

San Antonio job market remains positive

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The San Antonio area job market continued to trigger optimism in March as 5,500 positions were added across a number of industries and the area's already low unemployment rate fell again.

“The San Antonio job market remains a favorable environment across all industries,” said Chakib Chehadi, Alamo WorkSource's executive director. “We either had positive job growth or no changes. This is very encouraging to the overall San Antonio economy.”

The biggest gainer for the second consecutive month were hotels, restaurants and other employers in the hospitality sector, which added 2,500 jobs in March as spring break traffic grew. After shedding 1,100 jobs in January, the retail sector produced 600 more jobs last month largely because of Easter shopping.

The construction sector, which has been pummeled nationwide, continued to grow in San Antonio with 500 jobs for the month and 2,500 new jobs from March 2007 to March 2008. That equates to 5.1 percent annual growth.

The 12-month growth rate for the area job market hit 2.3 percent, the same as February and slightly higher than the 2.1 percent growth rate the state experienced. The state and local calculations are different, however, because the state modifies its numbers to take seasonal changes into account. The local count is not adjusted.

The San Antonio unemployment rate, meanwhile, fell to 3.9 percent from 4 percent in February. It also was 4 percent a year earlier. The area's job prospects kept the overall labor force, which counts active job seekers and those with jobs, growing during the month. The number of unemployed fell by 500.

Statewide, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate jumped by two-tenths-of-a-point in March to 4.3 percent. Nationally, unemployment hit 5.1 percent. It too, unlike the local unemployment rate, is seasonally adjusted.

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