



COLORADO CLOSE-UP

An Economic Newsletter

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THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

The national economic recovery continues to move forward without an accompanying increase in the number of jobs, although new jobless claims are trending downward. Second quarter inflation adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) rose 2.4% as business investment — a key contributor to a healthy recovery — jumped a substantial 6.9%. Corporate profits are showing improvement in response to previous cost cutting efforts, the weaker dollar, low interest rates, and improved pricing power and the stock market is trending up. Furthermore, second quarter U.S. productivity posted a strong 5.7% increase over the previous quarter, the result of higher output and fewer hours worked. And therein lies the rub: the recovery remains jobless because new technologies and efficiencies are enabling employers to expand production without hiring more workers. Indeed, it is unlikely that robust job growth will occur as long as GDP growth is less than productivity growth.

“... business investment — a key contributor to a healthy recovery — jumped a substantial 6.9%...”

National employment continued to decline in July 2003 and has fallen 0.4% year-to-date compared with 2002: since January 2003, 486,000 jobs have been cut. Payrolls declined by 44,000 in July 2003 and June 2003 employment was revised downward by 42,000, to show a total loss for the month of 72,000 jobs. Meanwhile, the average weekly hours worked for all employees dropped to 33.6 hours, a record low. Furthermore, the manufacturing sector lost 71,000 positions in July 2003, the 36th consecutive month of job losses in this beleaguered sector.

The unemployment rate declined to 6.2% in July 2003 from 6.4% in June 2003. This was primarily due to a decline in the number of job seekers. In July 2003, 470,000 people indicated that they were not looking for

work because they were discouraged over job prospects. By contrast, in July 2002, 405,000 people indicated that they had given up looking for work because of frustration over job opportunities. Meanwhile, the number of people collecting jobless benefits on a continuing basis rose to 3.82 million, the highest level since February 1983.

“... second quarter inflation adjusted GDP expanded at a healthy 2.4% pace...”

The U.S. Department of Commerce reported that second quarter inflation adjusted GDP expanded at a healthy 2.4% pace, boosted by rising consumer spending and a revival in business investment in computers and software. Military spending contributed the greatest share of the increase, as the war with Iraq produced a surge in military expenditures — 44% — the largest since 1951 when the Korean War boosted military spending 110%. The next-largest contributor to second quarter GDP growth came from a 3.3% rise in consumer spending. Stepped-up purchases of sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, and minivans accounted for one third of this increase. The second quarter performance was a welcomed contrast to the weak GDP growth posted during the previous two quarters, in which the nation's output of goods and services increased by only 1.4%.

Two surveys of U.S. employers indicate that they have budgeted for pay raises of between 3.3% and 3.5% over the next two years. That is the lowest increase since the mid-1970s. According to Mercer Human Resources Consulting, the belt-tightening reflects rising worker health care and pension costs and a weak economy that has made it difficult for companies to raise prices for their products. It also reflects the anemic job market and the accompanying over-supply of people looking for work.

According to a survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers, second quarter 2003 posted the first increase in overall

venture capital spending since the Internet-stock bubble burst 12 quarters ago. Overall venture capital investments rose 7.5%, to \$4.3 billion during second quarter 2003, following a five-year low of \$4.0 billion in first quarter 2003. Meanwhile, investment in early-stage start-ups jumped 43% to \$956 million from \$448 million in first quarter 2003.

National Economic Statistics

	Jul-03	Jul-02	2002 Annual Average	2001 Annual Average
Inflation-Adjusted Annual GDP Growth*	2.4%	1.3%	2.4%	0.3%
Consumer Spending	3.3%	1.8%	3.1%	2.5%
Nonresidential Fixed Investment	6.9%	-2.4%	7.3%	6.0%
Residential Fixed Investment	6.1%	2.6%	3.2%	2.0%
Exports	-3.1%	14.2%	2.2%	2.0%
Imports	9.2%	22.2%	1.0%	-10.7%
Federal Government	25.1%	7.5%	-3.1%	-3.8%
State and Local Governments	-1.5%	-1.7%	-5.7%	-5.2%
Inflation**	2.5%	4.6%	1.6%	2.8%
Nonfarm Employment Growth**	-0.3%	-1.4%	-1.1%	0.0%
Unemployment Rate	6.2%	5.8%	5.8%	4.8%
Housing Permit Growth***	5.6%	2.6%	6.8%	2.8%
Single-Family	6.3%	4.1%	7.9%	3.1%
Multi-Family	3.0%	-2.3%	3.5%	1.8%
Growth in the Value of Nonresidential Construction***	-4.9%	-9.4%	-8.3%	0.1%
Retail	-12.2%	-5.2%	-8.0%	0.6%
Offices	-19.4%	-31.5%	-28.1%	-6.0%
Factories	-26.4%	-42.8%	-43.8%	-7.2%
Retail Sales***	3.8%	3.2%	3.4%	3.8%

*Second quarter 2003.

