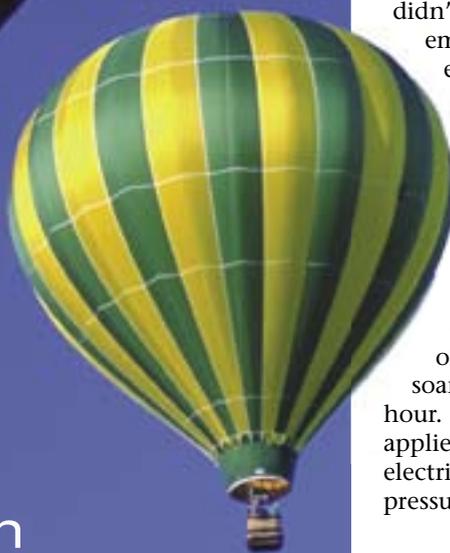


On the Rise



2005 Job
Vacancy Study:
A Profile of Job
Openings in Utah

With 2006 just underway, I've already accomplished my New Year's resolution. How could I have possibly lost all that weight so fast you ask? I didn't. My resolution was to evaluate whether Utah's 2005 Job Vacancy Study (JVS) revealed a rise in the metropolitan region's job vacancy rate.

In the fourth quarter of 2004 the Wasatch Front witnessed a modest 2.1 percent job vacancy rate, meaning that there were about two job openings for every 100 jobs in the region. Since that time, the prevalence of help wanted signs has increased and the fourth quarter of 2005 job vacancy rate reached 2.9 percent. Further, the average wage for the metro job vacancy rose from \$11.20 an hour to \$12.20 an hour, reflecting the increased demand for labor.

Overall, the composition of the metropolitan region's vacancies did not deviate much from what it was 2004. In the fourth quarter of '04, about 71 percent of the job vacancies required no post-secondary education and only 35 percent required related job experience. In the fourth quarter of 2005, almost 70 percent of the job openings required no more than a high school diploma and 38 percent required related job experience. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the majority of the job openings were generally low-skill, high-turnover occupations such as retail salespersons, cashiers and customer service representatives.

This is not to say that the labor market didn't show the need for higher-skilled employees. Wait a minute...is that an earthquake I hear? No, it's the boom in the construction industry! With the construction industry's year-over employment growth closing in on 11 percent, we expected to see more job openings¹. Construction-related job openings exceeded 3,000 for the final quarter of 2005, dwarfing the 1,870 vacancies found in the industry at the end of 2004. Additionally, the average offered wage for openings in the industry soared from \$12.10 an hour to \$16.30 an hour. A higher demand for positions requiring applied technology training such as plumbers, electricians and carpenters added to the upward pressure on the average offered wages.

Most Open Occupations Requiring an Associate Degree or Applied Technology Training

Occupation ²	Estimated # of Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Average Advertised Wage/Hour
Truck Driver, Heavy	578	4.3%	\$15.70
Registered Nurse	377	2.8%	\$18.80
Electricians	277	6.4%	\$15.10
Nurses Aides	252	3.6%	\$8.60
Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steam	222	5.6%	\$17.70
Carpenters	213	2.2%	\$13.70
Welders	204	7.3%	\$13.80
Automotive Service Techs	186	3.7%	\$17.70
Hairdressers	146	6.1%	\$9.80
HR Assistants	127	11.4%	\$12.40

A good number of the top ten openings that required a Bachelor's degree or higher were typically found in the professional, scientific and technical services. Computer programmers, computer software engineers, computer systems analysts and database administrators all found their way onto this list, and all experienced a rise in vacancies since the last survey.

Most Open Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree or Advanced Degree

Occupation	Estimated # of Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Average Advertised Wage/Hour
Computer Programmers	164	3.2%	\$28.50
Comp Software Engineers, Systems Software	114	2.9%	\$30.90
Civil Engineers	97	7.4%	\$23.90
Computer Systems Analyst	82	2%	\$19.90
Sales Reps, Technical & Scientific	78	2%	\$21.20
Industrial Engineers	65	5.7%	\$25.50
Medical and Clinical Lab Technologists	60	4.8%	\$16.70
Database Administrators	59	10.4%	\$24.00
Pharmacists	55	3.3%	\$41.60
Accountants and Auditors	47	<1%	\$18.40

Although not specifically addressed in my resolution for 2006, southwestern Utah added to my New Year's cheer by posting a significant increase in vacant jobs during the fourth quarter of 2005. At five percent, southwestern Utah's vacancy rate was up considerably from 3.1 percent the year before. Clearly, there is much more to elaborate on in the Southwestern region and all JVS areas. If it's Uintah Basin data you want, see **The March of the Roustabouts** in this publication. 

More? For comprehensive regional reports and complete survey results, <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/jvs2005>.

¹ Year-over calculations taken from the third quarter of 2004 to the third quarter of 2005

² Full occupational titles and definitions are available at www.bls.gov