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## Bay Area and state continue to lose jobs in July

 By **George Avalos**  
 Contra Costa Times

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Fresh evidence surfaced Friday that California's economy has faltered rather than rebounded: During the last two months, statewide employment weakened and the Bay Area job market is even worse.

In July, California lost 9,400 payroll jobs, state labor officials reported. The survey also determined that the Bay Area lost 8,000 jobs in the same period. The numbers were adjusted for seasonal changes.

By far, the hardest-hit regions in the Bay Area during July were the East Bay and the South Bay, according to seasonally adjusted numbers released by the state's Employment Development Department.

Employers in the East Bay shed 4,000 jobs last month. The South Bay lost 2,500 jobs in July.

"The Bay Area appears to be weaker than the rest of the state," said Michael Bernick, a San Francisco-based research fellow with the Milken Institute and former director of the EDD.

So far this year, the Bay Area has lost 11,600 jobs. In contrast, California has gained 65,300 jobs.

But the summer jobs slump statewide and in the Bay Area mirrors feeble employment trends throughout the country.

"We have lost our momentum in the job market," said Jon Haveman, a partner and economist with Beacon Economics. "This is the epitome of the jobless recovery."

A string of wobbly economic reports the last two months has surprised economists. The worse-than-predicted weakness has forced more analysts to ponder the dismal prospects of a jobless recovery or, in a more brutal scenario, a renewed recession.

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"What we're seeing in the Bay Area is consistent with what is happening on a statewide and nationwide basis," said Jeffrey Michael, director of the Stockton-based Business Forecasting Center at the University of the Pacific. "Private-sector hiring is weak. The government sector is losing jobs."

Only two of the six urban centers in the Bay Area managed to avoid job losses: The San Francisco-San Mateo-Marín region reported no change in payroll jobs, while Napa County gained 400 jobs, the EDD said.

The Bay Area accounted for 8,000 of the 9,400 payroll jobs that vanished in California during July. An analysis of the unsettling economic trends in the Bay Area shows the region's job market plunged, starting in June. The recent losses erased what had been a rebound for the Bay Area for much of 2010.

During the first five months of this year, the Bay Area gained 7,700 jobs. In the most recent two months, however, the Bay Area shed 19,300 nonfarm payroll jobs. That includes a loss of 11,300 jobs in June.

Similarly, California gained 98,700 jobs over the first five months of 2010 -- but lost 33,400 jobs during June and July combined. The statewide job losses were driven primarily by reductions in the government sector, the EDD report showed.

Private-sector employers created 13,700 jobs in July. Government employers eliminated 23,100 jobs. And much of the government losses were temporary positions linked to the winding down of the U.S. Census program, Beacon economists said.

The statewide unemployment rate was 12.3 percent, unchanged from June. But the stability in the rate appears to be due primarily to a worsening economy, rather than robust hiring. California's labor force shrank by 44,000 in July. If fewer people are in the statewide labor force, the jobless rate can remain stable, even if employment is weak.

"It's because the job market is so bad," Bernick said. "Some people have decided to go back to school, or they are going through job retraining, or are spending more time with their family, or they have given up looking for work."

The real problem, economists said, is no real propellant has materialized to fuel an economic boomerang, Haveman, the Beacon economist, said.

"Usually you have a driver from the consumer, the housing market, the automobile sector, or the financial sector," Haveman said. "This is different from other recessions."

Don't expect a significant rebound any time soon, economists warned.

"We are forecasting pretty slow growth for the next couple of years," Haveman said. "It may be 2012 before we get back to normal growth."

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**July Jobs score card**

**The nine-county Bay Area lost 8,000 jobs during July, with the East Bay and South Bay suffering the largest setbacks.**

**County/region JOBS LOSS/GAIN**

**Bay Area \* -8,000**

**East Bay -4,000**

**San Francisco area \* Unchanged**

**South Bay -2,500**

**Sonoma -1,300**

**Solano -600**

**Napa +400**

**San Joaquin -600**

**\* Numbers are adjusted for seasonal changes. Bay Area totals exclude San Joaquin County. The San Francisco area consists of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties.**

**Source: State Employment Development Department**



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