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The Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Economic Report, Quarter 4, 2015

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THE PITTSBURGH MICROPOLITAN AREA ECONOMIC REPORT

2016 Provides Significant Opportunities For Local Retail Sales

RETAIL SALES are projected to do well in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area in 2016, increasing 2.6 percent to \$521.3 million. The retail categories with the highest growth are projected to be furniture (up 6.4 percent), electronics and appliances (up 4.2 percent), and health and personal care (up 3.7 percent).

There are some significant opportunities in the local retail industry. The census reports that 65.7 percent of the jobs in the City of Pittsburgh are filled by people who do not live in the city, but commute into the city for work. Furthermore, approximately 19.1 percent of the jobs in the city

are filled by long-distance commuters from other counties in the state or other states, such as the Joplin area in Missouri. This means that the population in Pittsburgh swells significantly in the daytime during the work week. The Hoffman Strategy Group/Jeff Green Partners estimated recently that local retail and restaurant establishments could capture up to an additional \$62 million in annual retail and restaurant sales from the region.

The most direct way to capture these sales would be to increase the number and variety of local retail and eating and drinking establishments and providing a bigger

menu of services, which would help make Pittsburgh a more attractive urban center. Many businesses already see significant opportunities in the Pittsburgh area. Meadowbrook Mall is expanding to accommodate new tenants, including two national retailers. Numerous other national and regional retail chains have expanded into the Pittsburgh area recently or are in the process of doing so, including Buffalo Wild Wings, Colton's Steakhouse, Denny's, Guadalajara Mexican Grill, Gusano's Pizzeria, Jimmy Johns, the Jolly Fox Brewery, Rib Crib, and Walmart Neighborhood Market.

INSIDE

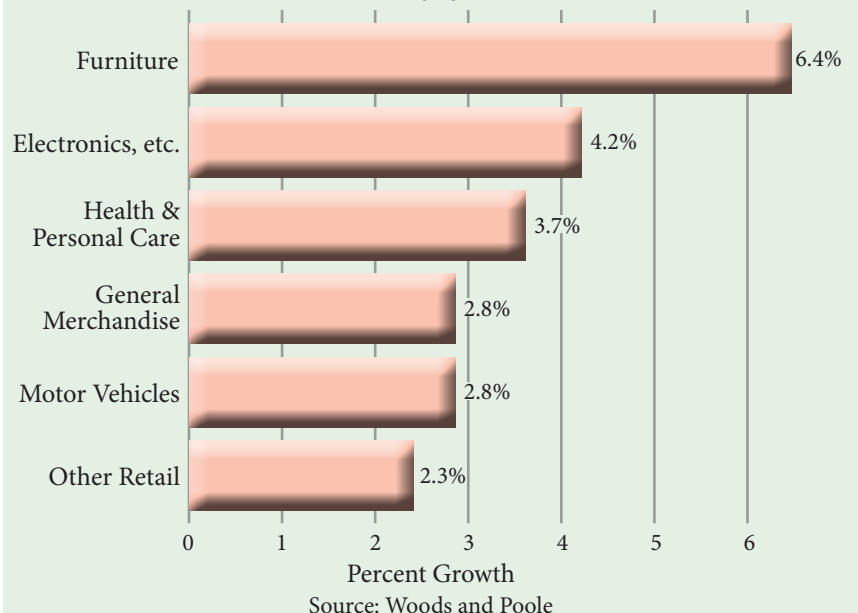


- Total Job Growth
- Unemployment
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- Payroll by Industry
- Labor Force
- Taxable Sales
- Residential and Commercial Permits
- Office Space Market
- Commercial and Residential Land Values
- Retail Space Market
- Bankruptcies and More



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Projected Retail Sales Growth By Category Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area 2016





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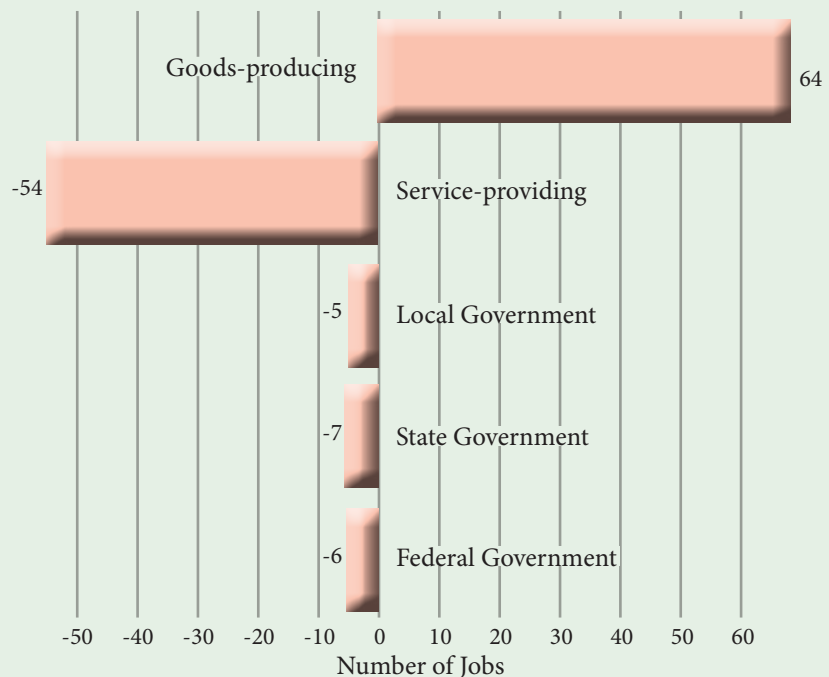
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TOTAL JOB GROWTH

The latest information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the 977 business establishments in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area that pay unemployment insurance had 16,925 jobs during the second quarter of 2015 (down eight jobs from the second quarter of 2014), paying an average monthly wage of \$2,628 and with a total payroll of \$133,439,879 (up 3.5 percent). The 145 establishments in the goods-producing industries posted 3,038 jobs (up 2.1 percent), with an average monthly wage of \$3,086 and a total payroll of \$28,131,520 (up 3.8 percent), and the 763 establishments in the service-providing industries posted 9,531 jobs (down 0.6 percent), with an average monthly wage of \$2,418 and a total payroll of \$69,151,099 (up 4.5 percent).

Local governments in the micropolitan area posted 3,193 jobs (down 0.2 percent), an average wage of \$2,380, and a total payroll of \$22,801,684 (up 1.6 percent); state government posted 1,083 jobs (down 0.7 percent), an average wage of \$3,830, and a total payroll of \$12,446,616 (up 1.2 percent); and the federal government posted 79 jobs (down eight percent), an average monthly wage of \$3,835, and a total payroll of \$908,960 (up 0.9 percent).

