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The Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Economic Report, Quarter 3, 2020

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THE PITTSBURG MICROPOLITAN AREA ECONOMIC REPORT

The Future Of Retail Sales

The COVID-19 PANDEMIC COULD prove to be the final blow for many brick and mortar stores nationwide.

Online retail sales increased 47.0 percent during the second quarter of 2020, online shopping is now 16.1 percent of all retail sales, and new projections show that online shopping is expected to grow to over 25 percent of all retail sales by 2025. The most recent projections estimate that between 20,000 and 25,000 retail stores will close nationwide in 2020, up from 9,832 in 2019. Clothing and clothing accessories store sales have been especially hard hit in the first two quarters of 2020, down almost 40 percent compared to the same period last year. The local retail

scene in the Pittsburgh micropolitan area has been improving significantly during the last few years and was doing well before the pandemic lockdown.

Placer.ai reports that malls and retail shopping centers in the City of Pittsburgh (Meadowbrook, North Gate, and Pittsburgh Town Center) saw an estimated 257,400 visitors during February 2020, with most of the visits to Meadowbrook Mall (120,300). Local malls and shopping centers were followed by grocery stores (Aldi, Walmart, and Dillon's) with 252,900 visits, fast food restaurants (all the major local fast food locations, except pizza places) with 147,500 visits, restaurants (Applebee's, Chili's, Colton's, El Charro and

Jimmy's Egg) with 73,000 visits, and discount chain stores (Big Lots, Dollar General and Dollar Tree) with 29,600 visits. In addition, there are over 40 small specialty retailers and bars in downtown Pittsburgh, and the health of downtown economy will rise and fall with these retailers.

How badly the local retail scene will be hit by the pandemic remains to be seen, but sales tax offers one unexpected but hopeful indicator: the Kansas Department of Revenue reports that sales taxes collected and returned to the City of Pittsburgh increased to \$6.2 million during the first eight months of 2020, up 2.7 percent from the first eight months of 2019.

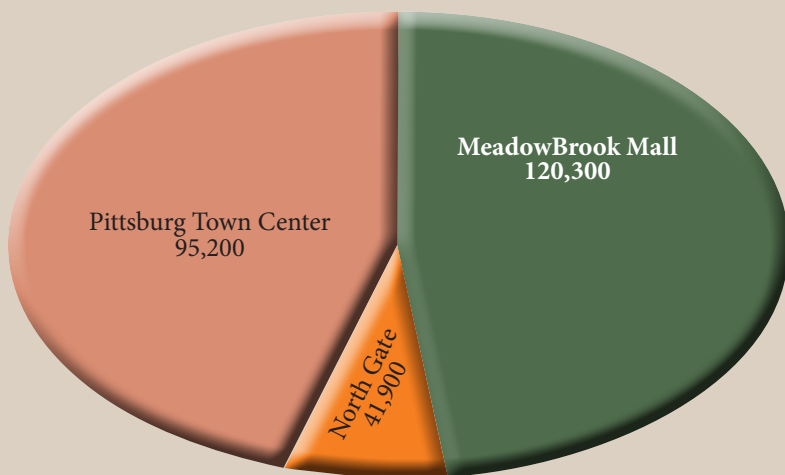
INSIDE

- Total Jobs
- Unemployment
- Job Growth by Industry
- Incomes by Industry
- Labor Force
- Taxable Sales
- Residential Building Permits
- Commercial Building Permits
- Medical Office Space Market
- Commercial Activity
- Retail Space Market
- Bankruptcies
- Banking, Credit Unions and more . . .



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Pittsburgh State University

Number Of Visitations To Malls And Shopping Centers In Pittsburgh February, Last Month Before Lockdown



Source: Placer.ai



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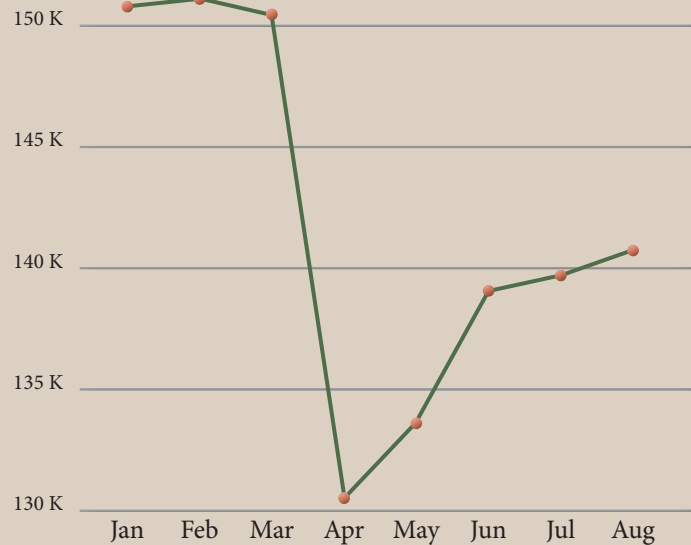
TOTAL JOBS

The national economy was very healthy at the beginning of 2020 with unemployment at a 50-year low and with more jobs unfilled nationwide than the number of unemployed.

Then the coronavirus pandemic began. Never in history has the US economy stopped as suddenly as it did in late March 2020, producing a policy-induced recession. Non-farm employment began to decline in March, down 1.0 million from February, and took a nosedive during the April lockdowns, down 20.8 million. However, non-farm employment has been increasing since May, with non-farm employment up 3.1 million in May, up 5.0 million in June, up 0.6 million in July, and up 1.5 million in August.

The total non-farm employment is still 10.5 million jobs below the February level; however, the Federal Reserve Bank recently stated that it was cautiously optimistic for a near-term rebound. Most of the jobs were lost in small businesses. It is estimated that 21 percent of all businesses nationwide have closed permanently since March, most of them small firms. Small businesses are very important for the economy, employing around half of the labor force and generating approximately half of the national income.

Number Of Jobs In Thousands Nationwide, 2020



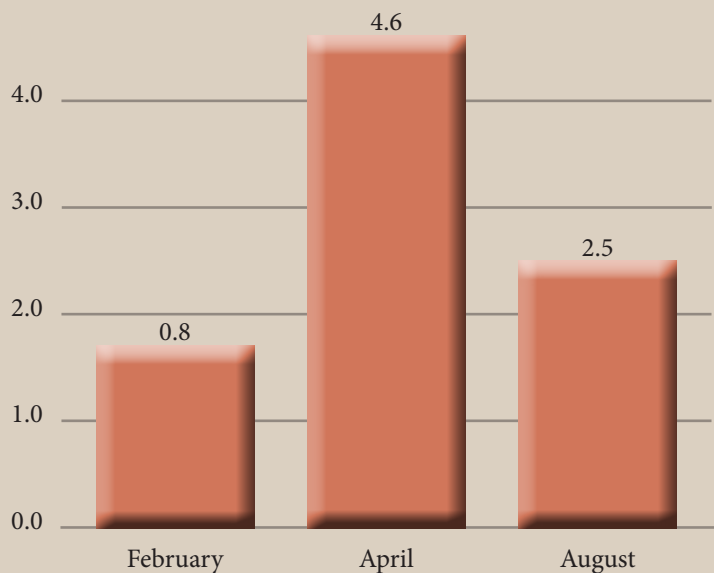
Source: Bureau Of Labor Statistics

UNEMPLOYMENT

The labor market is showing signs of recovery, with unemployment decreasing every month since May 2020. The unemployment rate was 3.8 percent nationwide in February before the pandemic (with 0.8 unemployed persons per one job opening nationwide), but increased to 14.4 percent in April (with 4.6 unemployed persons per one job opening) and then declined to 8.5 percent in August (with 2.5 unemployed persons per one job opening). The unemployment rate was 5.6 percent in August for people with a bachelor's degree or higher (down from 8.2 percent in April), 8.3 percent for people with some college or an associate's degree (down from 14.8 percent), 9.8 percent for high school graduates with no college (down from 17.0 percent), and 11.8 percent for people without a high school diploma (down from 20.9 percent).

