MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Center for Workforce Research and Information

LABOR MARKET DIGEST

February Data April 2009

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Adjusted statewide unemployment rate increased to 8.0 percent in February.....page 4

Nonfarm employment declined by 15,900 over the year.....page 6

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MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Center for Workforce Research and Information

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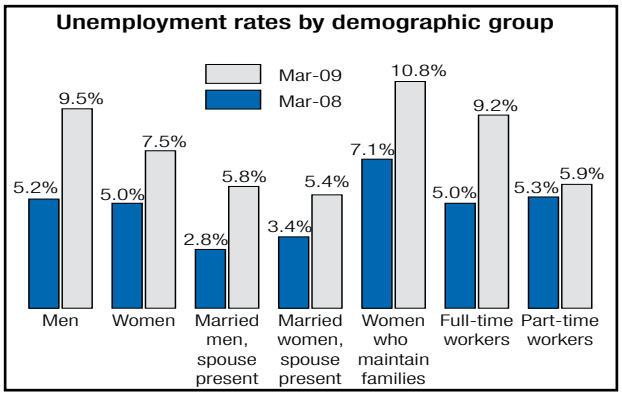
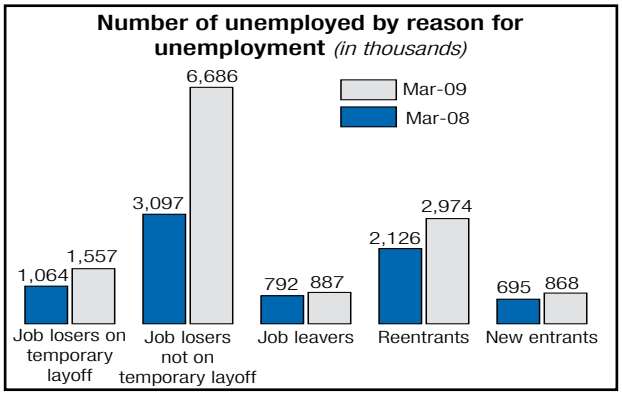
A Detailed Look at Unemployment and Labor Force Status

A few months ago alternative measures of labor utilization beyond the official unemployment rate were highlighted in this space. This month we graphically highlight trends in national characteristics of unemployment and labor force status over the year, a period in which the official unemployment rate increased from 5.1 percent in March 2008 to 8.5 percent in March 2009. Unpublished data for Maine, which is somewhat less reliable due to small sample size, reflects similar trends to the nation.

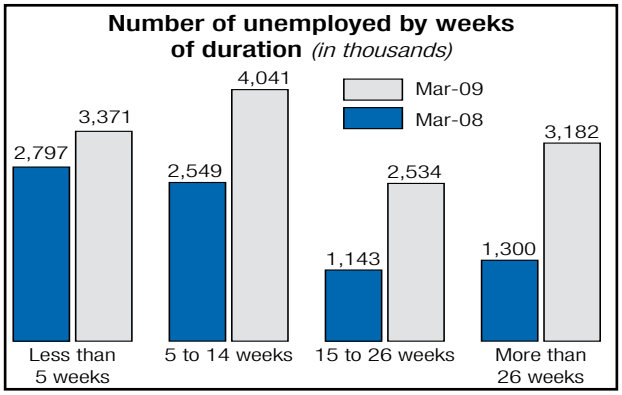
◆**Unemployment rates** were highest and increased the most over the year among women who maintain families with no spouse present, men, and full-time workers. Rates were lowest among married men and women with a present spouse and part-time workers.



◆**Job loss** is the primary reason for unemployment, of course, but unemployed reentrants (+40%) and new entrants (+25%) to the labor force were up sharply over the year. The rapid rise in entrants is partly related to job loss or job security concerns for primary earners in families.



◆**The number of unemployed** increased 68 percent to 13.2 million over the year, with the sharpest rise among long-term unemployed. The number unemployed 15 or more weeks was up 134 percent, driving average duration of unemployment up from 16 to 20 weeks.



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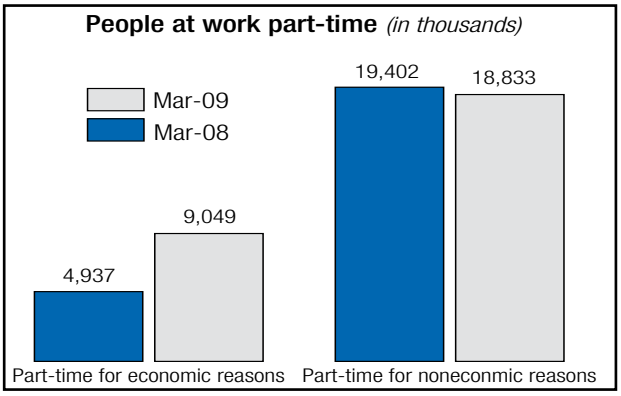
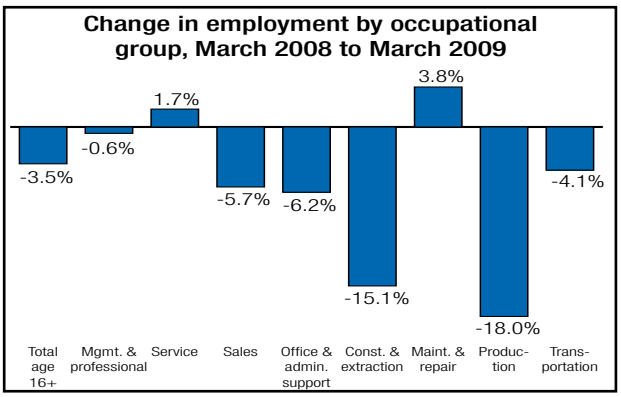
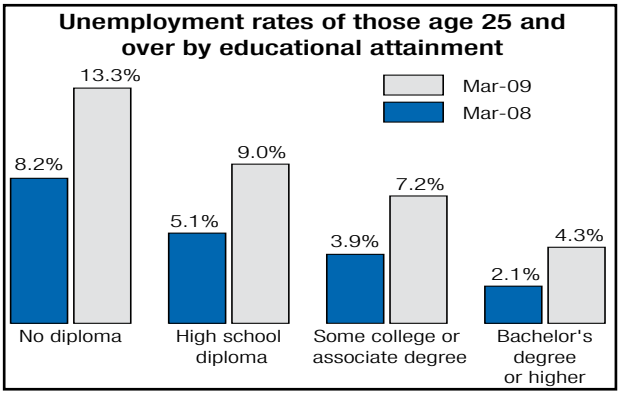
◆**Many employed people faced reductions** in work schedules. The 7.6 million decline in full-time employment (to 113.7 million) was greater than the total job loss, reflecting a rise in part-time employment (to 27 million). The rise in part-time employment was entirely among those working part-time for economic reasons (such as slack work or because they could not find full-time work). Among those who prefer part-time work (referred to as part-time for noneconomic reasons) employment declined 2.9 percent.



◆**Employment declined** over the year in most occupational groups, with the deepest losses in construction & extraction and production occupations. Employment increased in maintenance & repair and service occupations and was little changed in management and professional occupations.



◆**Unemployment rates were highest** and increased the most among those with the least educational attainment, partly reflecting high rates of job loss in construction & extraction, production, administrative support, and sales occupations. The smaller than average rise in unemployment rates of those with a bachelor's degree or higher partly reflects slower than average job losses in management and professional occupations.



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