Job Growth Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Q2 '14 - Q2 '15



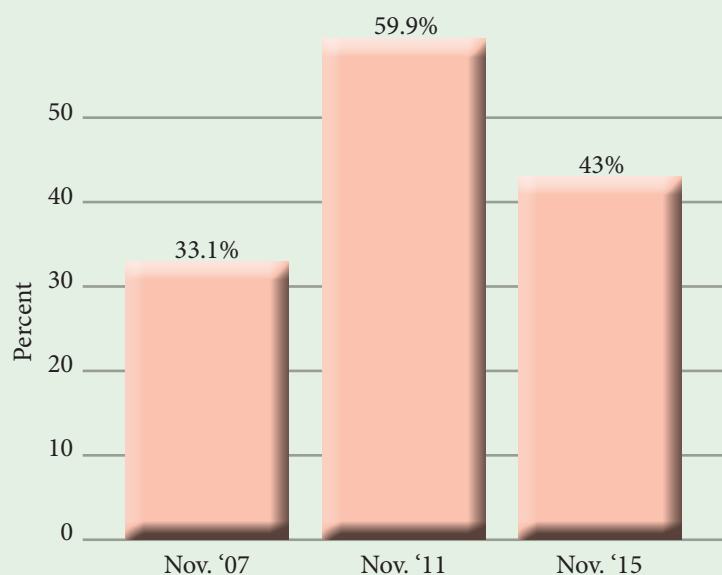
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rates nationwide have declined faster in the last few months than most forecasts expected. The good news is that this is due to faster growth in jobs than projected, and not due to discouraged workers leaving the labor force. The overall not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the nation was 4.8 percent in November, 3.5 percent in Kansas, and 4.2 percent in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area. However, the duration of unemployment is still a problem nationwide. Approximately 33.1 percent of the unemployed in November 2007 had been unemployed more than 15 weeks, the number increased to 59.9 percent in November 2011, and declined somewhat to 43 percent in November 2015. In November 2015, 7.6 million people were unemployed nationwide, of whom 28.7 percent had been unemployed less than five weeks, 28.3 percent 5-14 weeks, 16.5 percent 15-26 weeks, and 26.5 percent 27 weeks or more.

For the first 11 months of 2015, average unemployment was 5.3 percent nationwide (down from 6.2 percent during the same period in 2014), 4.3 percent statewide (down from 4.6 percent), and 5.2 percent in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area (down from 5.4 percent).

Duration of Unemployment Nationwide Percent Unemployed 15 or More Weeks



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Average Monthly Number of Jobs Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Q2 -'15



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

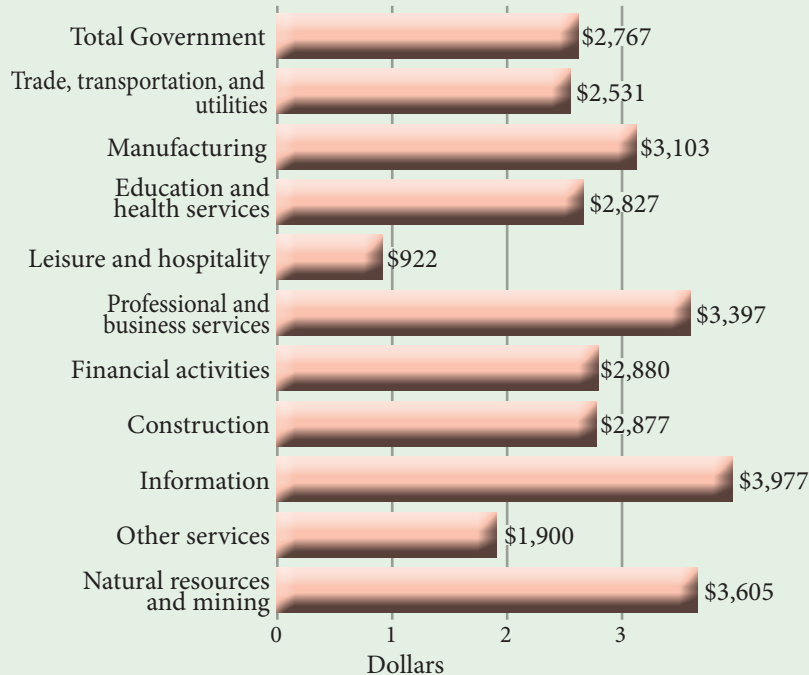
JOB GROWTH BY INDUSTRY

Nationwide, the Construction Industry was the fastest growing industry during the second quarter of 2015, while Professional and Business Services was the fastest growing industry in Kansas.

The fastest growing industry in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area during the period was Professional and Business Services, with 1,124 jobs (up 8.3 percent) and \$3,397 in average monthly wages, followed by Manufacturing with 2,506 jobs (up 2.4 percent) and \$3,103 in monthly wages; Construction with 436 jobs (up 0.9 percent) and \$2,877 in wages; Education and Health Services with 2,428 jobs (up 0.3 percent) and \$2,827 in wages.

Leisure and Hospitality posted 1,967 jobs (down 0.2 percent) and \$922 in average monthly wages; Government (all levels) posted 4,355 jobs (down 0.4 percent) and \$2,767 in wages; Natural Resources and Mining posted 97 jobs (down 0.7 percent) and \$3,605 in wages; Trade, Transportation and Utilities posted 2,979 jobs (down 1.9 percent) and \$2,531 in wages; Other Services (religious services, etc) posted 256 jobs (down 5.6 percent) and \$1,900 in wages; Financial Activities posted 514 jobs (down 10.3 percent) and \$2,880 in wages; and Information posted 263 jobs (down 10.4 percent) and \$3,977 in wages.

Average Monthly Wages Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Q2 -'15



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

PAYROLL BY INDUSTRY

Seven industries posted an increase in payroll in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area during the second quarter of 2015, compared to the second quarter of 2014. The Professional and Business Services Industry had the highest growth in payroll by far, posting a total quarterly payroll of \$11,458,387 (up 14.2 percent), followed by Education and Health Services, with a total of \$20,594,101 (up 7.3 percent); Construction with \$3,760,732 (up 5.8 percent); Leisure and Hospitality with \$5,440,269 (up 5.4 percent); Manufacturing \$23,321,650 (up 3.7 percent); Trade, Transportation and Utilities with \$22,620,405 (up 2.4 percent); and Government (all levels) with \$36,157,260 (up 1.4 percent).