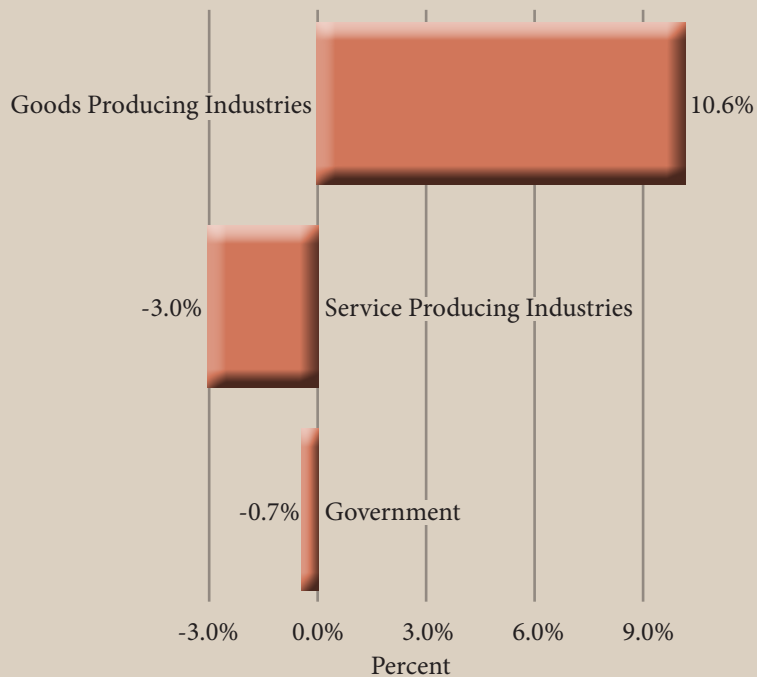
As of August, African Americans had the highest unemployment rate (13.1 percent), followed by Asian Americans (10.7 percent), Hispanics (10.5 percent), and whites (7.5 percent). The Pittsburgh area labor market was not hit as hard as the national labor market by the pandemic. The unemployment rate was 6.7 percent in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area in August and 7.1 percent statewide.

Number Of Unemployed People Per Job Opening Nationwide



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Job Growth Q1 '19 To Q1 '20 Pittsburg Micropolitan Area



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

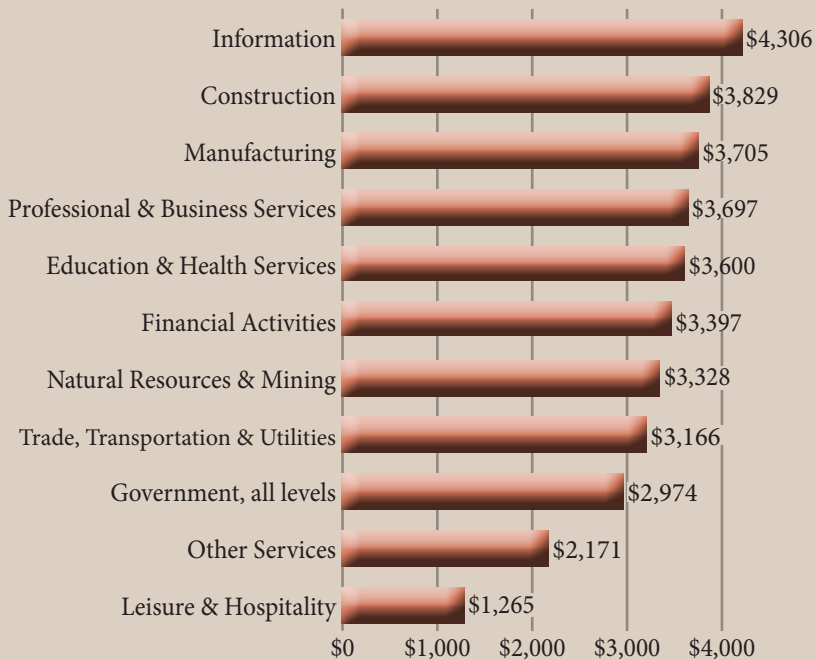
JOB GROWTH BY INDUSTRY

Nationwide, in the period from January to August 2020, the average number of jobs declined to 141.7 million, down 5.6 percent (down 9.5 million) from the same period last year. All industries lost jobs, but Leisure and Hospitality shrank the most (down 20.5 percent), while Financial Activities lost the fewest jobs (down 0.4 percent).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in September that the number of non-farm jobs in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area increased 10.6 percent in the goods-producing industries during the first quarter of 2020 from the first quarter of 2019, but declined 3.0 percent in the service-producing industries and 0.7 percent in government (all levels), with the total number of jobs increasing to 17,028, up slightly (up 0.03 percent).

Only five local industries added jobs during the first quarter of 2020, with Construction posting 682 jobs, up 285 jobs (up 71.9 percent), followed by Education and Health Services, posting 2,381 jobs, up 100 jobs (up 4.4 percent); Manufacturing posting 2,614 jobs, up 49 jobs (1.9 percent); Leisure and Hospitality posting 2,062 jobs, up 49 jobs (up 2.4 percent); and Information Services posting 296 jobs, up 3 jobs (1.0 percent).

Average Monthly Wages Pittsburg Micropolitan Area, Q1 '2020



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

INCOMES BY INDUSTRY

Wages in the Pittsburg micropolitan area increased a significant 5.0 percent during first quarter of 2020 (latest available) from the first quarter in 2019.

The goods-producing industries posted wages of \$3,720 (up 7.1 percent), and the service producing industries posted wages of \$2,995 (up 3.7 percent). Information Services posted the highest local average monthly wage of the private industries (\$4,306) and posted a quarterly payroll of \$3.8 million, followed by Construction, with an average monthly wage of \$3,829 and a payroll of \$7.8 million; Manufacturing, with an average monthly wage of \$3,705 and a payroll of \$29 million; Professional and Business Services with a wage of \$3,697 and a payroll of \$14.3 million; Education and Health Services with a wage of \$3,600 and a payroll of \$25.7 million; Financial Activities with a wage of \$3,397 and a payroll of \$4.6 million; Natural Resources and Mining with a wage of \$3,328 and a payroll of \$898,441; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities with a wage of \$3,166 and a payroll of \$25.6 million; Other Services with a wage of \$2,171 and a payroll of \$1.4 million; and Leisure and Hospitality with a wage of \$1,265 and a payroll of \$7.8 million.