**Year-to-date.

***Year-to-date through June 2003.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Employment growth is computed from wage and salary employment data by place of work.

The Conference Board consumer confidence index fell between June and July as consumers downgraded their assessment of the current situation and their expectations for the future. Weak labor markets appeared to be a significant factor in the decline: consumers' views of the current job markets are the worst since the beginning of 1994. High debt burdens, rising interest rates, and stubbornly high energy prices are also contributing to the decline. However, consumers are more confident now about job market prospects than they were before the recent war with Iraq.

The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) *manufacturing index* rose to 51.8 in July 2003, finally crossing the important 50-point mark that indicates the manufacturing sector in the U.S. is expanding once again. The result supports the view that the broader economy is beginning to pick up steam going into the second half of the year. However, the ISM

manufacturing trade indices also suggest that the weaker U.S. dollar is having only a moderate effect on manufacturing activity. Meanwhile, the ISM *non-manufacturing index* soared to 65.1 in July 2003, the index's highest value since it began in July 1997. Business managers reported a surge in new orders during July. Service-providing industries have been on the vanguard of the U.S. economic recovery and service-providing business activity has contracted only once in the past 18 months.

“. . . the ISM non-manufacturing index soared to 65.1 in July 2003.”

The U.S. Department of Commerce reports residential home permits issued year-to-date through June 2003 rose 5.6% compared with the same period in 2002. Single-family home permits issued rose 6.3% and multi-family home permits issued rose 3.0%. Meanwhile, the year-to-date value of nonresidential building construction fell 4.9%. The value of *retail* construction fell 12.2%, the value of *office* construction fell 19.4%, and the value of *factory* construction fell 26.4%.

THE COLORADO ECONOMY

Colorado Economic Statistics

	June 2003	June 2002	Annual Avg 2002	Annual Avg 2001
Nonfarm Employment Growth*	-0.7%	-2.5%	-1.9%	0.6%
Unemployment Rate	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	3.7%
Housing Permit Growth*	-22.3%	14.2%	-12.9%	0.8%
Single-Family	-11.7%	9.1%	-2.5%	-5.6%
Multi-Family	-54.4%	29.6%	-33.3%	16.0%
Growth in the Value of Nonresidential Construction*	-30.3%	-12.0%	-22.5%	1.0%
Retail	-10.5%	-19.2%	-8.3%	12.7%
Offices	-35.1%	-39.1%	-43.8%	-35.0%
Factories	-54.0%	-55.3%	-54.1%	119.6%
Retail Trade Sales**	-0.1%	-1.5%	-0.7%	2.0%

*Year-to-date.

**Year-to-date through May 2003.

Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, F.W. Dodge, and U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Employment growth is computed from wage and salary employment data by place of work.

Colorado's economy remains weak. However, not all the news is bad. Even though state employment growth remains flat, the unemployment rate is beginning to inch downward and new claims for unemployment benefits are slowly declining.

Colorado ranked fourth, behind California, Washington, and Massachusetts, in a recent study by the Progressive Policy Institute to determine the “leading new economy” states. The survey measures the education level of a state’s workforce, the emergence of new industries, the quality of life, and the ability to adapt to globalization. Overall, the ranking measures Colorado’s ability to expand in the “New Economy” and become a leader in the 21st century.

“Colorado ranked fourth . . . in a recent study . . . to determine the ‘leading new economy’ states.”

The Denver Manufacturing Business Conditions Purchasing Managers Index fell to 48.2 in July 2003 from 53.0 in June 2003, indicating the majority of respondents reported a decline in conditions. Meanwhile, the index for manufacturing prices increased in all sectors except computers and services, which showed a decline and no change, respectively. Respondents had reported positive trends to conditions in April, May, and June 2003, so the July 2003 index value is not yet indicative of a trend.