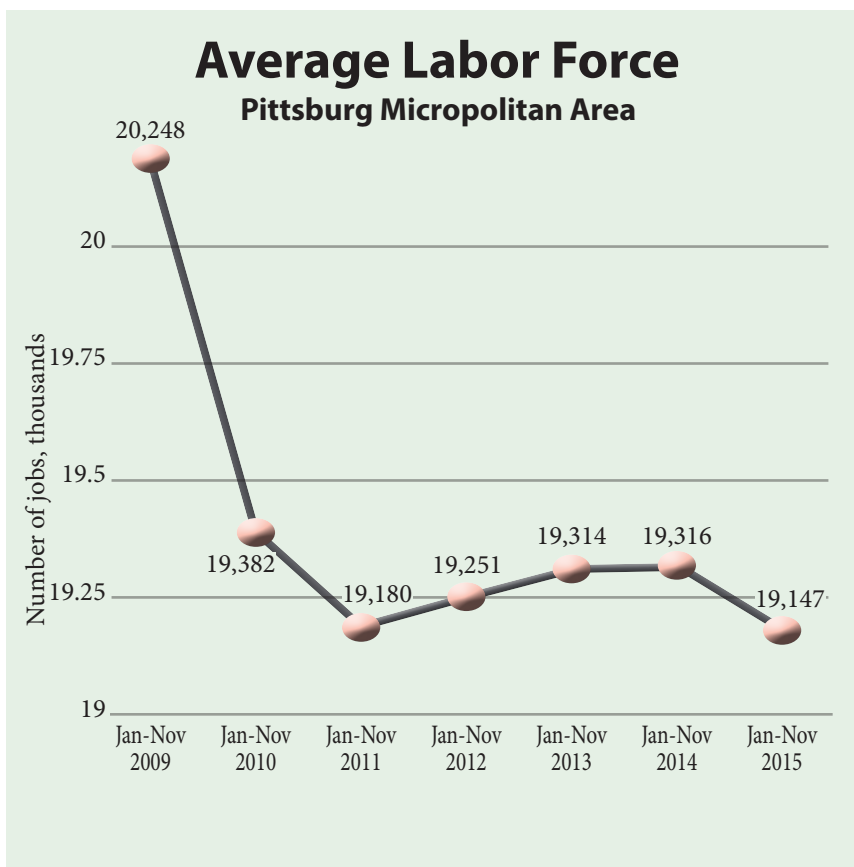
All other industries had a decline in payroll. Natural Resources and Mining posted \$1,049,138 in payroll (down 1.6 percent) followed by Information with a total payroll of \$3,141,772 (down 2.9 percent); Other Services with \$1,457,594 (down 3.9 percent); and Financial Activities with \$4,438,571 (down 15.1 percent).

Statewide, the industry with the highest increase in quarterly payroll was Professional and Business Services (up 18.9 percent), while Construction had the highest quarterly increase in payroll nationwide (up 5.1 percent).

LABOR FORCE

During the first 11 months of 2015, the average labor force in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area was 19,147 (down 0.9 percent from the same period in 2014); 1,493,030 statewide (down 0.5 percent); and 157.1 million nationwide (up 0.7 percent). However, national labor force participation continues to decline despite an increase in job growth. That is because the adult population continues to grow faster than the labor force nationwide, resulting in a decline in labor force participation. The adult population increased 1.1 percent during the first 11 months of 2015 (compared to the same period in 2014), while the civilian non-institutional labor force increased only 0.7 percent, which resulted in a drop in labor force participation of 0.4 percent. Interestingly, labor force participation declined 0.6 percent for women but only 0.2 percent for men.

The labor force stood at 19,455 in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area in November of 2015 (up 0.3 percent from November 2014) 1,513,255 statewide (up 0.5 percent); and 157.3 million nationwide (up 0.7 percent).



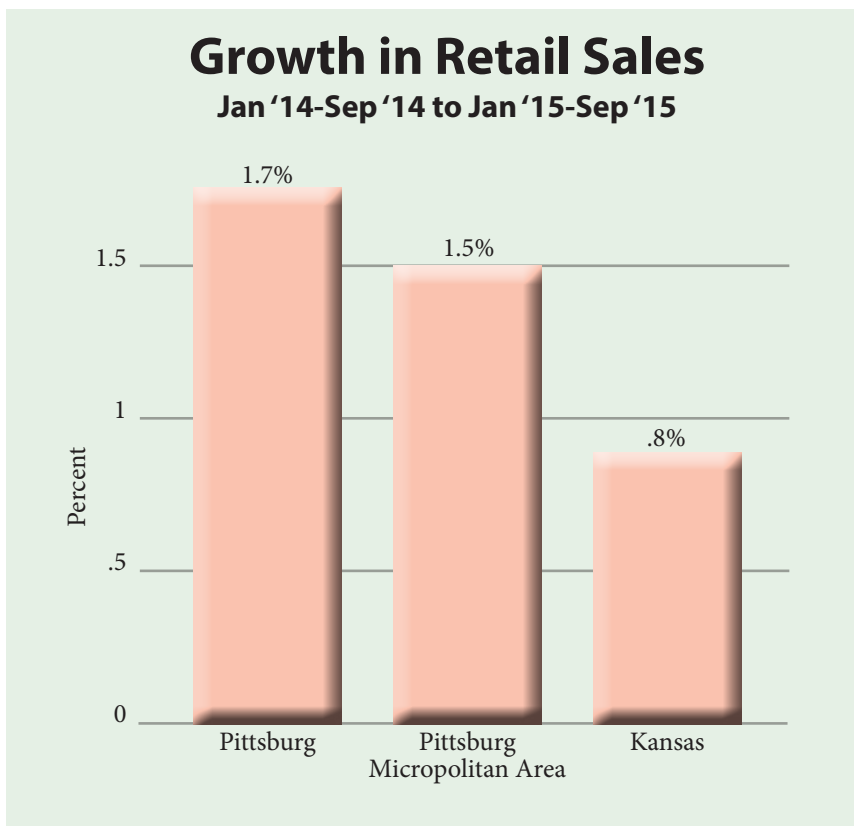
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

TAXABLE SALES

The Kansas Department of Revenue just released the latest information on taxable sales (sales taxes are levied on retail sales, and some services, such as car rental and lodging). It shows that taxable sales in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area increased to \$322,150,877 during the first nine months of 2015, up 1.5 percent, or \$4,683,432, from the first nine months of 2014. The major sources of revenue for local governments are property taxes and sales taxes. Total sales tax collections for local governments in the micropolitan area increased 3.5 percent during the period to \$20,198,974.

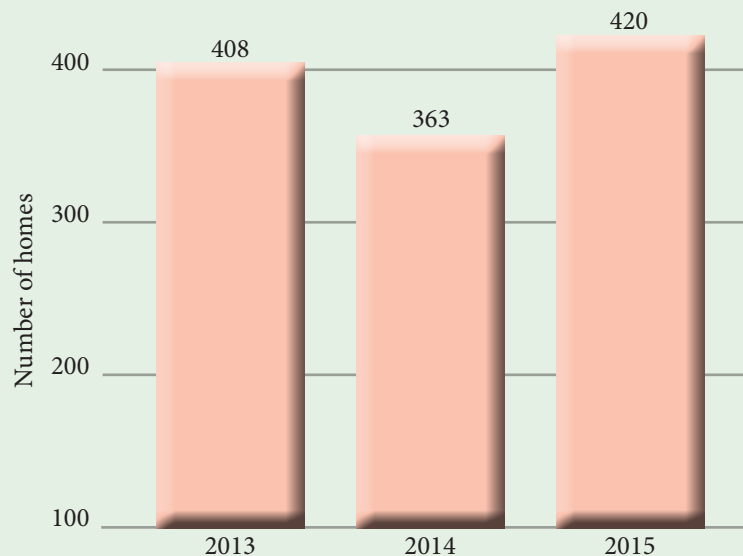
Most of the taxable sales in the micropolitan area take place in the City of Pittsburg. Total taxable sales in Pittsburg increased 1.7 percent during the period to \$236,455,146, up \$4,133,544 from the first nine months of 2014, and sales tax collections increased to \$14,825,168 (up 3.5 percent).

