

Surveying the Recession Upon Utah's Counties



The Great Recession has taken its toll upon Utah's economy. Job counts are rebounding across the state but still remain below their peak level prior to the recession. Utah is starting to add jobs back to its rolls, with many counties seeing employment increasing. But several counties are noted as having multiple years of employment declines that have not yet reversed themselves.

These are mostly rural counties and include Box Elder, Carbon, Emery, Iron, Juab, Morgan, Piute, Rich, Sanpete, Washington, and Weber. Some of these counties look like their employment levels have bottomed out—they just haven't started to rebound yet. Others look like they are still trending downward.

These less fortunate counties include Box Elder, Iron, Juab, Piute, Rich, and Sanpete counties. Box Elder has been impacted by manufacturing losses, including the closure of La-Z Boy and the cutbacks at ATK. Box Elder employment is down 16 percent since 2008. Carbon County's fortunes are generally tied to the coal mining industry, and this is where the slide lies. It is not drastic—down 2 percent—but it is enough to note.

Juab County's employment is down 6 percent since 2008, with most of it being traced to construction and healthcare. Piute is such a small county that it doesn't take much for its numbers to fall. Yet employment is down 18 percent since 2008, and this is traced to trucking and retail trade.

Rich County is a tourism-dependent county, relying upon summertime tourism and building expansion of cabins and summer homes. Both of these were impacted by the recession, so construction and leisure and hospitality declines account for Rich County's 17-percent job loss since 2008.

One of the larger rural economies in decline is Sanpete County. Down 11 percent since 2008, its woes are traced to manufacturing and construction. ●

Job counts are rebounding but still remain below peak level.

