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## Report: Non-agriculture jobs fall again

By [Paul J. Nyden](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- In West Virginia, employment in non-agricultural jobs fell for the fifth straight month, as 1,200 more jobs disappeared in June.

Manufacturing, education and health services saw no employment increases last month, according to "Jobs Count," a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Center of Budget & Policy.

Construction companies got hit the worst, losing 600 jobs in June — a drop of 1.7 percent in the industry's employment from the previous month.

The leisure and hospitality sector — which includes restaurants, hotels and tourism businesses -- lost 800 jobs.

Coal mining, logging, transportation, utilities and the financial sector saw jobs losses under 1 percent.

"After a promising end to 2011, 2012 is shaping up to be a disappointment at its halfway mark," according to the report.

The state's overall unemployment rate back in December 2007 was only 4.1 percent, compared to 7 percent today.

During the past four and a half years, mining and logging industries have done better than most, increasing employment by 2,300 jobs, or nearly 8 percent.

Manufacturing did the worst, losing 9,900 jobs between December 2007 and June 2012 -- a drop of more than 17 percent.

Traditional West Virginia manufacturing industries that suffered significant job losses include steel aluminum, glass and chemicals.

Health-care coverage is another growing problem.

The number of companies offering their workers health insurance has been declining for 30 years.

In the late 1970s, nearly 75 percent of West Virginians working in private-sector jobs had health insurance provided by their employers.

By 2010, only 53 percent of private-sector employees in the Mountain State still had employer-provided health insurance plans, close to the national average of 54 percent, according to "Jobs Count."

In the monthly newsletter, Center on Budget Policy officials said health-care coverage would be probably be getting worse if Congress had not passed the Affordable Care Act, which was signed by the president in March 2010 and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court last month.

In the "Jobs Count" report, Center on Budget and Policy officials also urged West Virginia officials to accept federal funds to expand Medicaid. Those funds would:

- Cover about 120,000 West Virginians without health insurance today.
- Reduce uncompensated health care by between \$263 million and \$563 million between 2014 and 2019, which would help physicians and health-care employers.
- Increase the overall health of the state's workforce.

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