Statewide taxable sales increased to \$30,825,717,632 during the period (up 0.8 percent) with total sales tax collections increasing to \$1,932,784,008 (up 2.7 percent).



Source: Kansas Department of Revenue

Housing Sales Pittsburg Area Single Family Homes



Source: Pittsburg Area Realtors Association

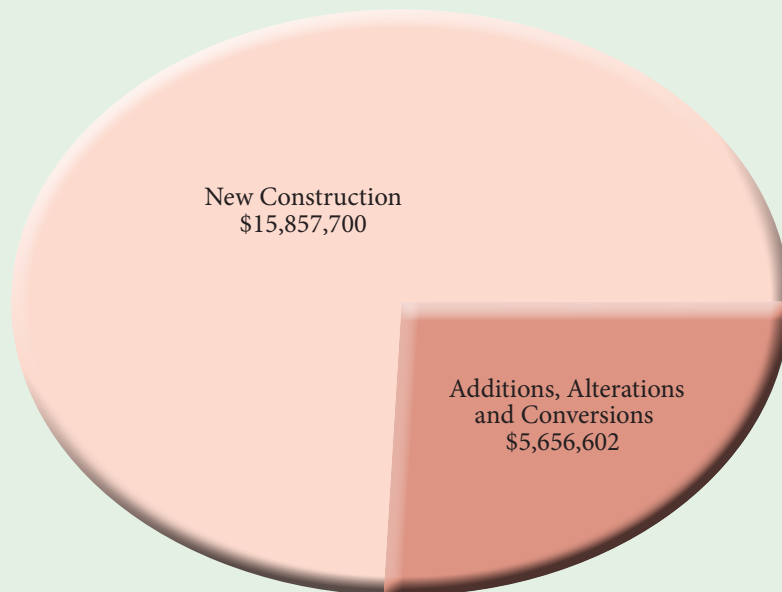
RESIDENTIAL PERMITS

Buying a home is the single biggest life-time expenditure for most households, and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average household spends 41.9 percent of the household budget on housing (rent/mortgage and maintenance).

Residential housing sales were up significantly in the Pittsburg area according to the Pittsburg Area Realtors Association. In 2015, 420 homes were sold in the Pittsburg area (412 existing homes and eight new homes), up 15.7 percent from 2014. The average sale price was \$96,336 (up 13.6 percent) and the median sale price was \$77,200 (up 13.8 percent). Homes were also taking less time to sell in 2015, with the average time on the market declining to 158 days (down from 174 days in 2014) and the median time to 110 days (down from 120 days).

The City of Pittsburg reports that 13 new residential permits were issued in the first three quarters of 2015, for a total stated value of \$2,145,545 (down 12.2 percent from the first three quarters in 2014) and 63 permits were issued for additions, alterations, and conversions, with a stated value of \$829,638 (down 4.4 percent).

Value of Commercial Permits City of Pittsburg Jan '15-Sep '15



Source: City of Pittsburg

COMMERCIAL PERMITS

During the first three quarters of 2015, 28 new commercial permits were issued by the City of Pittsburg, with a stated value of \$15,857,700, up 597 percent from the first three quarters of 2014. During the same period, 53 commercial permits were issued for additions, expansions, and conversions, with a stated value of \$5,656,602, down 66 percent. (Via Christi hospital was issued a permit for an expansion in June 2014). Overall, 81 commercial permits were issued during the period, for a stated value of \$21,514,303, up 13.9 percent.

There are some major commercial projects in the pipeline. La Quinta Inn & Suites is building a 75 room property with an indoor pool on the corner of Centennial and Broadway in south Pittsburg; it is expected to open in 2016. The \$70.2 million Kansas Crossing Casino is also in the pipeline, with 625 slot machines, 16 gaming tables, and a hotel. The annual impact during the construction phase includes 238 direct jobs and \$14.2 million in payroll annually, resulting in ripple effects of 173 additional jobs and \$8.3 million in additional payroll statewide, with the majority of the impact locally.

OFFICE SPACE MARKET

Many major companies have their headquarters in Pittsburgh, including Miller's Professional Imaging (annual sales of \$120-\$130 million), Jake's Fireworks (\$20- \$50 million), and Watco Mechanical Services (\$1-\$2.5 million). Moreover, NPC International (which owns and manages 1,263 Pizza Hut and 143 Wendy's restaurants) has most of their functional specializations (accounting and IT) located in Pittsburgh.

The performance of the local office market was good in 2015 according to Jones Heritage Realtors. In 2015, office space rentals for mid-size units in the 2,000 square feet to 4,000 square foot range had average rates of \$5.50 - \$13 per square foot for higher-end facilities (on gross basis). Office rental rates for high visibility space on North Broadway, which is the prime office market in Pittsburgh, ranged from \$8 - \$9 per square foot. Combining the qualities of a college town and a commercial center with a major hospital and the amenities, culture, and services that are attractive to an educated workforce makes Pittsburgh a good location for regional headquarters and functional specialization.

Gross Rental Rates for Midsize Office Space

Pittsburgh Area
December 2015



Source: Jones Heritage Realtors

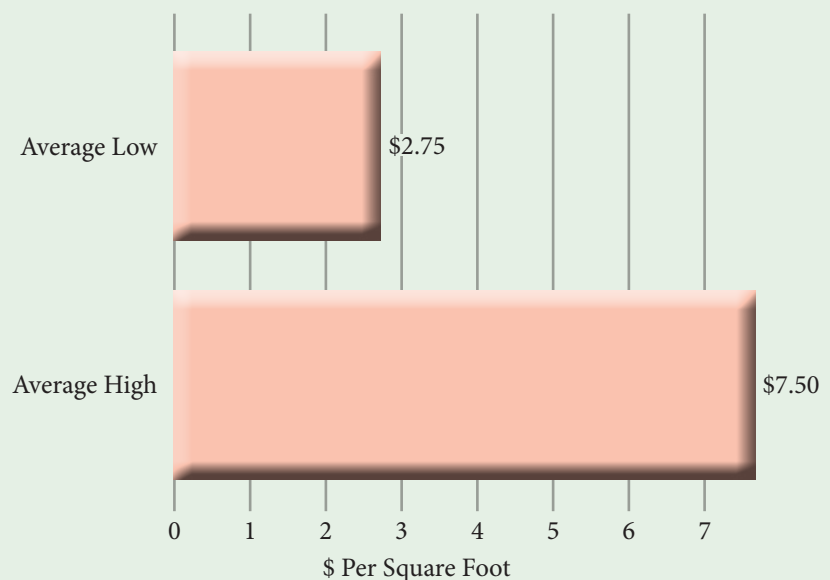
COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL LAND VALUES

There are currently approximately 116 buildings zoned for office use in the Pittsburgh area according to the Crawford County Appraisals Office, 423 for retail use and 152 for industrial and warehousing. Pittsburgh City, being a regional center, has the prime commercial space in the region.

