

# 44 states lost jobs in April, led by California

**WASHINGTON** — Forty-four states lost jobs in April, led by California where employers slashed 63,700 positions, as the recession took a further toll on

US workers. Trailing California in over-the-month job losses were: Texas, which saw 39,500 jobs vanish; Michigan, which lost 38,400 jobs; and Ohio, where payrolls

fell 25,200, according to a US Labor Department report issued May 22.

The few winners included Arkansas and Montana, followed by Florida—a dose of good news for a state that's been battered by the housing collapse.

California's unemployment rate dipped to 11 percent last month, fifth-highest in the country. Michigan's jobless rate was the highest at 12.9 percent, followed by Oregon at 12 percent, South Carolina at 11.5 percent and Rhode Island at 11.1 percent.

As the recession eats into sales and profits, companies have laid off workers and turned to other cost-cutting measures, such as holding down hours and freezing or trimming pay.

Since the recession began in December 2007, the US has lost a net total of 5.7 million jobs. The nationwide unemployment rate now stands at 8.9 percent, a quarter-century high.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and some economists hope the pace of layoffs will

moderate as the recession eases its grip and likely ends later this year.

But even if employers reduce firings, the nationwide unemployment rate is expected to hit double digits by year's end. Employers won't be in any mood to ramp up hiring until they feel confident that any recovery has staying power, economists say.

In the report, Arkansas and Montana tied for the biggest over-the-month payroll gains at 1,500 a piece. They were followed by Florida, which saw an increase of 1,300 jobs.

On the hiring front, North Dakota again registered the nation's lowest unemployment rate—4 percent. It was followed by Nebraska with a 4.4 percent jobless rate, Wyoming at 4.5 percent and South Dakota with 4.8 percent.

In another bit of mildly encouraging news, the Labor Department reported that mass layoffs—job cuts of 50 or more by a single employer—dipped to 2,712 in April, from a record-high of 2,933 in March. Still, more than 271,000 workers were fired

in last month's cuts, more than double the total from April 2008.

Layoffs in manufacturing, construction and retail are common threads running through the states with the highest unemployment rates. Another thread: difficulties faced by South Carolina, Michigan, Rhode Island and other states, to lure new types of companies to help cushion the loss of manufacturing jobs and retrain laid-off factory workers for other kinds of employment.

Nearly 6.7 million people nationwide are drawing state unemployment insurance, the highest on records dating to 1967, the federal government reported May 21. The crush has exhausted unemployment funds in California, New York and elsewhere, forcing them to tap the federal government for money to keep paying benefits.

States are hurting as the recession cuts into revenues.

Saddled with a \$21.3 billion budget deficit, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has said thousands of state employees must be laid off and billions of

dollars must be slashed from the budget. His administration has started sending layoff notices to 5,000 state employees with the goal of cutting the general work force by 5 percent.

Since December, California has led the nation in monthly job losses, according to the US Labor Department.

Against that backdrop, Californians' personal income fell statewide for the first time since 1938, leading to a sharp drop in tax revenue.

One in every 138 California households received a foreclosure filing last month, according to RealtyTrac Inc. That was the third-highest rate in the country behind Nevada's one in every 68 households, and Florida's one in every 135 households.

If California tries to borrow more to help pay its bills, it will be costly. The state has the worst credit rating in the nation. The state treasurer's office estimates that California would pay an extra \$500 million to \$1 billion in lender fees on a \$15 billion short-term loan. (AP)

## Israel to honor Pinoy ...

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Holocaust, the Israeli embassy said in a statement on its website.

"The warm hospitality of the Filipino people undoubtedly shed light to one of the darkest and most difficult periods in Jewish history," the embassy said.

The "Open Doors" monument, designed by Filipino artist Jun Yee, is scheduled to be unveiled on June 21 at the Rishon LeZion Holocaust Park in central Israel.

The idea came from Holocaust survivor Frank Ephraim's book "Escape to Manila," published in 2003.

It details the author's and 35 other Jewish refugees' journey to the Philippines — then a US

commonwealth — just before it fell to the Japanese during the mayhem of World War II that left Manila in ruins.

The Berlin-born Ephraim and his parents fled to the Philippines in 1939, when he was 8, taking advantage of President Manuel Quezon's decision to welcome Jewish refugees.

Preparations were made to accept 10,000 Jews a year, but only 1,200 made it to Manila.

Sixty-seven Jewish refugees were among the 100,000 Manila residents who died during the 1945 US liberation of Manila and the heavy bombing that preceded it, which also destroyed Manila's only synagogue, Temple Emil. (AP)

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