE	**20.4**	**20.3**	**19.6**	**0.5**	**4.1**
GOODS PRODUCING	**9.2**	**9.1**	**8.5**	**1.1**	**8.2**
Natural Resources & Mining	6.3	6.3	5.7	0.0	10.5
Construction	1.5	1.4	1.5	7.1	0.0
Manufacturing	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.0	7.7
SERVICE PROVIDING	**16.2**	**16.0**	**16.1**	**1.3**	**0.6**
Trade, Transport., & Utilities	5.0	5.0	4.9	0.0	2.0
Information	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Financial Activities	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.0	-11.1
Professional & Bus. Services	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.0	-8.3
Educational & Health Serv.	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.0	10.0
Leisure & Hospitality	2.3	2.3	2.2	0.0	4.5
Other Services	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0
GOVERNMENT	**5.0**	**4.8**	**5.0**	**4.2**	**0.0**

	Employment in Thousands			% Change Total Employment Feb 12	Mar 11
	Mar 12	Feb 12	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 12
TETON COUNTY					
TOTAL NONAG. WAGE & SALARY EMPLOYMENT	**16.2**	**16.3**	**15.4**	**-0.6**	**5.2**
TOTAL PRIVATE	**13.9**	**14.0**	**13.1**	**-0.7**	**6.1**
GOODS PRODUCING	**1.5**	**1.5**	**1.4**	**0.0**	**7.1**
Nat. Res., Mining & Const.	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.0	7.7
Manufacturing	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
SERVICE PROVIDING	**14.7**	**14.8**	**14.0**	**-0.7**	**5.0**
Trade, Transport., & Utilities	2.2	2.2	2.1	0.0	4.8
Information	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Financial Activities	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0
Professional & Bus. Services	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.0	7.7
Educational & Health Serv.	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.0	11.1
Leisure & Hospitality	6.5	6.6	6.1	-1.5	6.6
Other Services	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0
GOVERNMENT	**2.3**	**2.3**	**2.3**	**0.0**	**0.0**

State Unemployment Rates March 2012 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

State	Unemp. Rate
Puerto Rico	14.9
Nevada	11.9
Rhode Island	11.8
California	11.5
District of Columbia	9.9
North Carolina	9.6
New Jersey	9.3
Oregon	9.2
Illinois	9.0
Kentucky	9.0
Michigan	9.0
Georgia	8.9
Washington	8.8
Mississippi	8.7
New York	8.7
South Carolina	8.7
Florida	8.6
Idaho	8.6
Indiana	8.6
Arizona	8.4
United States	**8.4**
Maine	8.3
Colorado	8.2
Connecticut	8.1
Tennessee	8.1
Alaska	7.9
Missouri	7.9
Ohio	7.8
Pennsylvania	7.7
Wisconsin	7.5
Arkansas	7.4
West Virginia	7.4
Alabama	7.3
Delaware	7.1
Louisiana	7.0
Montana	7.0
New Mexico	7.0
Texas	7.0
Maryland	6.7
Kansas	6.6
Minnesota	6.5
Hawaii	6.4
Massachusetts	6.4
Utah	6.2
Wyoming	**5.9**
Iowa	5.7
Virginia	5.7
New Hampshire	5.6
Vermont	5.3
South Dakota	4.9
Oklahoma	4.8
Nebraska	4.2
North Dakota	3.8

Economic Indicators

by: Margaret Hiatt, Administrative/Survey Support Specialist

The Baker Hughes rig count for Wyoming fell for the third month in a row. It decreased from 48 in February to 44 in March, an 8.3% decline.