The City of Pittsburgh has undertaken several initiatives to increase the supply of commercial and residential land for development. The City entered into a land swap with the Pittsburgh State University that added 72.7 acres of prime residential real estate to the City, annexed land for the Kansas Crossing Casino, and received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to develop approximately 350 acres of land in the city. This land area is located in the middle of the city and is bounded by 7th Street, Washington Street, Joplin Street, and Rouse Street. Development of the land will include decisions on land use and zoning for office, retail (including restaurants), residential, light industrial, or some combination.

Commercial Land Values

Pittsburgh Area
December 2015



Source: Jones Heritage Realtors

Net Rental Rates for Retail Space

Pittsburg Area
December 2015



Source: Jones Heritage Realtors

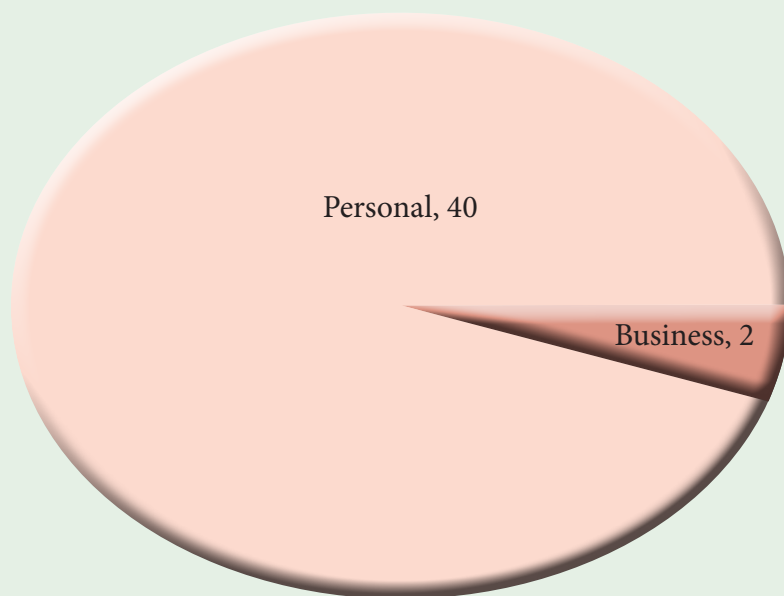
RETAIL SPACE MARKET

The Walmart Corporation recently expanded its presence in Pittsburg with the opening of a 41,000 square foot Walmart Neighborhood Market on the southwest corner of Centennial and Rouse, and several new restaurants have recently opened in the Pittsburg area. There are some significant opportunities in the Pittsburg retail space market, and the future looks very good. The Census Bureau states that over 65 percent of jobs in Pittsburg are filled by commuters, which represents a significant potential area of growth for the local economy. The Hoffman Strategy Group/ Jeff Green Partners found in a recent study that approximately \$62 million could be captured in additional sales annually by the Pittsburg retail and food service industries, supporting more than 164,000 square feet of new retail and restaurant space.

Jones Heritage Realtors reports that retail space rentals can go as high as \$14 per square foot for a medium retail space in prime locations but range on average between average low of \$5.50 per square foot (on net basis) to a high of \$8 per square.

Composition of Bankruptcies

Pittsburg Micropolitan Area
Twelve Month Period Ending Sep '15



Source: US Bankruptcy Courts

BANKRUPTCIES

During the twelve month period ending in September 2015, 42 bankruptcies were filed in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area, down 26.3 percent from the twelve month period ending in September 2014, and 6,998 cases were filed statewide, down 9.4 percent.

Nationwide, 860,182 bankruptcy cases were filed during the period, down 10.7 percent. This is good news, and it shows that bankruptcies are stabilizing after the most recent economic decline. This includes 533,572 Chapter 7 personal bankruptcies (straight bankruptcy, debt wiped out), down 14.4 percent; 1,095 Chapter 11 personal bankruptcies (reorganization of personal debt and temporary protection from creditors), down 5.1 percent; and 300,528 Chapter 13 personal bankruptcies (some debt wiped out and some repayments), down 3.3 percent.

Furthermore, a total of 16,464 Chapter 7 business bankruptcies (total liquidation with no repayments) were filed nationwide, down 13.4 percent; 5,945 Chapter 11 business bankruptcies (reorganization of business debt and temporary protection from creditors), down 8.6 percent; 383 Chapter 12 business bankruptcies (reorganization of debt for family farms), down 3.0 percent; and 2,114 Chapter 13 business bankruptcies (total liquidation with some repayments), down 10.0 percent.



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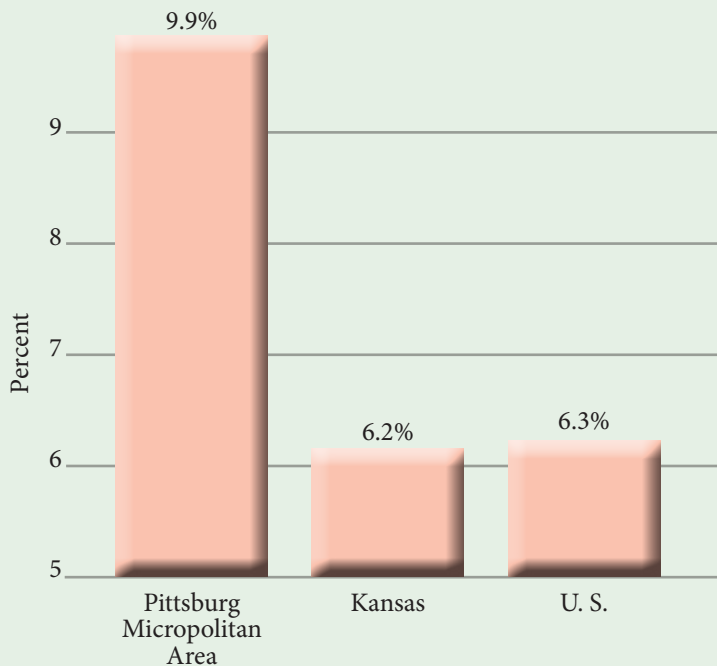
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Growth in Net Income, Banking Industry Q3 '14 - Q3 '15



