

Oklahoma recaptures some lost manufacturing jobs

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Oklahoma in the past year has regained some of the many industrial jobs it lost the two previous years, according to a report released this week by the Evanston, Ill.-based Manufacturers' News Inc.

From August 2010 through last month, MNI found Oklahoma gained 1,332 industrial jobs, or a half percent — compared with a 1.5 percent drop over the 2009-2010 survey period and 4.5 percent loss between August 2008 and 2009. The state is now home to 5,771 manufacturers which employ 201,406.

“The state's business-friendly environment and stronghold in the oil and gas industry have been a draw for a variety of enterprises,” MNI President Tom Dubin said.

Bright spots for the state include the opening of motorcycle manufacturer US Highland's new facility in Tulsa; the expansion of a Hitachi computer plant in Norman; and the expansion of MarkWest Energy's Arapaho processing plant. Forum Energy Technologies expanded its Elmore City facility, and Enerflow Industries announced an expansion of its factory in Broken Arrow over the next few years.

MNI reports industrial machinery and equipment remains the state's largest industrial sector by employment with 34,096 jobs, virtually unchanged from a year ago. Second-ranked oil and gas extraction accounts for 32,196, up 4.4 percent, while third-ranked fabricated metals accounts for 23,019, down 1.9 percent.

Sectors losing jobs over the past year included furniture/fixtures, down 7.5 percent; lumber/wood, down 5.6 percent; transportation equipment, down 5 percent, and chemicals, down 1.9 percent. Jobs remained steady in other sectors, while gains were seen in stone/clay/glass, up 10.7 percent; textiles/apparel, up 7.4 percent; petroleum and coal products, up 4.1 percent, and paper products, up 1 percent.

Companies closing locations include 3M, which shuttered its IMTEC plant in Ardmore; Plant Performance Services, which closed its Sand Springs facility; and Imation Corp., which shuttered its magnetic tape coating plant.

MNI reports northeast Oklahoma accounts for the most manufacturing employment in the state with 93,071 jobs, virtually unchanged from a year ago. The northwest region accounts for the second most at 63,126 jobs, up 1 percent.

Southwest Oklahoma is home to 24,789 industrial workers, with no significant change reported, while the southeast accounts for 20,420, up 4.2 percent over the past 12 months.

MNI's city data shows Tulsa is Oklahoma's top city for manufacturing employment, home to 46,846 jobs, up 1.5 percent over the year. Oklahoma City accounts for 42,260 jobs, up 1 percent. Broken Arrow is home to 5,738 industrial jobs, up 2.5 percent, while Ponca City accounts for 4,113 jobs, down 7.2 percent. Lawton is home to 3,946 industrial jobs, up 2.3 percent over the past 12 months.



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