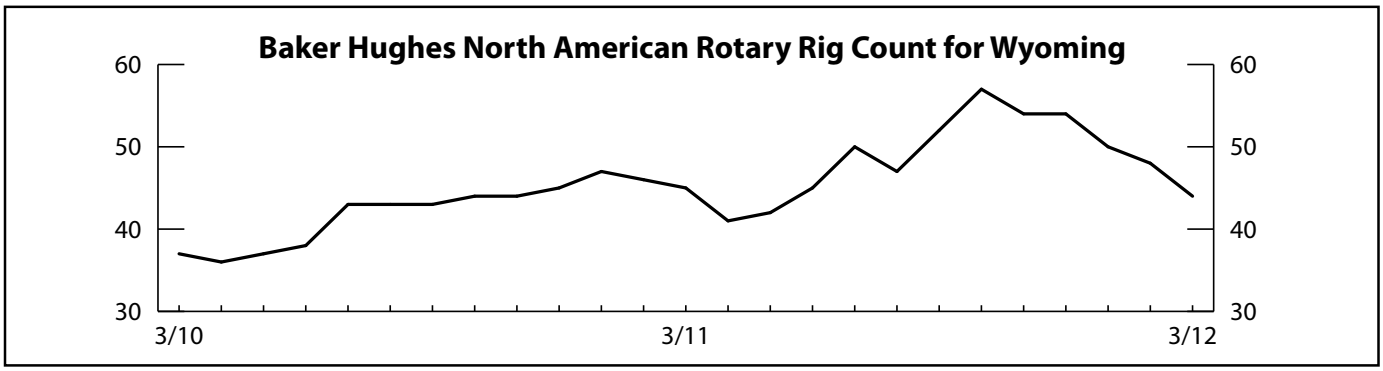
	Mar 2012 (p)	Feb 2012 (r)	Mar 2011 (b)	Percent Change Month	Percent Change Year
Wyoming Total Nonfarm Employment	**280,400**	**279,800**	**278,000**	**0.2**	**0.9**
Wyoming State Government	17,400	17,400	17,200	0.0	1.2
Laramie County Nonfarm Employment	44,900	44,600	43,300	0.7	3.7
Natrona County Nonfarm Employment	40,600	40,100	38,800	1.2	4.6
Selected U.S. Employment Data					
U.S. Multiple Jobholders	7,052,000	7,116,000	6,809,000	-0.9	3.6
As a percent of all workers	5.0%	5.1%	4.9%	N/A	N/A
U.S. Discouraged Workers	865,000	1,006,000	921,000	-14.0	-6.1
U.S. Part Time for Economic Reasons	7,867,000	8,455,000	8,737,000	-7.0	-10.0
Wyoming Unemployment Insurance					
Weeks Compensated	24,780	26,870	37,443	-7.8	-33.8
Benefits Paid	$8,323,950	$9,002,379	$12,063,896	-7.5	-31.0
Average Weekly Benefit Payment	$335.91	$335.03	$322.19	0.3	4.3
State Insured Covered Jobs[1]	261,927	259,987	253,980	0.7	3.1
Insured Unemployment Rate	3.3%	3.5%	3.2%	N/A	N/A
Consumer Price Index (U) for All U.S. Urban Consumers					
(1982 to 1984 = 100)					
All Items	229.4	227.7	223.5	0.8	2.7
Food & Beverages	232.7	232.5	225.5	0.1	3.2
Housing	221.5	221.1	217.7	0.2	1.7
Apparel	127.3	123.3	121.3	3.2	4.9
Transportation	220.8	214.4	211.0	3.0	4.7
Medical Care	411.5	410.5	397.7	0.3	3.5
Recreation (Dec. 1997=100)	114.7	114.3	113.3	0.3	1.2
Education & Communication (Dec. 1997=100)	113.2	133.2	130.7	-15.0	-13.4
Other Goods & Services	392.4	391.2	385.6	0.3	1.7
Producer Prices (1982 to 1984 = 100)					
All Commodities	204.3	201.6	199.2	1.3	2.6
Wyoming Building Permits (New Privately Owned Housing Units Authorized)					
Total Units	277	116	153	138.8	81.0
Valuation	$45,313,000	$27,469,000	$29,105,000	65.0	55.7
Single Family Homes	130	111	99	17.1	31.3
Valuation	$35,460,000	$27,041,000	$24,965,000	31.1	42.0
Casper MSA[2] Building Permits	137	15	27	813.3	407.4
Valuation	$10,993,000	$2,879,000	$3,237,000	281.8	239.6
Cheyenne MSA Building Permits	38	22	51	72.7	-25.5
Valuation	$4,755,000	$3,366,000	$5,434,000	41.3	-12.5
Baker Hughes North American Rotary Rig Count for Wyoming	44	48	45	-8.3	-2.2

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised. (b) Benchmarked.

[1]Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program estimates.