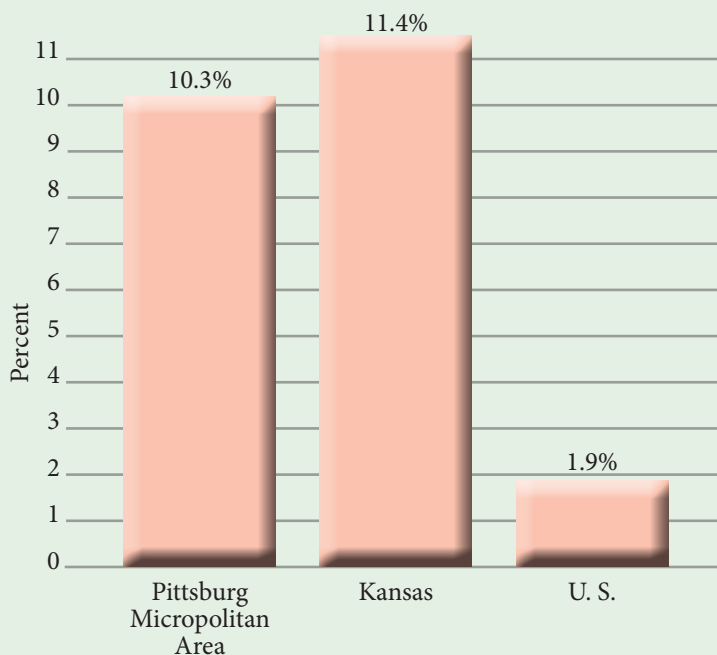
Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

BANKING INDUSTRY

The national banking industry had a relatively good quarter, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), with the number of problem institutions continuing to fall. Only five percent of institutions were not profitable at the end of the third quarter (the lowest since 2005), and approximately 58.9 percent reported healthy growth in earnings. Community banks did well during the quarter, reporting a 7.5 percent increase in earnings. However, the industry continued to suffer from low interest rate margins (difference between the interest rate banks charge and the interest rate they pay on deposits).

The performance of the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area banking industry was mixed during the quarter, according to the FDIC. Banks with headquarters in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area reported total average assets of \$747,920,000 in September 2015 (down 1.0 percent from September 2014), total net loans and leases of \$474,201,000 (up 4.0 percent), \$6,015,000 net operating income (up 9.9 percent), and \$6,095,000 in non-current loans and leases (up 17.9 percent). The reason for the increase in non-current loans and leases is not clear, especially since both business and personal bankruptcies have declined locally.

Growth in Net Income, Credit Union Industry Q3 '14 - Q3 '15



Source: National Credit Union Administration

CREDIT UNIONS

Credit unions are non-profit institutions which are tax-exempt, accept membership, and specialize in short term consumer loans. However, credit unions also do mortgage lending and various other types of financial services. Any profits from operations are returned to members at the end of the year as dividends. Banks, on the other hand, are for profit institutions and do both business and consumer loans, as well as mortgages, and usually have a bigger menu of financial services than credit unions.

The national credit union industry did well during the third quarter of 2015 according to the National Credit Union Administration, with membership continuing to increase and posting the 23rd consecutive quarter of positive net income. However, larger credit unions performed better than smaller credit unions. The Pittsburg Micropolitan Area credit union industry (institutions with local headquarters) reported \$81,664,218 in total assets at the end of September 2014 (up 1.9 percent from September 2014), \$51,010,393 in net loans and leases (up 10 percent), and \$394,522 in net operating income (up 10.3 percent). However, the local industry is experiencing more delinquency, reporting \$232,257 in noncurrent loans and leases (up 15 percent).

Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Business Summary

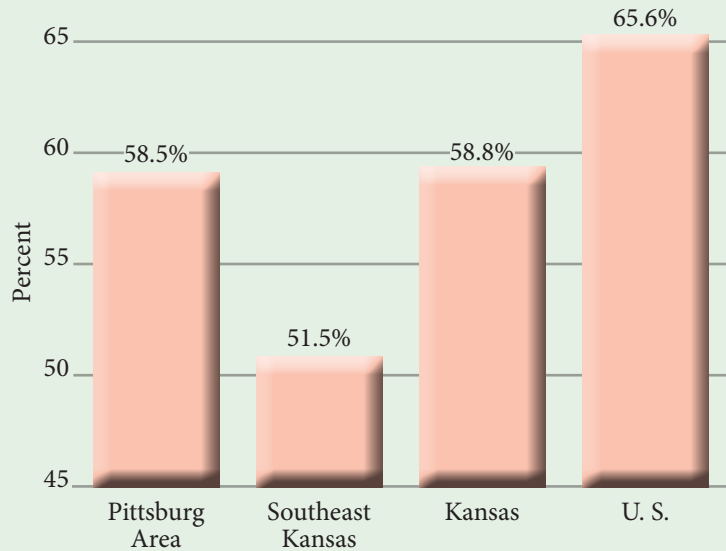
Major Industries	2015 Employees	Percent	2015 Establishments	Percent	Average Employee size
Forestry, & Fishing	232	1.5%	66	4.7%	3.5
Mining	15	0.1%	4	0.3%	3.8
Construction	463	3.0%	76	5.4%	6.1
Manufacturing	1724	11.0%	64	4.6%	26.9
Transportation, Communications, Elec., Gas, Etc.	1077	6.9%	74	5.3%	14.6
Wholesale Trade	665	4.2%	68	4.9%	9.8
Retail Trade	2739	17.5%	257	18.4%	10.7
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	499	3.2%	113	8.1%	4.4
Services	7484	47.8%	617	44.2%	12.1
Public Administration	775	4.9%	56	4.0%	13.8

Source: Demographics Now
Latest Information Available

Sub Industries	2015 Employees	Percent	2015 Establishments	Percent	Average Employee size
Retail Trade	2739	17.5%	257	18.4%	10.7
Building Materials, Hrdwr, Garden Supply, Etc.	196	1.3%	13	0.9%	15.1
General Merchandise Stores	521	3.3%	10	0.7%	52.1
Food Stores	203	1.3%	26	1.9%	7.8
Automotive Dealers and Gasoline Service Stations	170	1.1%	23	1.7%	7.4
Apparel and Accessory Stores	75	0.5%	13	0.9%	5.8
Home Furniture, Furnishings and Equipment Stores	122	0.8%	15	1.1%	8.1
Eating and Drinking Places	1118	7.1%	78	5.6%	14.3
Miscellaneous Retail	334	2.1%	79	5.7%	4.2
Services	7484	47.8%	617	44.2%	12.1
Hotels, Rooming Houses, Camps, and Other	136	0.9%	9	0.7%	15.1
Personal Services	177	1.1%	59	4.2%	3.0
Business Services	642	4.1%	84	6.0%	7.6
Automotive Repair, Services and Parking	138	0.9%	40	2.9%	3.5
Miscellaneous Repair Services	76	0.5%	22	1.6%	3.5
Motion Pictures	28	0.2%	3	0.2%	9.3
Amusement and Recreation Services	157	1.0%	18	1.3%	8.7
Health Services	1835	11.7%	124	8.9%	14.8
Legal Services	128	0.8%	26	1.9%	4.9
Educational Services	2807	17.9%	50	3.6%	56.1
Social Services	652	4.2%	45	3.2%	14.5
Museums, Art Galleries, Etc.	10	0.1%	2	0.1%	5.0
Membership Organizations	436	2.8%	97	7.0%	4.5
Engineering, Accounting, Research, Etc.	255	1.6%	33	2.4%	7.7
Services, Not Elsewhere Classified	7	0.0%	5	0.4%	1.4

