

Bay Area adds 5,600 jobs in June, while state adds 30,200

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The Bay Area added 5,600 jobs during June, a sturdy performance that eases fears of an employment slowdown in the region. Meanwhile, the statewide jobless rate improved to its lowest level in nearly five years, labor officials reported Thursday.

Santa Clara County gained 3,500 jobs in June, the Alameda County-Contra Costa County area added 1,700 and the San Francisco-San Mateo-Marín region gained 1,200, the state's Employment Development Department showed.

"The job growth is starting to spread beyond the South Bay and the San Francisco area," said Jon Haveman, chief economist with Marin Consulting. "The East Bay is now part of the jobs rebound."

California added 30,200 jobs in June, which means the Bay Area accounted for about one-fifth of the statewide gains.

"The jobs recovery appears to be strongest in the Bay Area," said Jeffrey Michael, director of the Business Forecasting Center at University of the Pacific. "The Bay Area is leading the state."

The jobless rate in the Golden State improved to 8.5 percent, down from 8.6 percent in May. That was the lowest jobless rate for the state since October 2008, the EDD reported.

"The California comeback continues," said Stephen Levy, director of the Palo Alto-based Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy.

Jobless rates, adjusted for seasonal changes, inched slightly higher in the Bay Area, according to an analysis of the EDD numbers that Beacon supplied this newspaper. But the increases appear due to an improving labor market; when more people begin looking for work, jobless rates can rise.

The Alameda County-Contra Costa County region posted a jobless rate in June of 7.1 percent, up from 7 percent in May. Santa Clara County's rate rose to 6.7 percent, up from 6.5 percent, and the San Francisco-San Mateo-Marín area's climbed to 5.3 percent, up from 5.2 percent.

Despite those likely temporary hikes in unemployment rates, the economic upswing in the Bay Area is broad-based and is spreading beyond the tech sector, said Jordan Levine, an economist and director of economic research with Beacon.

"Tourism, consumer spending, housing and business investment are all improving strongly," Levine said.

The Bay Area's job gains in June were the second biggest monthly gains for the region this year. So far in 2013, the Bay Area has added nearly 22,000 jobs.

"It's reasonable to think that we will see continued employment growth throughout the Bay Area and California for the foreseeable future," Haveman said.

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