LABOR FORCE

Service workers were hit the hardest by the pandemic, with 34 percent laid off, and 43 percent experiencing reduced pay, followed by arts, design, entertainment and media workers (25 percent laid off and 48 percent experiencing reduced pay); construction and mining workers (18 percent laid off and 38 percent reduced pay); sales workers (18 percent laid off and 46 percent reduced pay); and transportation workers (17 percent laid off and 49 percent reduced pay. Locally, 19.5 percent of the labor force works in sales and office occupations; 17.9 percent in production, transportation and material moving occupations; 12.3 percent in education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations; 11.6 percent in management, business, and financial occupations; 9.7 percent in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; 5.8 percent in food preparation and serving-related occupations; 5.6 percent in healthcare practitioner and technical occupations; 5.6 percent in personal care and service occupations; 4.6 percent in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations; 3.8 percent in healthcare support occupations; 2.5 percent in computer, engineering, and science occupations; and 1.1 percent in protective service occupations.

Workforce By Occupation Pittsburg Micropolitan Area

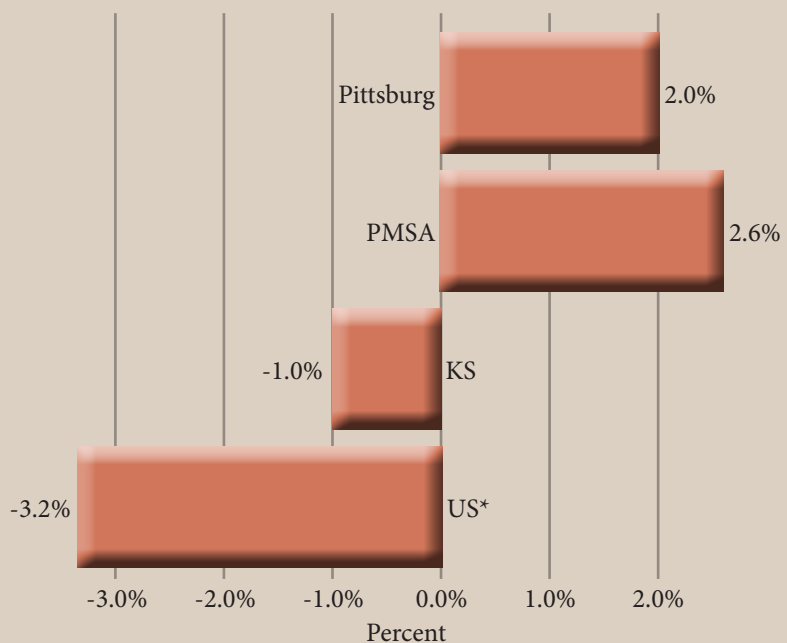
Occupations	Percentage Of Total
Management, business, and financial	11.6%
Computer, engineering, and science	2.5%
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media	12.3%
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.6%
Healthcare support	3.8%
Protective service	1.1%
Food preparation and serving related	5.8%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	4.6%
Personal care and service	5.6%
Sales and office	19.5%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	9.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving	17.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

TAXABLE SALES

The economy did well in 2019: preliminary estimates show that average household income increased 6.8 percent to \$68,703, the highest ever in US recorded history, and total retail sales increased a healthy 3.6 percent. Retail sales also showed a significant 6.6 percent increase during the first two months of 2020 (compared to the same period last year) but declined 10.9 percent from March to May 2020 (during state lockdowns) and began to increase in June. Federal stimulus checks to households helped limit the decline in retail sales. Coresight reports that collectively, recipients spent approximately 44 percent of the stimulus check on routine bills (utilities, etc), 35 percent on food, 11 percent on home improvement, 6 percent on beauty, and 5 percent on clothing. Overall, total retail sales nationwide declined 3.2 percent during the first six months of 2020, with sales declining 39.5 percent in clothing and clothing accessory stores and 22.1 percent in food and drinking places. The Kansas Department of Revenue reports that taxable sales in the City of Pittsburg increased to \$170.6 million during the first six months (up 2.0 percent), \$231.7 million in the Pittsburg micropolitan area (up 2.6 percent), and \$20.7 billion statewide (down 1.0 percent).

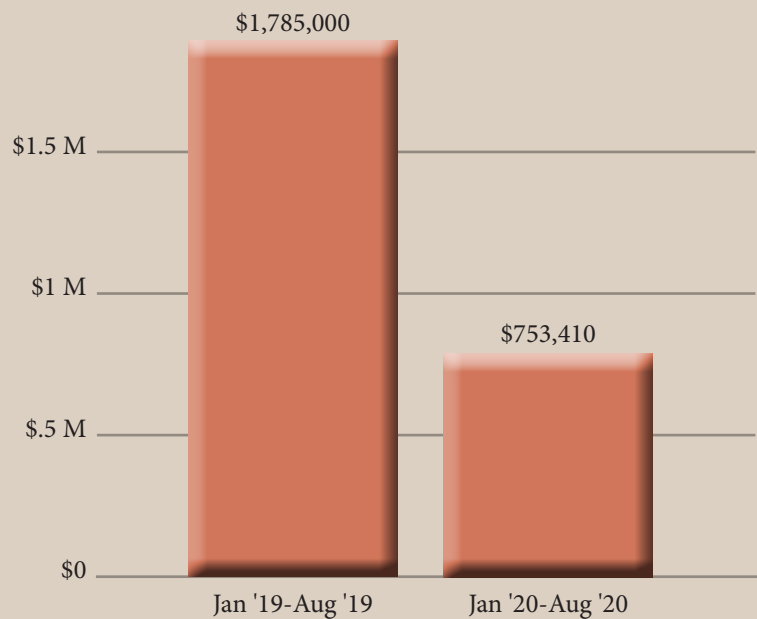
Growth Taxable Sales Jan '19-Jun '19 To Jan '20-Jun '20



Source: Kansas Department of Revenue

* Retail sales because taxable sales not available

Value Of Residential Permits City Of Pittsburgh



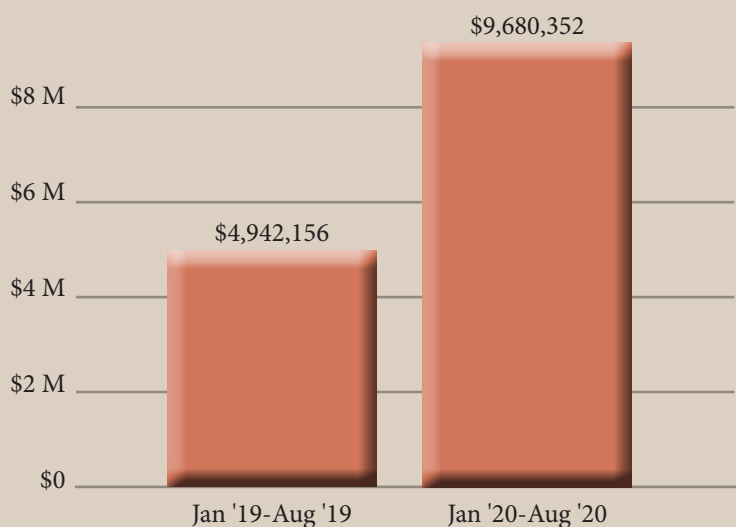
Source: City of Pittsburgh

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

A recent study in Bankrate finds that 36.0 percent of households nationwide have decided to put off a major life event, such as buying a home or getting married, during the pandemic. Local building permits and housing sales took a steep dive during the spring, but things are beginning to improve. The City of Pittsburgh reports that three new residential building permits were issued in May and June with a stated value of \$304,900 (up 90.6 percent from the same period last year). However, overall local building permits are down 25.8 percent for the first eight months.

