



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

Uintah Basin Boom



The Uintah Basin is in the midst of a thriving economic trend. At the leading edge of Utah's recovery from the recent recession that rocked Utah and the rest of the country, the Uintah Basin's employment picture is one of the best in the state. An oil and gas boom, responsible for the growing economic trend in Duchesne and Uintah counties, brings welcome opportunities for employment within the mining industries as well as the industries that support mining.

The Basin was the top performing economic area in terms of total employment growth in 2011 (Graph 1), with a growth rate more than twice that of any other region in Utah. Unemployment rates for all three counties within the Uintah Basin are currently below five percent—rates that these counties have not seen since before the Great Recession. Combined total employment for 2011 was up 7.5 percent from the previous year in Daggett, Duchesne and Uintah counties. The natural resources sector has driven the majority of economic activity in the private sector in Duchesne and Uintah counties for several years now. Fueled by increased oil, natural gas and mining activities in the Basin, strong economic growth comes as gasoline prices trend higher over time.

Despite a decline in jobs at the onset of the recent recession, the mining industry (predominantly oil and gas) has seen a steady gain in jobs since late 2009. As of December 2011, the industry job count has seen virtually a full recovery. This is welcome growth as the mining sector pulls up other important industries in the area, such as construction, transportation and leisure/hospitality. At 4 percent, Uintah County currently shares the lowest unemployment rate in the state, and Duchesne County has the second lowest unemployment rate at 4.2 percent.

What this boom means for the Uintah Basin is that total employment has increased as increased mining activity has boosted virtually every other industry in the region. Comparing December 2011 with the previous December, the Basin has 1,952 more jobs in total, with 763 of those jobs directly from mining oil and gas (Graph 2).

If mining can continue to grow at a steady pace, not only should the Uintah Basin's total employment continue its upward trajectory, but also the Basin will continue to be a strong factor in all of Utah's continued economic recovery. ●

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