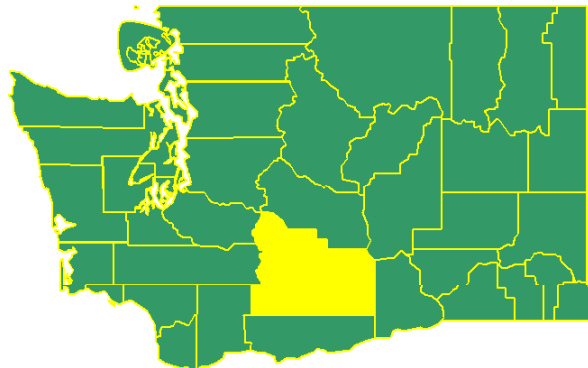


The Yakima County Labor Economy (September 2003)



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Total nonagricultural employment in Yakima County (also called the Yakima Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA) jumped 2.7-percent in September 2003. Yakima County's businesses and government provided approximately 77,200 jobs in September, up from the 75,200-figure one-month prior. However, an employment jump between August and September is the rule rather than the exception in Yakima County. The major sources of this over-the-month expansion were a 1,000-job increase in Non-Durable Goods; a 600-job upturn in Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities; and a 400-job advance in Wholesale Trade. This September's 2.7-percent jump was agriculture related as local food processing plants, trucking firms, and fresh fruit packinghouses hired workers to sort, process, package, and transport produce to market. Also, Local Government payrolls lengthened by 500, as local public schools hired non-teaching staff for the new school year (see Table 1).

Over-the-year rates of change in Washington's nonagricultural employment show that although job growth was positive during the first two quarters of 2003, the labor market stagnated in the third quarter. This September there were 0.3-percent fewer jobs across Washington than in September 2002, the largest over-the-year decline since October 2002 (see Figure 1). Yakima County's over-the-year job growth was robust in the first quarter of 2003 (in the 1.7 to 2.1 percent range), a little less dynamic in the second quarter (in the 1.0 to 1.5 percent range), and was fairly subdued in the third quarter (in the 0.3 to 0.8 percent range). Total nonagricultural employment elevated by approximately 600 jobs countywide this September compared with September 2002. About 300 new jobs have been generated over the year in Retail trade, and another 300 in Local Government (primarily in local public schools). However, Wholesale Trade (i.e., fresh fruit packinghouses) and Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities (i.e. trucking companies) employment dipped over the year. Washington's apple harvest this year will be smaller than the 2002 crop, which yielded 88.8 million 42-pound fresh-packed boxes. According to an article in the 23 October edition of *The Yakima Herald Republic*,

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the 2003 harvest is estimated to produce between 76 and 80 million boxes which will likely mean fewer jobs at processing plants, trucking firms, and fresh fruit packinghouses this October and November than last.

Between September 2002 and September 2003 Yakima County's unemployment rate rose four-tenths of a point, while Washington's edged upward three-tenths of a point (see Figure 2). Although both the state and the county saw over-the-year increases in the numbers of people unemployed and in unemployment rates, the underlying dynamics of the respective labor forces differ. Across Washington the number of employed residents fell since September 2002, indicating that some Washingtonians left the state to seek work. Conversely, the number of employed Yakima County residents grew by 3,000, albeit not as quickly as the number of unemployed residents. The good news is that more residents were working this September than last. The bad news is that a slow statewide economy is forcing more people who commute to work outside Yakima County onto the unemployment rolls.

	Sep 2003 ¹	Aug 2003	Sep 2002	CHANGE ³		% CHANGE	
				Aug 03 Sep 03	Sep 02 Sep 03	Aug 03 Sep 03	Sep 02 Sep 03
TOTAL NONFARM²	77,200	75,200	76,600	2,000	600	2.7%	0.8%
TOTAL PRIVATE	61,200	59,600	60,700	1,600	500	2.7%	0.8%
GOODS PRODUCING	14,400	13,600	14,300	800	100	5.9%	0.7%
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING, AND CONSTRUCTION	3,500	3,500	3,400	0	100	0.0%	2.9%
MANUFACTURING	10,900	10,100	10,900	800	0	7.9%	0.0%
Durable Goods	4,200	4,400	4,400	-200	-200	-4.5%	-4.5%
Non-Durable Goods	6,700	5,700	6,500	1,000	200	17.5%	3.1%
SERVICES PROVIDING	62,800	61,600	62,300	1,200	500	1.9%	0.8%
WHOLESALE TRADE	4,100	3,700	4,200	400	-100	10.8%	-2.4%
RETAIL TRADE	9,800	9,900	9,500	-100	300	-1.0%	3.2%
TRANSPORTATION, WAREHOUSING, and UTILITIES	3,100	2,500	3,300	600	-200	24.0%	-6.1%
INFORMATION	1,300	1,400	1,300	-100	0	-7.1%	0.0%
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	2,700	2,700	2,600	0	100	0.0%	3.8%
ALL OTHER SERVICES	23,100	23,200	23,100	-100	0	-0.4%	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	4,800	4,800	4,700	0	100	0.0%	2.1%
Health Services and Social Assistance	10,900	10,900	10,700	0	200	0.0%	1.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	5,600	5,700	5,500	-100	100	-1.8%	1.8%
GOVERNMENT	16,100	15,700	15,900	400	200	2.5%	1.3%
Federal Government	1,300	1,300	1,400	0	-100	0.0%	-7.1%
State Government	2,700	2,700	2,700	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Local Government	12,100	11,600	11,800	500	300	4.3%	2.5%
Workers in Labor Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	XXX	XXX

¹ Preliminary employment estimates.
² Excludes proprietors, the self-employed, members of the Armed Services, unpaid family members, workers in private households, and agricultural workers. Includes all full and part-time wage and salary workers receiving pay during the pay period including the 12th of the month, by place of work.
³ Differences in industry employment of 100 or less may not be significant due to rounding.

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