Colorado Economic Indicators

Employment

Colorado’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased to 5.7% in June 2003 compared with 5.8% in May 2003. Employment gains continue to be hindered by slow economic growth at both the national and state levels.

“Colorado’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased to 5.7% in June 2003”

Recent announcements of new hiring in Colorado include:

- Whole Foods Market is opening a new distribution facility in Aurora and new stores in both Fort Collins and Colorado Springs. The 55,000-square-foot warehouse will be staffed with 40 employees and the two new stores will hire an additional 400 employees.
- All United Airlines flight attendants who were furloughed in April 2003 will be called back in August. The recall of nearly 500 attendants is due

to an unprecedented number of United flight attendants retiring this summer. It was not reported how many Colorado-based flight attendants would be affected.

- Global Spectrum, an events management company, will hire 25 full-time and 75 part-time workers for the Budweiser Events Center at the new Larimer County Fairgrounds.

Recent announcements of layoffs in Colorado include:

- May Department Stores Co. will close its three Denver Lord and Taylor department stores. The stores in the Cherry Creek, Park Meadows, and FlatIron Crossing shopping centers employ about 300 people.
- The Air Force plans to cut 263 jobs in Colorado. An undisclosed number of the jobs will involve vacant positions.
- The Rocky Flats cleanup project will eliminate 90 positions. The Energy Department will minimize the amount of layoffs by offering early retirement incentives and job placement at other federal agencies.

Colorado Construction Activity

Residential Construction

The U.S. Bureau of the Census reported the total number of housing units in Colorado increased 2.9% between July 2001 and July 2002 — the second highest increase in the nation. Nevada saw the largest increase with 4.0% growth in the number of housing units. The same report also found Douglas County to be the fastest growing county in the country with an 8.3% increase in units, while Broomfield County ranked sixth-fastest growing with a 6.0% increase in the number of homes built during the same period. Meanwhile, through June 2003, total housing permits issued fell 22.3% compared with year-to-date June 2002. Single-family home permits fell 11.7%, while multi-family home permits declined 54.4%.

“. . . the median price of a previously owned single-family home increased 8.2%”

Compared with July 2002, the median price of a previously owned single-family home increased 8.2%,

to \$238,000 in July 2003. Furthermore, the median price of a condominium increased 3.5% to \$153,000 in July 2003 compared with July 2002. On average, the year-to-date price of a single-family home was \$288,009 in July 2003, 4.8% higher than through July 2002. The average price of a condominium rose to \$173,502, a 3.4% increase compared with year-to-date July 2002. Meanwhile, there are 21.7% more homes on the market in July 2003 than there were one year ago.

Several noteworthy new residential construction projects were recently announced:

- Construction will begin this fall on a 29-unit, \$20 million luxury condominium project in Colorado Springs. Units will range from 1,390 to 3,190 square feet and cost \$400,000 to \$1.1 million.
- The final phase of the Sears redevelopment in Cherry Creek North will include 25 condominiums ranging from 845 to 2,900 square feet. Homes in the 191 Clayton Lane project are priced between \$349,000 and \$1.6 million.

Nonresidential Construction

F.W. Dodge reports that the value of Colorado nonresidential building construction declined 30.3% through June 2003 compared with year-to-date June 2002. The value of *factory* construction dropped 54.0%, while *office space* construction declined 35.1% and *retail* construction fell 10.5%.

Office vacancy rates remain high in the Denver area. In second quarter 2003, Grubb and Ellis Company reported a 22.4% office vacancy rate in the metropolitan area, a 0.6 percentage point increase from first quarter 2003. The vacancy rate is equivalent to about 19 million square feet of vacant space out of Denver's 84.7 million-square-foot office market. The industrial market in the Denver area saw modest improvement, with vacancy rates declining to 8.6% in second quarter 2003 compared with 8.8% in first quarter 2003. Meanwhile, rental rates for both the office and industrial markets declined. Office rental rates declined nearly 5% through second quarter 2003 while industrial rental rates declined 3.3% to \$6.18 per square foot in second quarter 2003 compared with \$6.39 per square foot in first quarter 2003.