Source: Demographics Now
Latest Information Available

Average Occupancy Rates 2015



Source: The Council for Community and Economic Research

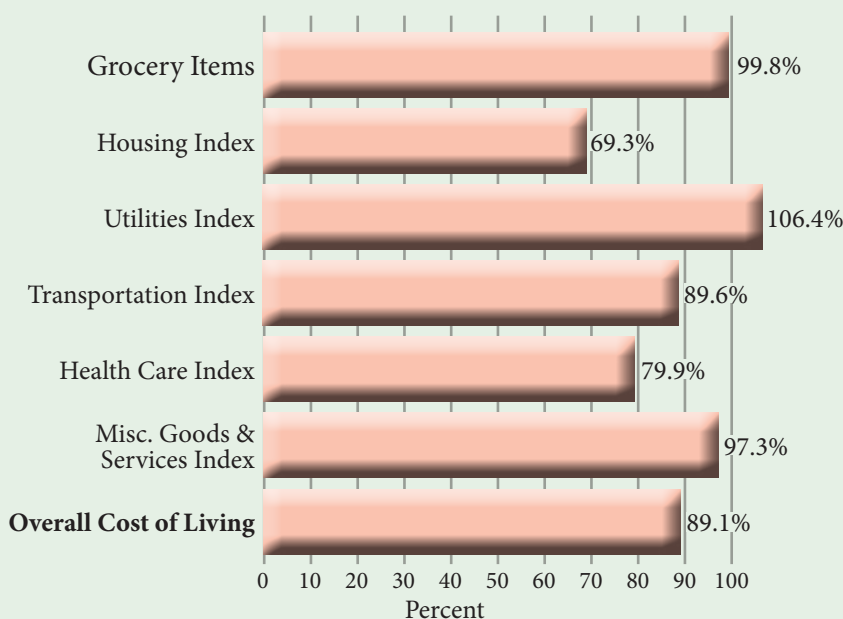
LODGING INDUSTRY

The average occupancy rate in the Pittsburg Area lodging industry declined slightly in 2015 to 58.5 percent, down from 61 percent in 2014. This is, however, the second highest annual occupancy rate recorded in the area. The average room rate held steady at \$80.00. The average occupancy rate was 51.5 percent in the Southeast Kansas region in 2015 (down from 55.0 percent) with the average room rate of \$67.40 (up from \$64.60).

The City of Pittsburg, which is the seat of the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area, is increasingly becoming more important as a tourist destination. Currently tourists visiting the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area spend almost \$54 million annually, creating 594 jobs. With the completion of the Kansas Crossing Casino, which is scheduled to open in fall 2016, an additional 426,000 tourist visits are expected annually.

Statewide, the average occupancy rate was 58.8 percent during 2015 (down from 59.2 percent) with the average room rate of \$81.10 (up from \$78.30) and nationwide the average occupancy rate was 65.6 percent (up from 64.4 percent) and the average room rate was \$120.00 (up from 114.9).

Cost of Living - Percent of the National Average Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Q3'15



Source: The Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness

COST OF LIVING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The local cost of living is relatively attractive. The cost of living in the Pittsburg area in the third quarter of 2015 was 89.1 percent of the national average. The cost of groceries was 99.8 percent of the national average, housing was 69.3 percent, utilities 106.4 percent, transportation 89.6 percent, health care 79.9 percent, and miscellaneous goods and services 97.3 percent.

Pittsburg area urban amenities include 255 retail, eating and drinking establishments, two performing arts centers (the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts and the Memorial Auditorium), an 11,910 capacity NCAA Division II football stadium, three golf courses, a philharmonic orchestra, an opera, and more. Some of the area's many natural amenities include aesthetic backdrops such as fourteen parks, walking and biking trails, and access to eight major lakes and rivers within a one-hour drive.

BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

SECOND DELAY FOR KANSAS CROSSING CASINO

Kansas crossing started preparing the site on the northwest corner of U.S. highways 69 and 160 in Crawford County soon after being awarded the contract. But in September the project was put on hold because of lawsuits brought by Cherokee County and Castle Rock Casino, a competing casino company that wanted to build a casino in Cherokee County. The casino was originally supposed to open in July 2016.

Houston developer Bruce Christenson, the lead investor in the project, said in a written statement that the delay will cost state and local governments millions of dollars in gaming revenue. Crawford and Cherokee counties, and the City of Pittsburg each lost \$88,270 in expected tax revenue because of the first delay and would lose an additional \$88,270 now that the second delay has been granted, according to Kansas Crossing. *Sarah Okeson, The Joplin Globe, December 3, 2015*

NEW HOTEL BRINGS LIFE TO S. BROADWAY

The landscape at the south end of Broadway in Pittsburg will begin to change as construction starts on a 42,000 square foot La Quinta Hotel. The 72-room hotel is slated to open in mid-October 2016 and will create 21 new jobs. The hotel will be the seventh hotel in Pittsburg, according to the city's Economic Development Director Blake Benson. "We think it is a great location and will be very successful," Benson said. "Especially with its proximity to Pittsburg State University and the Robert W. Plaster indoor event center and the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts. And its proximity to Via Christi Hospital."

The owners, Dan and Manisha Bhakta, owned the property for 15 years, he said. The Wichita couple had an EconoLodge at the location which was damaged and ultimately demolished after being hit by a storm in February 2012. Benson said the process has been in the work for years: From dealing with insurance and demolition of the old hotel then securing finances and the La Quinta name. "All-in-all, it was a four year process just to get us to the groundbreaking," he said.

Michael Stavola, The Morning Sun, December 31, 2015

JO'S GYROS TO RELOCATE

Jo's is moving. And expanding. And that's a good thing. Dan Tiwari opened the modest little shop with nine tables next door to Tropical Sno in a plaza west of the Pittsburg State University campus. Jo's gyros, hummus, pita, falafel—you name it, it was great. It's plain—basic restaurant booths, a TV monitor in the corner, and a serve-yourself soda machine. But what makes it special is the care the owner and his four employees take with the food. Dan confirmed renovations have begun at the former Wheat State Pizza, and he's moving Jo's there soon. Doing so will nearly triple the size of his seating area and kitchen/prep area. It also will allow him to hire as many as six more staff members. And instead of operating as an order-at-the-register restaurant, it will enable him to offer table service and an expanded menu.