[2]Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Note: Production worker hours and earnings data have been dropped from the Economic Indicators page because of problems with accuracy due to a small sample size and high item nonresponse. The Bureau of Labor Statistics will continue to publish these data online at http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.wy.htm.



Wyoming County Unemployment Rates

by: Carola Cowan, BLS Programs Supervisor

In March 2012, the highest unemployment rates were found in Lincoln (8.9%), Johnson (7.3%), and Sheridan (7.2%) counties.

	Labor Force			Employed			Unemployed			Unemployment Rates		
REGION County	Mar 2012 (p)	Feb 2012 (r)	Mar 2011 (b)	Mar 2012 (p)	Feb 2012 (r)	Mar 2011 (b)	Mar 2012 (p)	Feb 2012 (r)	Mar 2011 (b)	Mar 2012 (p)	Feb 2012 (r)	Mar 2011 (b)
NORTHWEST	**46,833**	**46,281**	**46,145**	**43,587**	**43,044**	**42,592**	**3,246**	**3,237**	**3,553**	**6.9**	**7.0**	**7.7**
Big Horn	5,194	5,048	4,978	4,830	4,713	4,549	364	335	429	7.0	6.6	8.6
Fremont	19,819	19,704	19,826	18,405	18,238	18,234	1,414	1,466	1,592	7.1	7.4	8.0
Hot Springs	2,575	2,532	2,617	2,446	2,398	2,471	129	134	146	5.0	5.3	5.6
Park	14,894	14,671	14,316	13,840	13,651	13,233	1,054	1,020	1,083	7.1	7.0	7.6
Washakie	4,351	4,326	4,408	4,066	4,044	4,105	285	282	303	6.6	6.5	6.9
NORTHEAST	**54,691**	**54,557**	**55,146**	**51,566**	**51,444**	**51,610**	**3,125**	**3,113**	**3,536**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**6.4**
Campbell	27,728	27,934	28,112	26,454	26,685	26,693	1,274	1,249	1,419	4.6	4.5	5.0
Crook	3,496	3,405	3,479	3,285	3,200	3,273	211	205	206	6.0	6.0	5.9
Johnson	3,907	3,777	3,908	3,623	3,484	3,555	284	293	353	7.3	7.8	9.0
Sheridan	16,264	16,152	16,315	15,099	14,980	14,975	1,165	1,172	1,340	7.2	7.3	8.2
Weston	3,296	3,289	3,332	3,105	3,095	3,114	191	194	218	5.8	5.9	6.5
SOUTHWEST	**65,342**	**65,476**	**64,681**	**61,566**	**61,761**	**60,487**	**3,776**	**3,715**	**4,194**	**5.8**	**5.7**	**6.5**
Lincoln	8,105	8,110	8,362	7,381	7,396	7,520	724	714	842	8.9	8.8	10.1
Sublette	8,266	8,262	7,281	7,977	7,994	6,976	289	268	305	3.5	3.2	4.2
Sweetwater	25,463	25,460	25,264	24,168	24,191	23,857	1,295	1,269	1,407	5.1	5.0	5.6
Teton	12,824	12,949	12,630	11,979	12,104	11,718	845	845	912	6.6	6.5	7.2
Uinta	10,684	10,695	11,144	10,061	10,076	10,416	623	619	728	5.8	5.8	6.5
SOUTHEAST	**78,764**	**78,771**	**78,070**	**74,012**	**73,994**	**72,998**	**4,752**	**4,777**	**5,072**	**6.0**	**6.1**	**6.5**
Albany	20,969	21,031	20,674	19,981	20,059	19,644	988	972	1,030	4.7	4.6	5.0
Goshen	6,546	6,429	6,511	6,154	6,038	6,100	392	391	411	6.0	6.1	6.3
Laramie	45,822	46,110	45,358	42,768	43,017	42,057	3,054	3,093	3,301	6.7	6.7	7.3
Niobrara	1,270	1,189	1,259	1,207	1,130	1,196	63	59	63	5.0	5.0	5.0
Platte	4,157	4,012	4,268	3,902	3,750	4,001	255	262	267	6.1	6.5	6.3
CENTRAL	**59,032**	**59,123**	**58,518**	**55,848**	**55,888**	**54,691**	**3,184**	**3,235**	**3,827**	**5.4**	**5.5**	**6.5**
Carbon	7,596	7,515	7,851	7,087	7,008	7,260	509	507	591	6.7	6.7	7.5
Converse	7,862	7,858	7,750	7,486	7,477	7,348	376	381	402	4.8	4.8	5.2
Natrona	43,574	43,750	42,917	41,275	41,403	40,083	2,299	2,347	2,834	5.3	5.4	6.6
STATEWIDE	**304,664**	**304,210**	**302,561**	**286,581**	**286,130**	**282,378**	**18,083**	**18,080**	**20,183**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**6.7**
Statewide Seasonally Adjusted										5.3	5.4	6.1
U.S.										8.4	8.7	9.2
U.S. Seasonally Adjusted										8.2	8.3	8.9