Although the nonresidential construction market has slowed, new projects continue to be announced:

- The Clayton Lane project in Cherry Creek North will include 180,000 square feet of retail space, 160,000 square feet of Class A office space, and a 196-room JW Marriott hotel. The project will be completed in late 2004.
- The University of Northern Colorado will begin construction on a \$9 million dining hall, using money raised by issuing bonds.
- Bestway Concrete, a Greeley-based provider of Ready Mix concrete, is building a 7,000-square-foot plant in Milliken. Scheduled to open in September, this will be the fifth Colorado plant for the company. The four other plants are located in Windsor, Greeley, Firestone, and Brighton.

Colorado's Industrial Sectors

Agriculture

Prices received by Colorado farmers in mid-July 2003 were higher for steers and heifers and calves, but were lower for wheat. Prices for corn were unchanged. The mid-July 2003 price of winter wheat fell 17.4% compared with mid-July 2002. Meanwhile, steer and heifer prices increased 14.3% during this period and the price of calves rose 22.2%.

"Prices received by Colorado farmers in mid-July 2003 were higher . . ."

Manufacturing

In July 2003, Colorado's manufacturing sector contracted, ending a three-month expansion. According to the Front Range Purchasing Managers Index, Colorado's score dipped in July 2003 to 48.2 compared with 53.0 in June. A score above 50 indicates an increase in economic activity, while a score below 50 indicates a decline. July's contraction reflects a decline in the backlog of orders compared with June 2003 levels.

Oil and Gas

AAA Colorado reported the state's average retail gasoline price increased 1.8 cents to \$1.57 per gallon for regular unleaded during the first week in August compared to the previous week. Of the cities

surveyed, Vail had the largest increase, with the average price of regular unleaded gasoline increasing \$0.08 to \$1.88 per gallon. The overall increase is attributed to a tighter gasoline supply across the nation.

Tourism

In first quarter 2003, Denver International Airport (DIA) was the nation's seventh-busiest and the world's 11th-busiest. According to Airports Council International, DIA served 8.5 million passengers during the first three months of the year. Previously, DIA was ranked the nation's fifth-busiest and world's tenth-busiest airport.

"Denver International Airport (DIA) is the nation's seventh busiest . . ."

Over the next two years, DIA will build ten gates and expand six existing gates in Concourse A as part of a \$300 million expansion plan. Frontier Airlines will lease the ten new gates while regional jets will use the six expanded gates.

In FY 2002-03, Colorado's 42 casinos saw a decline in revenue for the first time since gaming was introduced to the state in 1991. According to the Colorado Division of Gaming, revenues declined to \$707.2 million in FY 2002-03 from \$707.8 million in FY 2001-02. The slight decline is attributed to wildfires during the summer of 2002, the blizzard in March 2003 that closed roads, and the weak economy.

The state's hotel industry is slowly recovering. Despite a drop in occupancy statewide — in June 2003, hotels posted a 65.8% occupancy rate compared with 69.3% in June 2002 — the average room rate rose to \$92.75 in June 2003 from \$92.55 in June 2002. The Rocky Mountain Lodging Report noted about five percentage points of the June 2002 occupancy rate were attributable to fire refugees and firefighters as a result of the Hayman fire.

Great Sand Dunes National Park will receive \$11 million from the U.S. Senate. The appropriation is the final amount needed to purchase Baca Ranch and complete the transition of the Sand Dunes from state monument to the nation's newest national park.

According to the Cortez Chamber of Commerce, a 2,600-acre wildfire at Mesa Verde National Park caused a year-to-date 11% drop in tourism at the park. The fire did not threaten any of the park's 4,000 archaeological sites.

Venture Capital

According to a survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers, Colorado venture capital investments in second quarter 2003 totaled \$229.5 million, a 49.0% increase from first quarter 2003. There were 18 companies that received funding during second quarter. Telecommunications companies received the largest share, over 77% or \$176.9 million, while software companies received \$18 million. The two companies receiving the largest amount of venture capital were WildBlue Communications Inc., a broadband company based in Englewood, which received \$156 million, and AirCell Inc., a Louisville-based wireless company, which was awarded \$9 million.

Colorado Regional News

Metropolitan Denver

According to a report by the Denver Regional Council of Governments, population in the Denver area, including Gilpin and Clear Creek, increased 6.2% since 2000. The population increased nearly 30% in Douglas County, 12.1% in Broomfield County, and 10.4% in Adams County.

". . . the median price of a metro Denver home climbed 5.8% . . ."