Furthermore, the Pittsburgh Area Realtors Association reports that 117 homes were sold in Pittsburgh in June and July 2020, up 4.5 percent from the same period last year. The City of Pittsburgh has been facilitating housing development programs, culminating in a record year in 2019 with local housing sales up 19 percent and the average home price up 29 percent. Three new housing developments are currently underway: Creekside East (a new subdivision utilizing the rural housing incentive district); Payton's Hamlet with 4 new homes; and a high-end, 55+ gated community, which will consist of over 125 units when finished.

Value Of Commercial Permits City Of Pittsburgh



Source: City of Pittsburgh

COMMERCIAL BUILDING PERMITS

Local businesses are optimistic about the future, despite the bleak economic performance during COVID-19. The City of Pittsburgh reports that local commercial building permit activity is up significantly (especially in April and June), with 54 commercial permits issued during the first eight months of 2020 with a stated value of \$9,680,352, up 95.9 percent from the first eight months of 2019. Six of these were for new construction, with a stated value of \$2,084,241 (up a significant 127.5 percent), and 48 were permits issued for additions, alterations and conversions, with a stated value of \$7,596,111 (up 88.7 percent). Among them are a permit for a new building for Security 1st Title Agency, located at 910 S Broadway, with a stated value of \$678,000; a permit to replace the façade at the Northgate shopping center in the 2800 Block of North Broadway, with a stated value of \$308,798; a permit for remodeling for the Newman Center at 301 E Cleveland, with a value of \$1,939,988; a permit for remodeling at 111 N Broadway, with a value of \$346,000; and a permit to Verizon for remodeling of the building located at 2826 N. Broadway, with a stated value of \$298,518.

MEDICAL OFFICE SPACE MARKET

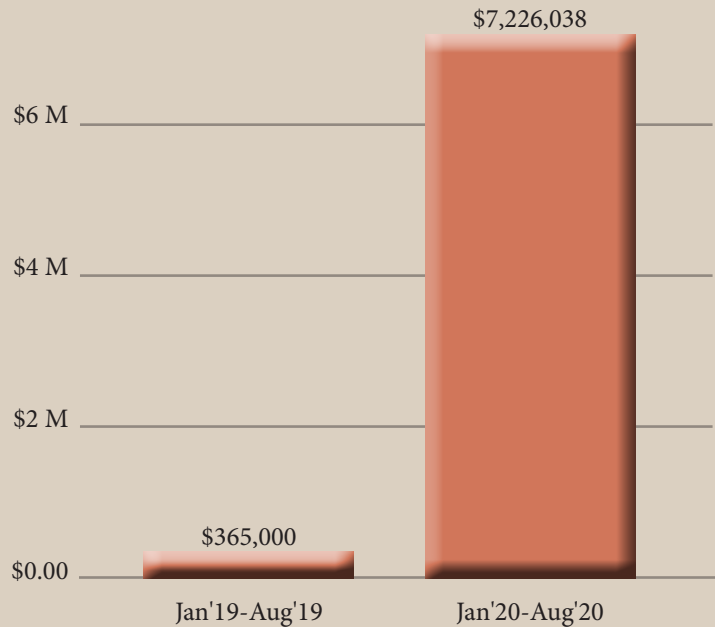
If there is one thing that COVID-19 taught us, it is that access to medical facilities is a very important factor of quality of life.

The American Hospital Association reports a significant revenue loss in the nationwide health care industry due to COVID-19 with overall industry wide losses of over \$323 billion for the first two quarters and the losses are expected to increase by \$120 billion during the last two quarters.

Overall, there are 101 medical offices located in Pittsburgh. The local medical office space market is doing well, according to Jones Heritage Realtors, a local authority on commercial space, with an average low medical space gross rental rate of \$11.00 per square foot, an average high of \$16.00 per square foot, and an overall average of \$14.50 per square foot.

There are currently several medical building projects in the pipeline or just completed, including: a \$400,000 remodeling of 1117 W 4th Street for Riggs Chiropractic; a new medical building at 2425 Bradshaw with a stated value of \$1,200,000; three construction projects for Via Christi, with stated values of \$174,000, \$261,000, and \$220,358; and two remodeling projects for medical offices with a stated value of \$586,000.

Value Of Medical Building Pemits City Of Pittsburgh



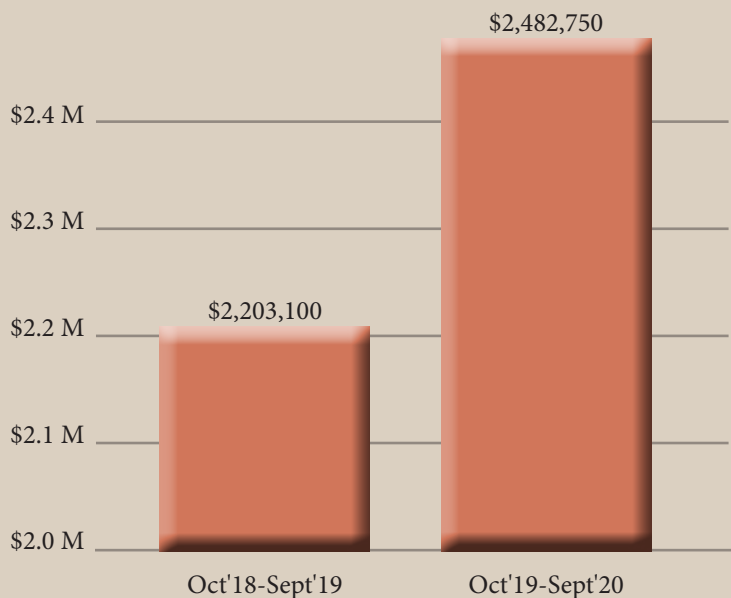
Source: City of Pittsburgh

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

Non-residential construction activity nationwide is down 75.4 percent for the first seven months of 2020. Construction activity had been increasing following the end of most state lockdowns, but in July 2020, it declined 1.0 percent. Religious construction had the largest decline at 26.8 percent, followed by lodging construction, down 13.4 percent; manufacturing construction, down 10.0 percent; office construction, down 7.2 percent; educational construction, down 5.9 percent; recreation construction, down 2.4 percent. Other construction increased during the month.