Prepared in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Benchmarked 02/2012. Run Date 04/2012.

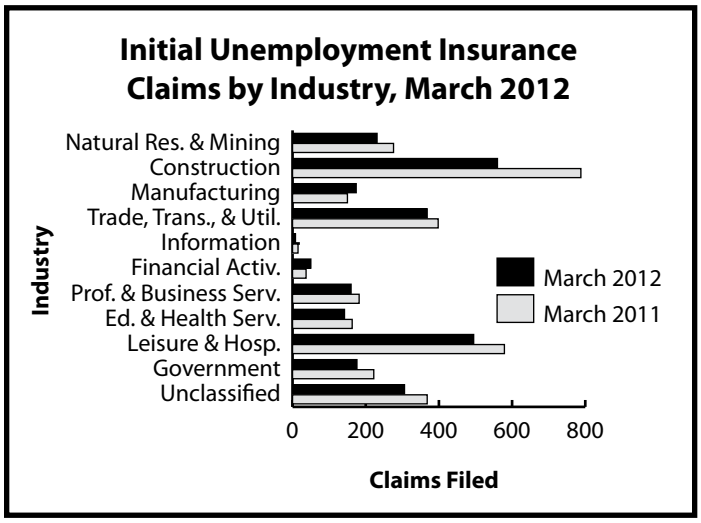
Data are not seasonally adjusted except where otherwise specified.

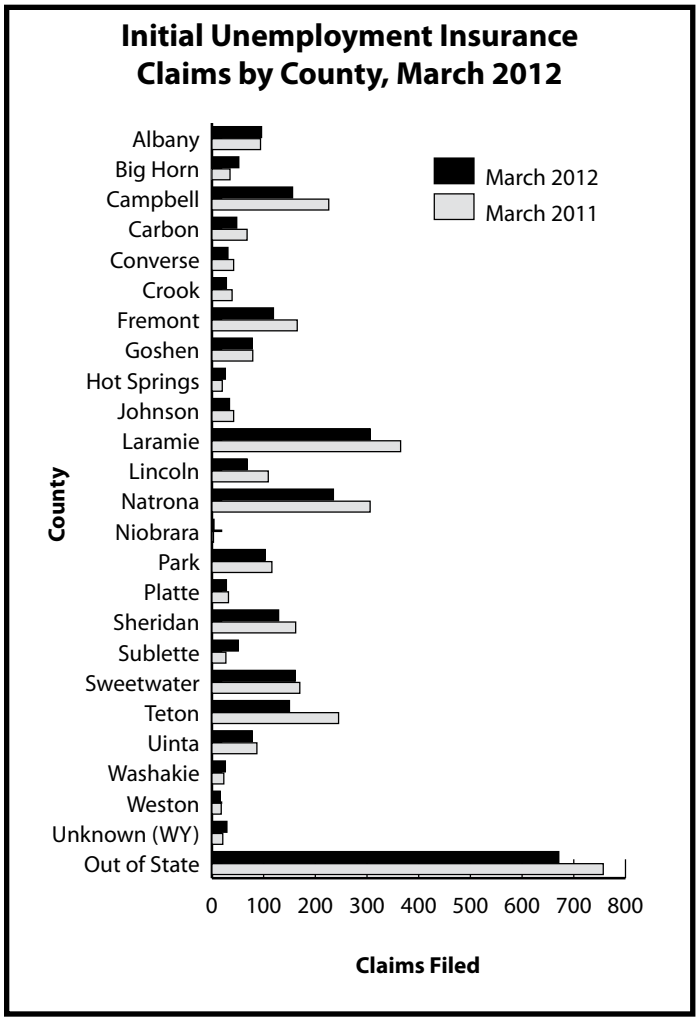
(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised. (b) Benchmarked.