Denver-area home sales through July 2003 have decreased 2.5% compared with July 2002. However, the median price of a metro Denver home climbed 5.8% for the same period. Residential construction activity for the first half of 2003 fell 28.2% compared with June 2002, while the growth in value of nonresidential construction fell 45.7% for the same period.

In May 2003, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce/Rocky Mountain News historic index, which tracks how the Denver economy is performing, fell 2.0% compared with May 2002, an improvement over April's year-over-year decline of 2.3%.

Meanwhile, the leading index, which looks at how the economy will perform in the next six to nine months, increased to 99.7 in May 2003. The index has been stalled just below 100 since January 2003.

Denver Region Economic Statistics

	Avg. Emp. Growth	Avg. Unemp. Rate	Retail Trade Sales Growth	Housing Permit Growth	Growth in Value of Nonres. Const.
<i>Data Available Through</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>May-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>
Denver-Boulder MSA	-1.1%	6.1%	0.6%	-28.2%	-45.7%
Boulder-Longmont MSA	-14.0%	5.9%	0.2%	-14.7%	-53.2%
Denver MSA	1.0%	6.2%	0.7%	-29.4%	-44.5%

Source: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, and F.W. Dodge. MSA employment growth is computed using data estimating wage and salary employment by place of work.

Eastern Plains

Year-to-date, residential housing permits issued in Prowers County increased 66.7% through June 2003, while Logan County saw no growth. Meanwhile, year-to-date growth in the value of nonresidential building construction was flat in Prowers County, while in Logan County it was down more than 97%.

Eastern Region Economic Statistics

	Avg. Emp. Growth	Avg. Unemp. Rate	Retail Trade Sales Growth
<i>Data Available Through</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>May-03</i>
Eastern Region	-1.6%	6.0%	0.5%
Baca	0.8%	1.9%	1.8%
Bent	0.0%	8.0%	-4.0%
Cheyenne	2.4%	3.2%	4.3%
Crowley	1.4%	6.3%	-5.0%
Elbert	14.4%	3.6%	-15.3%
Kiowa	-5.2%	4.8%	-13.1%
Kit Carson	0.2%	3.6%	-6.6%
Lincoln	1.9%	2.5%	28.6%
Logan	3.5%	3.8%	-2.3%
Morgan	2.4%	4.3%	14.0%
Otero	1.4%	6.6%	-3.1%
Phillips	1.4%	3.2%	-0.9%
Prowers	-1.2%	5.9%	-4.0%
Sedgwick	5.4%	3.6%	12.5%
Washington	0.6%	2.5%	-9.6%
Yuma	5.8%	2.6%	-1.6%

Source: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, and F.W. Dodge. Employment growth is computed from labor force data estimating employment by place of residence.

Mountains

Vail ski resort will be the first U.S. ski resort to build its own wind farm. Turbines with 30-foot-long blades will

be placed on 100-foot towers and power three of the resort's 34 ski lifts.

The year-to-date June 2003 number of housing permits issued in Routt County was down 44.2% compared with year-to-date June 2002. The number of housing permits issued in Eagle, Pitkin, and Summit counties was up 1.8% during this period.

"The number of housing permits issued in Eagle, Pitkin, and Summit counties was up 1.8% . . ."

The value of nonresidential building construction in Eagle, Pitkin, and Summit counties was down 24.5% year-to-date through June 2003 compared with the same period in 2002. In Routt County, the year-to-date June 2003 value of nonresidential building construction was down 68.9%.

Mountain Region Economic Statistics

	Avg. Emp. Growth	Avg. Unemp. Rate	Retail Trade Sales Growth
<i>Data Available Through</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>May-03</i>
Mountain Region	3.0%	5.9%	-1.2%
Chaffee	-1.0%	3.3%	-10.1%
Clear Creek	6.9%	5.8%	-7.9%
Eagle-Pitkin-Summit	-0.9%	5.3%	-1.2%
Gilpin	9.1%	4.8%	-11.5%
Grand	4.7%	4.1%	12.0%
Jackson	3.8%	5.8%	-21.9%
Lake	-1.0%	7.8%	4.8%
Park	4.5%	4.3%	-3.4%
Routt	3.6%	3.9%	0.2%
Teller	-0.5%	4.6%	-0.6%

Source: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, and F.W. Dodge. Employment growth is computed from labor force data estimating employment by place of residence.

