

## **Fourth Quarter 2007 Job Vacancy Study: Executive Summary**

To profile Utah's demand for labor and gather information concerning the current nature and number of job openings in Utah, the Department of Workforce Services conducted the 2007 Job Vacancy Study (JVS). Nearly 3,500 employers across three geographical areas were surveyed concerning the fourth quarter of 2007. These geographic regions were established and identified as Metropolitan Utah, Southwestern Utah and the Uintah Basin.

### **Metropolitan Utah**

- The job vacancy rate for Metropolitan Utah measured 3.3 percent, meaning there were 3.3 job vacancies for every 100 jobs in the region. This is up from 2.9 percent during the fourth quarter of 2005. The current vacancy rate translates into approximately 34,700 open jobs at any time during the survey period.
- The average advertised wage for job openings surveyed was \$13.10/hr, up from \$12.20/hr measured in 2005. After adjusting for inflation, however, the average wage for the fourth quarter 2007 openings is only 20 cents higher than the 2005 offering.
- Eight of 17 publishable industry groups reported a growth in job openings since the fourth quarter of 2005.
- The top five occupations with the most available openings were combined food preparation and service workers, retail salespersons, cashiers, registered nurses and customer service representatives.
- "Difficult-to-fill" occupations are those occupations that are experiencing a labor gap or skill shortage. Among those occupations were welders, industrial and civil engineers, machinists, registered nurses and pharmacists.
- In sum, results from the fourth quarter of 2007 JVS portray the same economic environment for metropolitan Utah as other measures do. Some key industries are experiencing downturns, the demand for labor is slowing and the accelerated economic expansion that has affected the region for years is beginning to flatten.

### **Uintah Basin**

- The job vacancy rate in the Uintah Basin was 5.2 percent and the average advertised wage for the region was \$14.10/hr, both of which were the highest of the three areas surveyed.
- There were approximately 1,000 open jobs in the area at any given time during the fourth quarter of 2007.
- Almost half of all vacancies in the area were found in the construction and mining industries.
- The 2007 JVS paints the same picture for the Uintah Basin as it did in 2005. The need for energy-related labor is pushing up average advertised wages. A significant number of openings were found in the mining and construction industries and occupations such as truck drivers significantly contributed to the number of openings for the area.

## **Southwestern Utah**

- The job vacancy rate for the Southwest area was 4.1 percent, down from 5 percent in 2005.
- Approximately 2,850 openings were observed in the area during the survey period.
- The average offered wage in the area was \$12.70/hr, up from \$11.20 an hour in 2005.
- The industry with the most job openings and highest vacancy rate is healthcare.
- Occupations with many openings that met the study's statistical requirements for publication include retail salespersons, cashiers and food preparation and service workers.
- The Southwestern area was the only area in Utah that saw a drop in both the vacancy rate and number of job openings. This is a reflection of the JVS survey capturing the slowing economic environment in this area, particularly in construction.