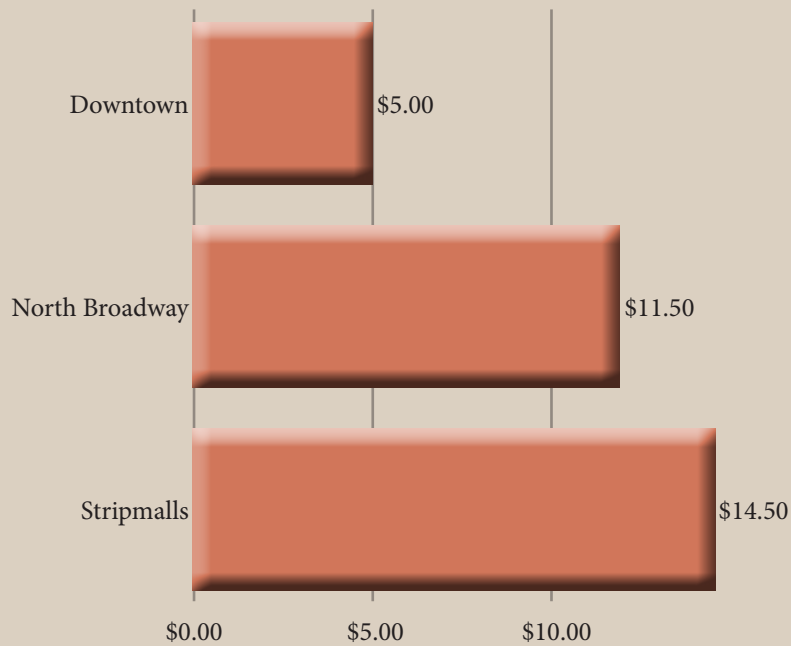
Recent estimates show that real estate sales nationwide declined as much as 40 percent during COVID-19. However, commercial real estate sales in the Pittsburgh micropolitan area have been relatively robust, with 14 sales during the last 12 months, including a Frontenac warehouse or industrial metal building on 2.8 acres, which sold for \$235,000, \$28.92 per square foot; a large office building, which sold for \$225,000, \$53.57 per square foot; a Frontenac convenience store business with gas pumps, which sold for \$350,000, \$140.00 per square foot; a gentlemen's club, which sold for \$450,000, \$175.78 per square foot; a restaurant and nightclub with all equipment, which sold for \$300,000, \$31.67 per square foot.

Commercial Real Estate Sales Pittsburg Area



Source: Jones Heritage Realtors

Net Retail Space Rental Rates Pittsburg Area



Source: Jones Heritage Realtors

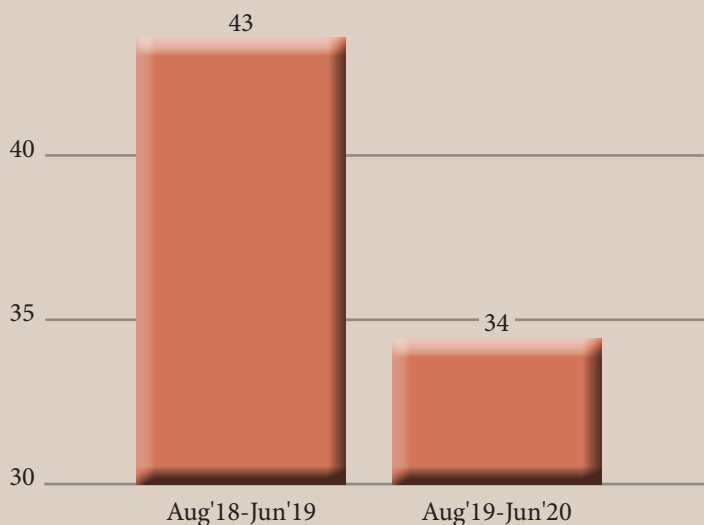
RETAIL SPACE MARKET

Suppliers scaled back operations at the beginning of the pandemic, and now the retail industry is having supply chain problems. The U. S. Census reports that 47.1 percent of small retailers in Kansas expect to return to normal operation in six months. Malls are suffering nationwide, with a 256 percent decline in earnings during the second quarter.

Weaker malls are at risk of closing, and Moody's projects that the number of stores in malls nationwide could shrink by 20 percent. Overall, more retailers are shifting to e-commerce at the expense of brick and mortar locations. Small retailers are at a disadvantage in this shift because it is expensive to set up e-commerce platforms. Real estate transactions are also down significantly in 2020, according to Newmark Knight Frank, but although construction for retail spaces was down 1.1 percent in June, it was up 0.9 percent in July.

However, there has not been much change in the conditions of the Pittsburg area retail space market in 2020, according to Jones Heritage Realtors, which reports that average rental rates are \$5.00 per square foot downtown, \$11.50 per square foot on North Broadway and \$14.50 per square foot in strip malls.

Total Bankruptcies Pittsburg Micropolitan Area



Source: US Bankruptcy Courts

BANKRUPTCIES

Most economists expect bankruptcies to increase significantly later this year due to the COVID-19 recession. Small businesses with 50 or fewer employees are most affected, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce states that 43 percent of all small businesses could fail. The most recent estimates indicate that 22 percent of small businesses failed in April. The retail and hospitality industries are hit especially hard. A ten-year record number of large retailers have filed for bankruptcy in 2020 and a breathtaking number of smaller retailers are facing bankruptcy, but total bankruptcies have not increased so far in 2020 because many small retailers/companies have not yet filed.

Moreover, federal and local stimulus efforts to help small businesses are ongoing. The Federal Reserve initiated a \$600 billion small and medium business lending program, but it has only dispersed \$496.8 million so far, perhaps because the partner banks were not ready to implement the program. There has been a total of 682,363 bankruptcies nationwide during the 12-month period ending June 30 (down 11.8 percent from the previous 12-month period), 5,736 bankruptcies statewide (down 16.1 percent), and 34 bankruptcies in the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area (down 20.9 percent).



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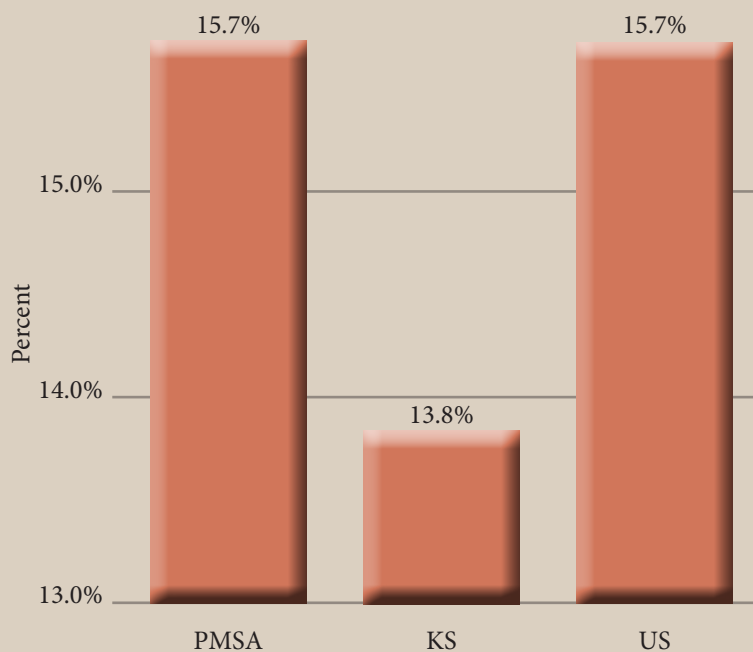
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Banking Industry