Wyoming Normalized[a] Unemployment Insurance Statistics: Initial Claims

by: Sherry Wen, Senior Economist

Initial claims decreased over the year in most industries, but significant increases were seen in financial activities (35.1%), wholesale trade (21.7%), and manufacturing (16.0%).





Initial Claims

	Claims Filed			Percent Change Claims Filed	
	Mar 12	Feb 12	Mar 11	Feb 12	Mar 11
Wyoming Statewide					
TOTAL CLAIMS FILED	**2,723**	**2,980**	**3,252**	**-8.6**	**-16.3**
TOTAL GOODS-PRODUCING	**965**	**1,362**	**1,214**	**-29.1**	**-20.5**
Natural Res. & Mining	231	306	276	-24.5	-16.3
Mining	201	283	248	-29.0	-19.0
Oil & Gas Extraction	4	15	19	-73.3	-78.9
Construction	560	948	788	-40.9	-28.9
Manufacturing	174	108	150	61.1	16.0
TOTAL SERVICE-PROVIDING	**1,276**	**1,051**	**1,448**	**21.4**	**-11.9**
Trade, Transp., & Utilities	368	358	398	2.8	-7.5
Wholesale Trade	56	43	46	30.2	21.7
Retail Trade	195	187	236	4.3	-17.4
Transp., Warehousing & Utilities	117	128	116	-8.6	0.9
Information	8	12	15	-33.3	-46.7
Financial Activities	50	52	37	-3.8	35.1
Prof. and Business Svcs.	160	199	182	-19.6	-12.1
Educational & Health Svcs.	142	128	163	10.9	-12.9
Leisure & Hospitality	495	240	579	106.3	-14.5
Other Svcs., exc. Public Admin.	53	62	74	-14.5	-28.4
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	**176**	**205**	**222**	**-14.1**	**-20.7**
Federal Government	74	84	89	-11.9	-16.9
State Government	23	22	23	4.5	0.0
Local Government	79	99	110	-20.2	-28.2
Local Education	22	30	27	-26.7	-18.5
UNCLASSIFIED	**306**	**362**	**368**	**-15.5**	**-16.8**
Laramie County					
TOTAL CLAIMS FILED	**308**	**414**	**365**	**-25.6**	**-15.6**
TOTAL GOODS-PRODUCING	**94**	**178**	**135**	**-47.2**	**-30.4**
Construction	78	156	113	-50.0	-31.0
TOTAL SERVICE-PROVIDING	**171**	**177**	**172**	**-3.4**	**-0.6**
Trade, Transp., & Utilities	51	50	54	2.0	-5.6
Financial Activities	16	15	**9**	6.7	77.8
Prof. & Business Svcs.	50	42	35	19.0	42.9
Educational & Health Svcs.	24	32	27	-25.0	-11.1
Leisure & Hospitality	19	28	34	-32.1	-44.1
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	**30**	**38**	**43**	**-21.1**	**-30.2**
UNCLASSIFIED	**13**	**21**	**15**	**-38.1**	**-13.3**
Natrona County					
TOTAL CLAIMS FILED	**235**	**336**	**308**	**-30.1**	**-23.7**
TOTAL GOODS-PRODUCING	**99**	**161**	**124**	**-38.5**	**-20.2**
Construction	67	120	87	-44.2	-23.0
TOTAL SERVICE-PROVIDING	**123**	**147**	**167**	**-16.3**	**-26.3**
Trade, Transp., & Utilities	41	54	49	-24.1	-16.3
Financial Activities	4	7	6	-42.9	-33.3
Prof. & Business Svcs.	23	20	28	15.0	-17.9
Educational & Health Svcs.	21	27	27	-22.2	-22.2
Leisure & Hospitality	23	22	36	4.5	-36.1
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	**7**	**15**	**8**	**-53.3**	**-12.5**
UNCLASSIFIED	**6**	**13**	**9**	**-53.8**	**-33.3**

[a]An average month is considered 4.33 weeks. If a month has four weeks, the normalization factor is 1.0825. If the month has five weeks, the normalization factor is 0.866. The number of raw claims is multiplied by the normalization factor to achieve the normalized claims counts.

