**Ames**

Employment in the Ames metropolitan statistical area (MSA) increased by 900 positions (1.9 percent) between January and February. Employment historically rises in February due to heightened activity at the MSA’s state university. This year was no different, as state government (+500 positions) made up the bulk of the monthly job gains. The private service-providing sector added 200 positions to payrolls to accommodate higher demand due to returning university students. Elsewhere, the goods-producing sector and local government each gained 100 employees over-the-month.

Employment in the MSA is still significantly depressed due to the Covid-19 pandemic – the number of workers employed in February was 48,200, a decline of 6,600 (12.0 percent) from the year prior. State government suffered the largest reduction in employment, employing 3,700 fewer individuals than a year ago, a 21.5 percent contraction. The private service-providing industry also endured significant losses in employment, cutting payrolls by 11.7 percent (-2,900 positions) annually. Local government experienced modest losses, paring 200 positions. Finally, the goods-producing sector was the only segment of the MSA’s economy to add jobs over-the-year (+200 positions). Federal government was unchanged.

**Cedar Rapids**

Employment in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan statistical area added 500 jobs in February, reversing the January to February change of the past two years when jobs were trimmed. All additional jobs were in service-providing industries as goods-producing shed 400 jobs.

Educational and health services added 300 jobs, as did government. All of the jobs added in government were in local government. Leisure and hospitality gained 200 jobs, returning employment back to the December level following a slight dip in January employment. Manufacturing added 100 jobs in the durable goods sector. Mining, logging and construction pared 500 jobs as colder weather prevailed.

Over the year, area employment is down by 9,000. The value remains 6.3% below the March 2020 (pre Covid-19) level. The area has regained slightly more than 43% of the jobs lost due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Leisure and hospitality, which suffered the greatest employment loss of all sectors in April 2020, continues to struggle to bring employment levels back to the pre Covid-19 level. Nearly 53% of the jobs lost have been recovered, but the industry remains 21.01% below the February 2020 level. Employment in educational and health services is down 1,700 (-7.59%) jobs from one year ago. Professional and business services has 1,000 fewer jobs (-6.76%) in the same period and information is down 12.12% which represents 400 jobs.

**Des Moines/West Des Moines**

# Total nonfarm employment in the Des Moines area lost a slight 500 jobs in February, lowering the total number of jobs to 354,600. Mining, logging, and construction shed 2,700 jobs due primarily to unusually cold weather halting some projects. This was especially true for specialty trade contractors (-1,400) as winter storms affected much of the country. Other monthly losses included health care and social assistance, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing. Job gains were strong this month for leisure and hospitality (+1,700). This was true in many parts of the U.S. as vaccines for COVID rolled out and social distancing measures started to ease. Private education gained 600 jobs as schools prepared for the spring session. Despite the monthly gain, this sector still trails by 2,300 jobs. Professional and business services benefitted from hiring in employment services and advanced by 300 jobs. Government also gained 300 jobs due to hiring at the state and local level.

# Since last year, total nonfarm employment has shed 17,000 jobs. Despite the moderate monthly gain, leisure and hospitality still trails by 6,300 jobs. Full-service restaurants have been hit especially hard (2,300). Education and health care trails by 4,600 jobs and mining, logging, and construction by 2,400 jobs following this month’s loss. The only sector in the black is financial activities (+500) which has been bolstered by hiring in the insurance carriers and related services industry.

# Dubuque

The Dubuque Metro saw little change in total nonfarm employment in February as goods-producing sector losses were exactly matched by private service gains (-300 jobs vs. +300 jobs, respectively). February isn’t a typically seasonal month, so the lack of job movement isn’t unusual. Government also saw no change compared to January.

Compared to last February, the Dubuque Metro remains down 3,400 jobs (-5.6 percent). Private services are responsible for most of the loss (-2,500), although goods-producing industries are also down versus twelve months ago (-600). Local governments have shed 300 jobs while state and federal government are unchanged.

**Iowa City**

Employment in the Iowa City metropolitan statistical area (MSA) rebounded slightly, rising from 93,000 in January to 93,400 in February. The modest increase is mostly due to gains in the private service-providing sector, which added 400 positions over-the-month. Within the sector, trade, transportation, and utilities (+200 jobs) and leisure and hospitality (+200 jobs) had the largest monthly expansions. The increase in leisure and hospitality was fueled particularly by businesses in accommodation and food services, which added 300 positions. In other areas of the local economy, losses in the goods-producing sector (-200 jobs) and gains in state government (+200 jobs) offset each other.

The MSA is still reeling from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, as employment decreased by 7,500 positions from 100,900 in February 2020 to 93,400 in February 2021. This 7.4 percent decline was largely motivated by losses in the private service-providing sector, which cut 5,400 jobs from payrolls. Leisure and hospitality suffered the largest decline within the sector, employing 2,400 fewer individuals than the year prior (-24.0 percent). Professional and business services and retail trade experienced modest declines, respectively trimming 300 and 200 positions. Likewise, the goods-producing sector contracted by 400 positons. There were 1,700 fewer jobs in the government sector than in February 2020, with significant decreases in state (-1,200 jobs) and local government (-600 jobs) over-the-year. Federal government added 100 positions.

**Sioux City**

# Employment in the Sioux City MSA is up 100 jobs from January, bringing total nonfarm employment to 82,600. The change for the month matches the January-to-February change in each of the last two years.

# Trade, transportation and warehousing pared 800 jobs, significantly more than the 10-year average January-to-February change of -140. Only 100 of those jobs are in retail trade establishments, which is equal to the average February change. All other sectors gained jobs, including; government (+300), leisure and hospitality (+200) and professional and business services and manufacturing (+100 each).

# Overall, area employment remains down 4,800 jobs from one year ago with job losses in leisure and hospitality (-1,100), trade, transportation and warehousing (-700), government (-600), and manufacturing (-300). Professional and business services is the only sector with a jobs gain from one year ago, adding 500 jobs (+6.58%).

# Waterloo/Cedar Falls

The Waterloo/Cedar Falls metropolitan statistical area total nonfarm employment added 1,400 jobs from January and stands at 84,700. The value remains 5,000 jobs short of the March, pre- Covid-19 level and curtailment efforts and 5,400 below the February 2020 level.

Government employment is up 1,400 jobs, with the bulk of the jobs in state government (+1,200) and seasonally expected. Educational and health services added 200 jobs and leisure and hospitality added 100 jobs. Trade, transportation and warehousing and manufacturing each trimmed 100 jobs.

Over the year, government and educational and health services each pared 1,100 jobs. Employment in leisure and hospitality is 1,000 below one year ago, a -13.16% change. Jobs were also shed in trade, transportation and warehousing (-400), manufacturing (-300) and professional and business services (-200). There were no sectors with job gains.