Growth In Total Assets Q2'19-Q2'20



Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

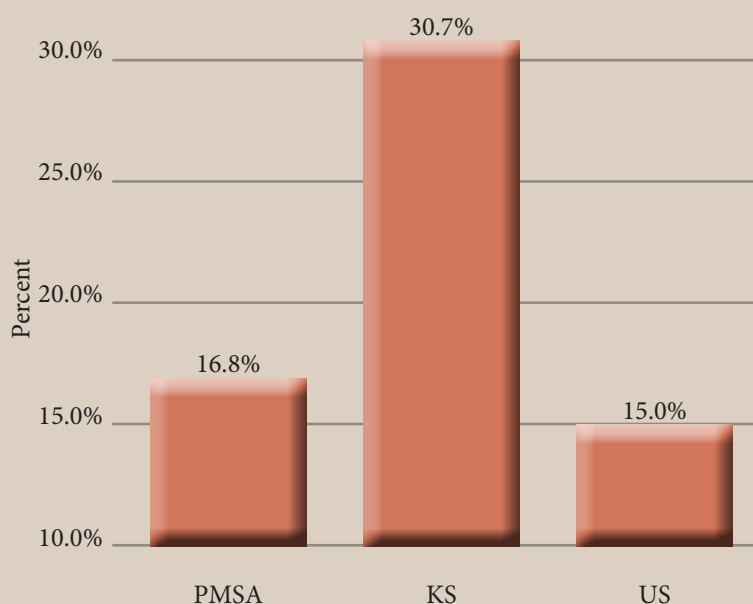
BANKING INDUSTRY

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) was created by legislation in 1933 to improve public confidence in the national banking system. The FDIC reports that the national banking industry (commercial banks and savings institutions) did relatively well during the second quarter, despite the weak economy. However, the industry is worried about commercial loans, and the provision for credit losses increased 382.2 percent. Overall, the commercial banking industry posted total assets of \$21.1 trillion in the quarter (up 15.7 percent from the second quarter last year), \$10.8 trillion in net loans and leases (up 5.7 percent), \$37.3 billion in net income (down 69.7 percent), and \$118.3 billion in non-current loans and leases (up 23.4 percent).

The statewide industry posted \$84.0 billion in total assets (up 13.8 percent), \$54.3 billion in net loans and leases (up 9.6 percent), \$441.7 million in net income (up 3.7 percent), and \$507.2 million in non-current loans and leases (up 10.2 percent). Banks with headquarters in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area posted \$832.4 million in total assets (up 15.7 percent), \$533.7 million in net loans and leases (up 10.1 percent), \$4.7 million in net income (up 18.9 percent), and \$11.5 million in noncurrent loans and leases (up 119.6 percent).

Credit Union Industry

Growth In Total Assets Q2'19-Q2'20



Source: Nation Credit Union Administration

CREDIT UNION INDUSTRY

The Federal Credit Union Act passed in 1934 created an agency to charter and supervise federal credit unions, and in 1970 the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) became an independent federal agency. The NCUA reports that national credit unions did well during the second quarter of 2020 with loan delinquencies declining from last year.

Local credit unions with headquarters in the Pittsburgh Micropolitan Area posted \$116.5 million in total assets in the second quarter (up 16.8 percent from the same period last year), net loans and leases of \$71.2 million (down 1.9 percent), \$275,561 in net operating income (down 56.6 percent) and delinquent loans and leases of \$493,809 (up 92.0 percent). Credit unions with headquarters in Kansas posted \$12.3 billion in total assets (up 30.7 percent), net loans and leases of \$8.4 billion (up 24.0 percent), net operating income of \$23.4 million (down 42.7 percent) and \$47.3 million delinquent loans and leases (up 7.1 percent). The nationwide banking industry posted \$1.8 trillion in total assets (up 15.0 percent), \$1.1 trillion in net loans and leases (up 6.5 percent), \$4.7 billion in net operating income (down 34.6 percent), and \$6.7 billion in delinquent loans and leases (down 2.5 percent).

Pittsburg Micropolitan Area Demographic Summary 2019

Pittsburg Micropolitan Area, Kansas

Total Population	39,526
Population Density (per Sq. Mi.)	66.43
Total Households	16,063

Population By Gender

Male Population	19,780
Female Population	19,746

Population Percentage By Race and Ethnicity

White	89.4%
Black	2.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.1%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2.0%
Some Other Race	2.3%
Hispanic Ethnicity	5.5%
Not of Hispanic Ethnicity	94.5%

Households By Income

Average Household Income	\$56,339
Median Household Income	\$42,225
Per Capita Income	\$23,510

Employment

Total Population 16+	31,886
% Blue Collar	44.8%
% White Collar	55.2%

Population Percentage By Educational Attainment

High School Graduate	27.5%
Some College, No Degree	25.5%
Associates Degree	8.6%
Bachelor's Degree	17.4%

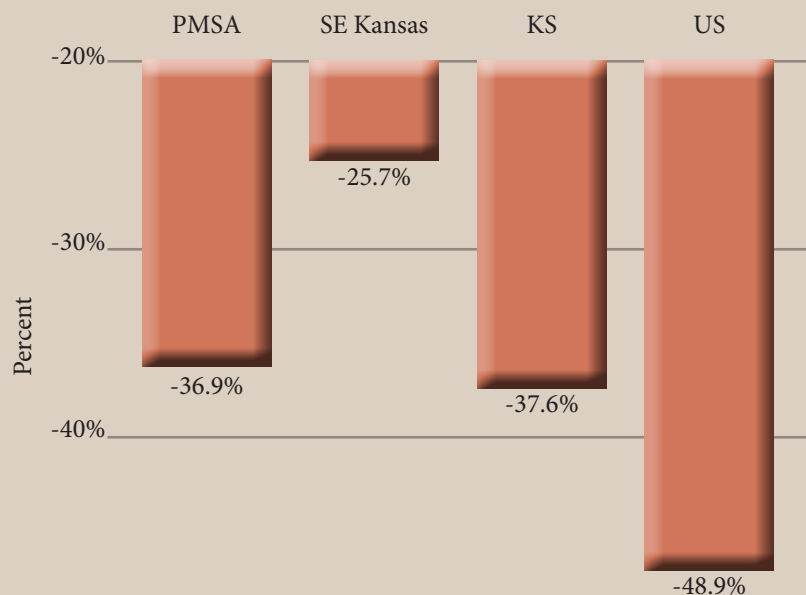
Source: Demographics Now

Annual Wages For Pittsburg Micropolitan Area 2019

Accountants and Auditors	\$53,380	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	\$61,532
Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers	\$106,758	Human Resources Specialists	\$49,767
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	\$58,671	Industrial Engineers	\$74,342
Cashiers	\$20,243	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	\$28,012
Chief Executives	\$166,953	Loan Officers	\$46,457
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	\$37,135	Machinists	\$34,281
Coaches and Scouts	\$35,852	Management Occupations	\$90,763
Computer Programmers	\$59,467	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$52,004
Computer User Support Specialists	\$32,878	Medical Assistants	\$25,382
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$22,370	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$30,568
Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community and Social Service Specialists	\$39,469	Pharmacists	\$135,633
Customer Service Representatives	\$26,345	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	\$39,383
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	\$42,036	Postal Service Mail Carriers	\$51,781
Electricians	\$41,137	Receptionists and Information Clerks	\$25,198
Engineers	\$65,622	Retail Sales Workers	\$19,725
Financial Managers	\$120,379	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$32,646
Firefighters	\$31,980	Software Developers, Applications	\$85,122
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	\$19,694	Teacher Assistants	\$22,684
General and Operations Managers	\$79,350	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$29,174
Graphic Designers	\$33,318	Waiters and Waitresses	\$17,728