Wyoming Normalized[a] Unemployment Insurance Statistics: Continued Claims

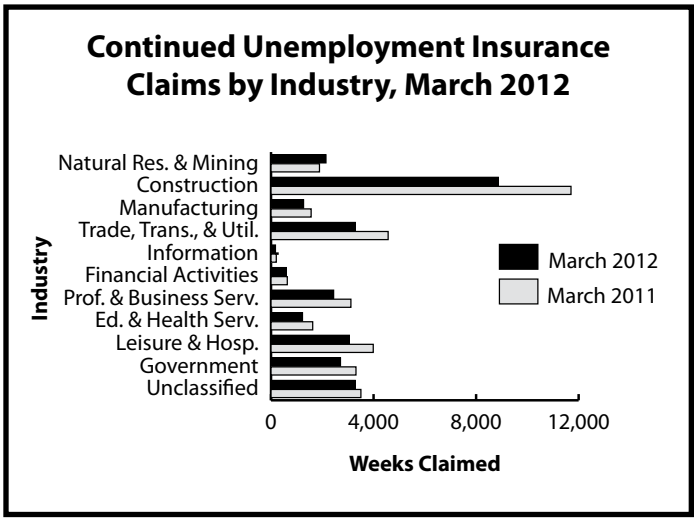
by: Sherry Wen, Senior Economist

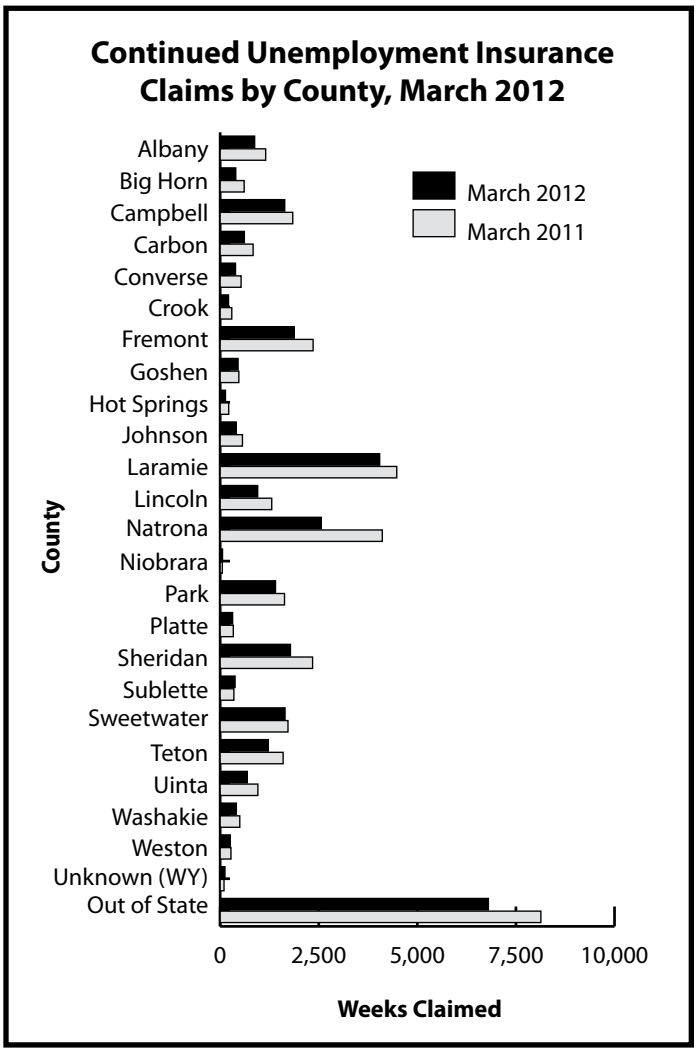
The number of continued weeks claimed declined from March 2011 for all industries except natural resources & mining (13.4%).

