

# BUSINESS COURIER

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## Ohio adds construction jobs in April

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Ohio was one of 29 states that added jobs in the construction industry from March to April.

Thanks in part to the stimulus package and housing starts picking up, the state added 5,500 jobs last month, according to the **Associated General Contractors** of America.

Even though construction employment is on the rise, it is still lower than it was a year ago. While there were 170,500 Ohioans working in the construction industry in April, that's down 6.6 percent from the 182,600 jobs in the field last April.

The association studied federal employment figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Ohio is not alone. Despite the recent gains nationwide, 46 states and the District of Columbia lost construction during the last 12 months.

"A gradual turnaround appears to be taking hold after years of construction employment declines," Ken Simonson, the association's chief economist, said in a news release. "As more stimulus projects get underway and single-family housing starts pick up, we are likely to see the number of states with year-over-year increases grow."

Since February, 6,700 construction jobs across Ohio have been added. In the Dayton area, there were 9,700 jobs in March, the most recent data available. That's down 14 percent from the year before, but up from 9,500 jobs in January.

Kansas had the highest increase in construction employment, up 8.7 percent, followed by North Dakota, at 6.5 percent, and Wyoming at 6 percent.

The states with the largest losses were: Nevada, down 28 percent, 24,300 jobs; Colorado, down 19 percent, 26,300 jobs; and Vermont, down 17 percent, 2,300 jobs.

Simonson said the construction slump is far from over, as the industry still has to deal with high vacancy rates, delays in passing highway and infrastructure legislation, and declining state and local tax revenue.



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