As soon as repairs are made to the former Wheat State location, including to the floor and roof, he's prepared to make the move over a weekend and then reopen on a Monday.

Andra Bryan Stefanoni, The Joplin Globe, November 9, 2015

WAL-MART TO HIRE 190 PEOPLE FOR TWO STORES

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said it plans to hire up to 190 people for two Neighborhood Markets scheduled to open in the area early next year. The company said it plans to hire 95 people for a store at 25145 DeMott Drive in Airport Drive. The majority of those employees will begin work in November to help prepare the store for its grand opening, which is expected in the first quarter of 2016, according to Anne Hatfield, spokeswoman for Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart also will hire up to 95 associates to work at its new Neighborhood Market in Pittsburg, Kansas. A majority of those employees will begin work in December to help prepare the store for its grand opening, also in the first quarter of next year, Hatfield said. Airport Drive Store Manager Steve Brigham and Pittsburg Store Manager Phil VanKirk said in statements sent out by Wal-Mart that the positions will be both full time and part time.

From Staff Reports, The Joplin Globe, October 27, 2015

CRAWFORD COUNTY TOURISM BOOM

"In 2014, \$53.3 million was spent by visitors to Crawford County. That's across all different sectors whether it be fuel, entertainment, food, lodging. All those combined for that total, it's the highest number we've ever seen. It means that tourism accounts for nearly 600 jobs in the state, in the Crawford County area," said B.J. Harris, Crawford County C.V.B.

"Our base economy is a sales tax and we use that, any tourism dollars we can get through here is good news. And so the stronger the Convention and Visitors Bureau is, the more tourism through here, the lower the taxes are for those of us paying property tax," said Daron Hall, Pittsburg City Manager. Hall expects even more tourism success from here on out with a casino on the way, as well as all the events that will come to the county from the construction of PSU's Bicknell Family Arts Center and the Plaster Athletic Facility.

"This is the start of something that's going to continue for a long time and it's going to be a huge difference maker for all of us," said Hall.

Nexstar Broadcasting, November 18, 2015

Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Economic Report

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with support and direction from

Kelce College of Business
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PITTSBURG MICROPOLITAN AREA EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

INDUSTRY TITLE	Q2 2014		Q2 2015		Growth in Employment	Growth Avg Weekly Earnings
	Average Employment	Avg. Weekly Earnings	Average Employment	Avg. Weekly Earnings		
Accommodation	97	\$274	93	\$302	-4.3%	10.2%
Administration of economic programs	15	\$896	13	\$1,116	-12.5%	24.6%
Administrative and support services	364	\$650	436	\$672	16.4%	3.4%
Ambulatory health care services	612	\$764	563	\$780	-8.7%	2.1%
Building material and garden supply stores	183	\$410	193	\$398	5.0%	-2.9%
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	70	\$252	65	\$269	-7.1%	6.7%
Construction of buildings	75	\$511	77	\$580	2.2%	13.5%
Credit intermediation and related activities	279	\$778	239	\$697	-16.7%	-10.4%
Crop production	24	\$731	25	\$698	4.0%	-4.5%
Educational services	35	\$455	46	\$466	23.2%	2.4%
Electrical equipment and appliance mfg.	202	\$793	240	\$788	15.9%	-0.6%
Electronics and appliance stores	101	\$364	64	\$410	-57.0%	12.6%
Executive, legislative and general government	940	\$507	955	\$520	1.5%	2.6%
Fabricated metal product manufacturing	371	\$780	393	\$761	5.6%	-2.4%
Food and beverage stores	377	\$336	336	\$375	-12.2%	11.6%
Food services and drinking places	1715	\$195	1725	\$208	0.5%	6.7%
Furniture and home furnishings stores	74	\$703	82	\$558	9.0%	-20.6%
Gasoline stations	174	\$265	159	\$287	-9.9%	8.3%
General merchandise stores	471	\$341	521	\$339	9.5%	-0.6%
Health and personal care stores	101	\$483	100	\$530	-0.7%	9.7%
Heavy and civil engineering construction	104	\$745	110	\$766	5.5%	2.8%
Insurance carriers and related activities	59	\$575	54	\$595	-9.9%	3.5%
Justice, public order, and safety activities	43	\$828	44	\$906	1.5%	9.4%
Machinery manufacturing	74	\$669	80	\$608	8.3%	-9.1%
Management of companies and enterprises	336	\$869	343	\$1,043	2.2%	20.0%
Membership associations and organizations	69	\$402	55	\$405	-25.5%	0.7%
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods	117	\$745	127	\$695	7.9%	-6.7%
Merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods	376	\$757	378	\$770	0.5%	1.7%
Miscellaneous store retailers	52	\$337	48	\$362	-9.0%	7.4%
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	206	\$582	226	\$605	8.6%	4.0%
Nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing	37	\$627	42	\$609	11.8%	-2.9%
Nonstore retailers	23	\$455	21	\$438	-9.4%	-3.7%
Nursing and residential care facilities	675	\$377	668	\$411	-1.1%	9.0%
Personal and laundry services	78	\$443	86	\$433	8.9%	-2.3%
Postal service	65	\$771	61	\$816	-7.7%	5.8%
Printing and related support activities	417	\$798	424	\$798	1.7%	0.0%
Private households	24	\$223	23	\$191	-4.3%	-14.3%
Professional and technical services	286	\$713	296	\$684	3.4%	-4.1%
Real estate	114	\$392	114	\$438	0.0%	11.7%
Rental and leasing services	93	\$682	88	\$742	-6.5%	8.8%
Repair and maintenance	99	\$494	92	\$526	-7.6%	6.5%
Specialty trade contractors	253	\$620	249	\$645	-1.5%	4.0%
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	37	\$345	39	\$331	4.3%	-4.1%
Telecommunications	87	\$1,231	86	\$1,290	-1.2%	4.8%
Truck transportation	102	\$787	130	\$766	22.0%	-2.7%
Utilities	35	\$326	24	\$369	-44.4%	13.2%
Waste management and remediation services	45	\$538	49	\$571	8.2%	6.1%
Wood product manufacturing	144	\$631	150	\$626	4.0%	-0.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Congratulations *to the* Via Christi Cancer Center



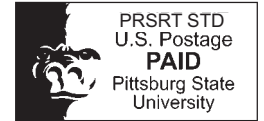
Congratulations to the team of the Via Christi Cancer Center for achieving **full accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer**. Accreditation is the seal of approval for cancer programs from the American College of Surgeons and formally acknowledges Via Christi's commitment to providing high-quality cancer care to our community and patients. For the first time ever, the **Via Christi Cancer Center received all 8 commendations** from the ACOS. By making the advanced treatments you need available close to home, the Via Christi Cancer Center is here for every patient, every time.



...because your life matters

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