Continued Claims

	Continued Weeks Claimed			Percent Change Weeks Claimed	
	Mar 12	Feb 12	Mar 11	Mar 12 Feb 12	Mar 12 Mar 11
Wyoming Statewide					
TOTAL WEEKS CLAIMED	**29,647**	**32,889**	**36,765**	**-9.9**	**-19.4**
EXTENDED WEEKS CLAIMED	**10,266**	**9,988**	**18,698**	**2.8**	**-45.1**
TOTAL UNIQUE CLAIMANTS[b]	**8,630**	**7,798**	**8,937**	**10.7**	**-3.4**
Benefit Exhaustions	*763*	*741*	*1,055*	*3.0*	*-27.7*
Benefit Exhaustion Rates	*8.8%*	*9.5%*	*11.8%*	*-0.7%*	*-3.0%*
TOTAL GOODS-PRODUCING	12,278	13,331	15,156	-7.9	-19.0
Natural Res. & Mining	2,143	1,962	1,890	9.2	13.4
Mining	1,866	1,678	1,630	11.2	14.5
Oil & Gas Extraction	165	154	129	7.1	27.9
Construction	8,866	10,060	11,702	-11.9	-24.2
Manufacturing	1,269	1,309	1,564	-3.1	-18.9
TOTAL SERVICE-PROVIDING	11,377	12,502	14,789	-9.0	-23.1
Trade, Transp., & Utilities	3,285	3,545	4,568	-7.3	-28.1
Wholesale Trade	483	527	620	-8.3	-22.1
Retail Trade	1,964	2,115	2,884	-7.1	-31.9
Transp., Warehousing & Utilities	838	903	1,064	-7.2	-21.2
Information	172	166	205	3.6	-16.1
Financial Activities	597	613	634	-2.6	-5.8
Prof. & Business Services	2,442	2,814	3,116	-13.2	-21.6
Educational & Health Svcs.	1,227	1,282	1,626	-4.3	-24.5
Leisure and Hospitality	3,056	3,470	3,987	-11.9	-23.4
Other Svcs., exc. Public Admin.	598	612	653	-2.3	-8.4
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	2,709	3,122	3,314	-13.2	-18.3
Federal Government	1,369	1,650	1,618	-17.0	-15.4
State Government	252	301	281	-16.3	-10.3
Local Government	1,088	1,171	1,415	-7.1	-23.1
Local Education	218	212	249	2.8	-12.4
UNCLASSIFIED	3,283	3,934	3,506	-16.5	-6.4
Laramie County					
TOTAL WEEKS CLAIMED	**4,046**	**4,528**	**4,476**	**-10.6**	**-9.6**
TOTAL UNIQUE CLAIMANTS	**1,181**	**1,079**	**1,116**	**9.5**	**5.8**
TOTAL GOODS-PRODUCING	1,782	2,147	1,902	-17.0	-6.3
Construction	1,405	1,722	1,645	-18.4	-14.6
TOTAL SERVICE-PROVIDING	1,733	1,843	2,030	-6.0	-14.6
Trade, Transp., and Utilities	547	633	665	-13.6	-17.7
Financial Activities	154	126	131	22.2	17.6
Prof. & Business Svcs.	464	516	501	-10.1	-7.4
Educational and Health Svcs.	221	194	405	13.9	-45.4
Leisure & Hospitality	249	267	226	-6.7	10.2
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	381	387	438	-1.6	-13.0
UNCLASSIFIED	150	151	106	-0.7	41.5
Natrona County					
TOTAL WEEKS CLAIMED	**2,561**	**3,070**	**4,113**	**-16.6**	**-37.7**
TOTAL UNIQUE CLAIMANTS	**764**	**771**	**1,010**	**-0.9**	**-24.4**
TOTAL GOODS-PRODUCING	1,100	1,291	1,460	-14.8	-24.7
Construction	860	1,061	1,085	-18.9	-20.7
TOTAL SERVICE-PROVIDING	1,247	1,562	2,376	-20.2	-47.5
Trade, Transp., and Utilities	430	515	944	-16.5	-54.4
Financial Activities	71	79	84	-10.1	-15.5
Professional & Business Svcs.	236	319	424	-26.0	-44.3
Educational & Health Svcs.	215	258	322	-16.7	-33.2
Leisure & Hospitality	152	229	381	-33.6	-60.1
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	131	141	193	-7.1	-32.1
UNCLASSIFIED	83	76	84	9.2	-1.2

[a]An average month is considered 4.33 weeks. If a month has four weeks, the normalization factor is 1.0825. If the month has five weeks, the normalization factor is 0.866. The number of raw claims is multiplied by the normalization factor to achieve the normalized claims counts.
[b]Does not include claimants receiving extended benefits.





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