Northern

According to the latest U.S. Bureau of the Census population statistics, two of the top ten fastest-growing cities and towns in America are located in Weld County. Firestone and Fredrick, located in southwest Weld, are becoming a commuter hub for metro Denver. Firestone's population more than doubled between April 2000 and July 2002 and Fredrick grew 88.5% during the same period.

In Larimer County, nearly 1,800 manufacturing jobs were lost from 2001 to 2002. However, many of the jobs were replaced by positions in the retail and service industries. Currently, the largest industries in

Larimer County are the service sector, holding a 21% share of jobs, government with an 18% share, retail and manufacturing each accounting for 13%, and accommodations/food/entertainment at 12%.

Northern Region Economic Statistics

	Avg. Emp. Growth	Avg. Unemp. Rate	Retail Trade Sales Growth	Housing Permit Growth	Growth in Value of Nonres. Const.
<i>Data Available Through</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>May-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>
Northern Region	3.5%	6.2%	2.6%	-22.1%	-15.9%
Larimer	1.9%	5.4%	1.4%	-31.7%	-47.8%
Weld	2.7%	6.7%	4.8%	-15.9%	62.2%

Source: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, and F.W. Dodge. Employment growth is computed from labor force data estimating employment by place of residence.

Southern

The number of housing permits issued in Alamosa increased 3.4% year-to-date through June 2003 compared with year-to-date June 2002, while the number of housing permits issued in El Paso, and Pueblo counties declined 34.8% and 5.9%, respectively. During the same period, the value of new nonresidential building construction rose 23.3% in El Paso County and 8.3% in Pueblo County, while it dropped 92.9% in Alamosa County.

Southern Region Economic Statistics

	Avg. Emp. Growth	Avg. Unemp. Rate	Retail Trade Sales Growth
<i>Data Available Through</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>May-03</i>
Southern Region	1.8%	6.3%	0.4%
Alamosa	1.8%	7.1%	3.1%
Conejos	1.8%	8.1%	-10.5%
Costilla	-4.3%	9.1%	-24.0%
Custer	21.7%	3.0%	-0.9%
El Paso / Colorado Springs MSA	-0.6%	6.5%	0.3%
Fremont	-1.1%	5.6%	2.2%
Huerfano	8.3%	8.4%	-19.0%
Las Animas	3.6%	5.5%	3.7%
Mineral	-1.6%	3.3%	-11.2%
Pueblo	1.0%	6.9%	0.9%
Rio Grande	2.3%	5.6%	0.1%
Saguache	2.3%	6.8%	13.7%

Source: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, and F.W. Dodge. MSA employment growth is computed using data estimating wage and salary employment by place of work. All other employment growth is computed from labor force data estimating employment by place of residence.

Western Slope

“... housing permits issued in La Plata and Mesa counties rose 56.1% and 29.4%, respectively . . .”

The year-to-date June 2003 number of housing permits issued in La Plata and Mesa counties rose 56.1% and 29.4%, respectively, compared with year-to-date June 2002. Meanwhile, the number of permits issued in Montrose County fell 3.6% during the same period. The value of new nonresidential construction in La Plata County was up more than 52% because of education and commercial projects. The value of nonresidential construction in Montrose decreased 5.9% and in Mesa County, the year-to-date June 2003 value of nonresidential construction declined 44.1%.

Western Region Economic Statistics

	Avg. Emp. Growth	Avg. Unemp. Rate	Retail Trade Sales Growth
<i>Data Available Through</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>Jun-03</i>	<i>May-03</i>
Western Region	1.2%	6.3%	2.3%
Archuleta	2.0%	5.1%	-3.9%
Delta	1.7%	5.3%	7.8%
Dolores	-0.9%	9.6%	1.7%
Garfield	1.5%	3.7%	4.9%
Gunnison	-0.3%	6.6%	-9.7%
Hinsdale	-2.7%	1.8%	-5.7%
La Plata	1.6%	4.8%	6.8%
Mesa	3.7%	5.6%	1.3%
Moffat	1.9%	6.3%	-4.2%
Montezuma	2.6%	4.5%	2.0%
Montrose	2.5%	5.4%	4.2%
Ouray	2.5%	3.0%	10.6%
Rio Blanco	3.0%	2.8%	-5.1%
San Juan	0.7%	10.0%	-15.0%
San Miguel	-0.5%	4.8%	-4.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, Colorado Department of Revenue, and F.W. Dodge. Employment growth is computed from labor force data estimating employment by place of residence.