Source: Kansas Labor Market Information Center

Growth in Room Revenues 'Jan'19-Aug'19 To Jan'20-Aug'20



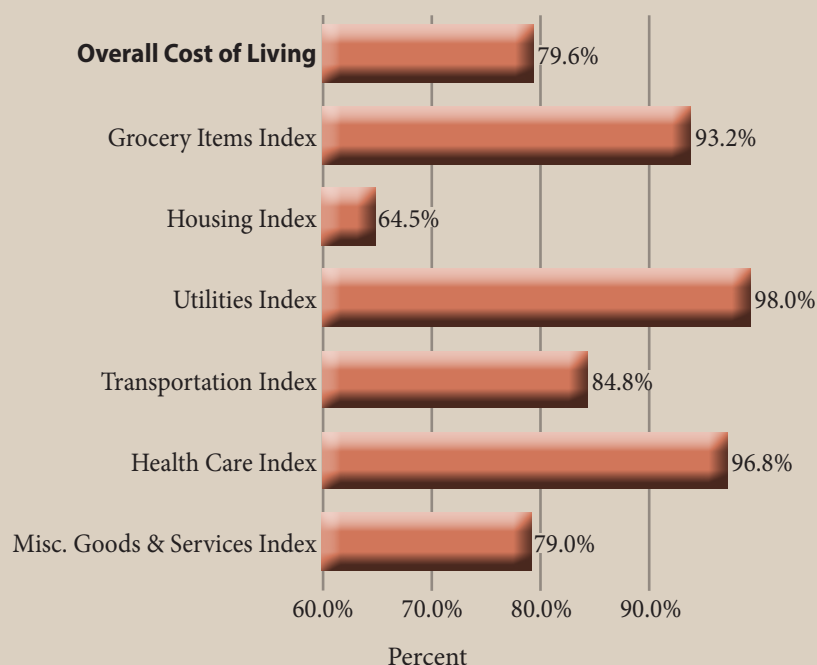
Source: Smith Travel Research

LODGING INDUSTRY

Nationwide, the tourism industry has been decimated by COVID-19. The major airlines are furloughing between 6,000-7,000 pilots and reported a decline in revenues of 86.0 percent during the second quarter of 2020. The largest cruise companies operating in the US report a decline in revenues of 89.9 percent during the second quarter, and the International Travel and Tourism Office reports that the number of international tourists visiting the U.S is down 67.1 percent for the first six months of 2020 with estimated international tourist spending down 52.6 percent.

Most of the firms in the leisure and hospitality industry are small, and 63.5 percent are owned by women and/or minorities. The nationwide hotel and motel industry report an average occupancy rate of only 44.4 percent during the first eight months, with total room revenues down 48.9 percent from the same period in 2019. The Kansas industry reports an occupancy rate of 40.7 percent and a 37.6 percent decline in room revenue; the Southeast Kansas industry reports an occupancy rate of 36.3 percent and 25.7 percent decline in room revenue; and the Pittsburg Micropolitan Area industry reports an occupancy rate of 36.1 percent and a 36.9 percent decline in room revenue.

Cost of Living Q3-2019



Source: The Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness

QUALITY OF LIFE & COST OF LIVING

Quality of life is relatively high in the Pittsburg area, according to a study by U.S. News and World Report, which gives the Pittsburg micropolitan area a significantly higher average score than 813 communities nationwide in the same peer group. The study found that the Pittsburg micropolitan area has 36.1 percent greater access to local hospital beds per capita than the average, 3.1 percent higher expenditure per pupil and six percentage points higher high school graduation rate, 15.4 percent less violent crime per capita, 32.1 percent lower per capita homicide rate, and 3.3 percent per capita better access to the internet.

The average cost of living in the Pittsburg Micropolitan area is 79.6 percent of the national average, according to the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness. The cost of groceries is 93.2 percent of the national average; the cost of housing is 64.5 percent of the national average; the cost of utilities is 98.0 percent of the national average; the cost of transportation is 84.8 percent of the national average; the cost of health care is 96.8 percent of the national average; and the cost of miscellaneous goods and services is 79.0 percent of the national average.

BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

CRAWFORD COUNTY ISSUES REVISED PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER

Due to a surge in coronavirus cases, especially among college aged students, Crawford County ordered bars and restaurants to “stop serving at midnight and close by 12:30 am.” Those orders were short lived, however, as it was decided it was safer for the students to socialize in public as opposed to going to house parties. Food service workers are required to take extra precautions while working such as wearing masks, and their employers are encouraged to screen employees for symptoms of Covid-19.

There was also additional spread of the disease through 2 long-term care facilities. “Despite the increasing numbers of positive cases, hospital capacity has not been a problem, Deputy Public Health Officer Dr. Linda Bean said, and many of the new cases have been asymptomatic.”

Despite all the warnings and extra precautions many companies are taking, the county’s public health officer, Dr. Tim Stebbins, states the health department “has received reports of some businesses requiring employees to work despite testing positive for Covid-19 and being ordered to remain in isolation or quarantine.” These violations are being taken seriously and will be responded to by law enforcement and enforced by county and city attorneys. “If a business fails to comply with the order, penalties could include closure by the health department. The business would then have to submit a remediation plan and pass an inspection before reopening.”
Jonathan Riley, The Pittsburg Morning Sun

COUNTY TAKING REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATIONS. \$14 million to defray some expenses related to the pandemic.

Applications can now be submitted by Jasper County MO governments, businesses and nonprofit organizations for “reimbursement of COVID-19 related expenses through funding provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Relief Fund.” Derek Hunter has been hired as a Grants Administrator to accept the applications and assist in determining if the expenses are considered eligible, either in full, or partially. Final decisions regarding the disbursement of funds, however, will be made by the County Commissioners.

Applications and supporting documents should be submitted by September 30th. According to Hunter reimbursable expenses include, “those that were made

to address medical and public health needs.” Additionally, “Certain cost that provided economic support to those who sustained economic losses from unemployment or business interruption resulting from closings during the pandemic could also be eligible.”

Debby Woodin, The Joplin Globe

INTEREST IN HOMESCHOOLING HAS 'EXPLODED' AMID PANDEMIC

Ongoing concerns over children’s health combined with a lack of confidence in school districts’ ability to deliver virtual learning and frustrations stemming from constant changes have led to a dramatic surge in homeschooling applications. Parents are feeling the need to exert more control over the situation and provide their school age children structure and consistency.

“There were about 2.5 million homeschool students last year in grades K-12 in the U.S., making up about 3% to 4% of school-age children, according to the National Educators Research Institute.”

Brian Ray, the group’s president, is anticipating that their numbers will increase by at least 10%.”

Heather Hollingsworth, Associated Press, Mission, Kan.

UPDATED: AMERICAN AIRLINES TO SUSPEND JOPLIN SERVICE TO DFW FOR ONE MONTH THIS FALL

The flights for American Airlines out of Joplin Regional Airport are primarily used for business travel and take passengers to Dallas Fort Worth. In June of 2019 2 flights a day were added to Chicago, IL. Due to massive reductions in airline travels the Chicago flights ended in April. It has been announced that the 2 flights a day to DFW will be suspended from Oct. 7 to Nov.3. Airports in 14 other cities will also have suspensions.

“A massive pandemic relief measure approved in March set aside up to \$50 billion in cash and low-interest loans for the nation’s passenger airlines. American was the largest recipient - \$10.7 billion if a pending loan wins final approval from the U.S. Treasury Department.”

Lobbying efforts from the airlines for another \$25 billion have received “significant support in Washington.” The funds are requested to help pay workers through March to prevent layoffs of tens of thousands of employees that could start in the beginning of October. American Airlines alone “lost more than \$2 billion in its most recent quarter.”

Andy Ostmeyer, The Joplin Globe/ The Associated Press contributed to this report

US UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS TO 8.4% EVEN AS HIRING SLOWS

The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 8.4% in August. 22 million jobs were lost due to the coronavirus outbreak and only about half of them have been recovered. “An increasingly large share of Americans reported that their jobs are gone for good, according to the Labor Department report.”

The main contributor to the drop in unemployment was the recall of workers whom had been laid off. In addition, 250,000 workers were hired as temporary census workers. “Richard Moody, chief economist at Regions Financial, noted that about half the private sector job gains were in three categories: retail, restaurants, hotels, and casinos, and health care.” Manufacturers added 29,000 jobs and construction 16,000.

“Millions of people have given up looking for work since the outbreak began, many to avoid contracting the coronavirus. That has helped bring down the jobless rate, because the government doesn’t count people as unemployed unless they are actively seeking jobs.”

Michael Strain, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute says unemployment could “near 7% by November, ... it’s too high, many people will be suffering, but you can see healthy from there.”

Christopher Rugaber, Associated Press Washington

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PITTSBURG MICROPOLITAN AREA EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

	Average No. of Q1 '20 Employees	Average Q1 '20 Wages	Average no. of Q1 '20 Employees	Average Q1 '19 Wages	Average Job Growth	Average Wage Growth
Postal service	66	\$3,798.11	66	\$3,618.15	-1.01%	4.97%
Agricultural market and commodity regulation	12	\$4,861.31	11	\$4,971.26	2.94%	-2.21%
Oilseed and grain combination farming	26	\$3,054.88	31	\$2,865.71	-15.22%	6.60%
Water supply and irrigation systems	13	\$2,928.33	13	\$2,874.65	-2.50%	1.87%
Commercial building construction	60	\$3,497.57	51	\$3,234.46	19.08%	8.13%
Power and communication system construction	70	\$3,668.38	58	\$3,342.66	21.97%	9.74%
Grain and field bean merchant wholesalers	55	\$3,812.93	56	\$3,606.14	-0.60%	5.73%
Automotive parts and accessories stores	53	\$1,683.86	53	\$1,644.41	0.00%	2.40%
Tire dealers	37	\$3,019.34	40	\$2,576.49	-7.50%	17.19%
Nursery, garden, and farm supply stores	33	\$1,808.38	22	\$2,082.31	52.31%	-13.15%
Supermarkets and other grocery stores	303	\$1,956.26	304	\$1,948.83	-0.33%	0.38%
Pharmacies and drug stores	53	\$2,777.90	57	\$2,865.61	-5.88%	-3.06%
Women's clothing stores	21	\$928.79	19	\$859.60	8.62%	8.05%
Family clothing stores	16	\$1,201.06	18	\$1,000.02	-12.73%	20.10%
Commercial banking	180	\$3,926.65	187	\$3,867.10	-3.57%	1.54%
Tax preparation services	15	\$1,660.16	21	\$1,621.11	-29.03%	2.41%
Managing offices	336	\$6,036.49	337	\$4,901.94	-0.49%	23.14%
Janitorial services	71	\$2,085.64	82	\$2,232.68	-12.65%	-6.59%
Solid waste collection	51	\$3,131.01	34	\$2,597.56	47.57%	20.54%
Offices of dentists	112	\$5,588.52	103	\$4,631.65	8.41%	20.66%
Offices of chiropractors	15	\$2,269.28	10	\$2,002.57	53.33%	13.32%
Offices of optometrists	40	\$2,754.02	35	\$2,439.69	13.21%	12.88%
Home health care services	122	\$2,758.08	113	\$2,613.14	7.94%	5.55%
Nursing care facilities, skilled nursing	329	\$2,619.49	356	\$2,008.42	-7.59%	30.43%
Services for the elderly and disabled	218	\$2,028.17	227	\$1,745.33	-3.82%	16.21%
Child day care services	117	\$1,528.84	121	\$1,387.78	-3.03%	10.16%
Full-service restaurants	832	\$967.04	742	\$1,054.42	12.12%	-8.29%
Water supply and irrigation systems	13	\$2,928.33	13	\$2,874.65	-2.50%	1.87%
Management of companies and enterprises	336	\$6,036.49	337	\$4,901.94	-0.49%	23.14%
Legal services	83	\$3,412.73	85	\$3,445.82	-1.96%	-0.96%
Accounting and bookkeeping services	70	\$2,722.07	103	\$2,978.50	-31.82%	-8.61%
Management and technical consulting services	55	\$3,912.82	57	\$4,399.04	-4.09%	-11.05%
Individual and family services	288	\$2,303.11	318	\$2,129.54	-9.33%	8.15%
Traveler accommodation	300	\$2,643.53	316	\$2,635.88	-5.06%	0.29%
Death care services	38	\$2,254.03	40	\$2,029.43	-5.04%	11.07%
Fabricated metal product manufacturing	452	\$3,751.68	402	\$3,597.02	12.34%	4.30%
Machinery manufacturing	97	\$2,788.35	98	\$2,836.61	-1.02%	-1.70%
Electrical equipment and appliance mfg.	269	\$3,599.03	284	\$3,823.64	-5.40%	-5.87%
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods	100	\$4,506.88	109	\$3,712.87	-8.23%	21.39%
Furniture and home furnishings stores	93	\$2,265.49	80	\$2,548.37	16.18%	-11.10%
Electronics and appliance stores	76	\$2,473.80	91	\$2,383.99	-16.48%	3.77%
Building material and garden supply stores	191	\$2,010.66	171	\$2,002.90	11.72%	0.39%
Food and beverage stores	365	\$1,974.12	367	\$1,943.66	-0.36%	1.57%
Health and personal care stores	80	\$2,305.82	87	\$2,176.53	-8.78%	5.94%
Gasoline stations	151	\$1,580.80	152	\$1,499.46	-1.09%	5.42%
Sports, hobby, music instrument, book stores	42	\$1,966.64	49	\$1,753.71	-15.54%	12.14%
General merchandise stores	419	\$1,996.48	436	\$1,894.60	-3.90%	5.38%
Truck transportation	94	\$3,348.83	90	\$2,991.71	4.07%	11.94%
Accommodation	300	\$2,643.53	316	\$2,635.88	-5.06%	0.29%
Repair and maintenance	89	\$2,640.22	99	\$2,361.71	-10.14%	11.79%
Personal and laundry services	72	\$1,965.98	75	\$1,793.83	-4.42%	9.60%
Civic and social organizations	14	\$727.28	13	\$799.33	10.26%	-9.01%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

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