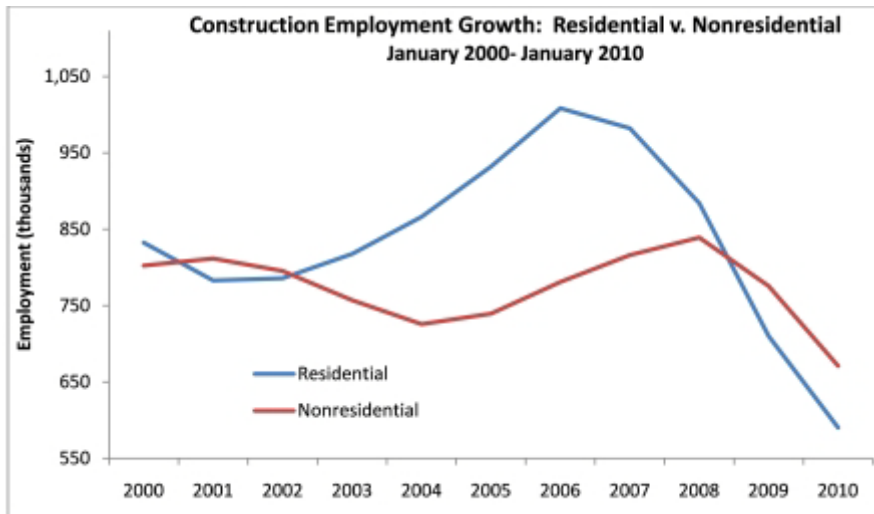


2010 Begins with More Nonresidential Construction Job Losses

"Since the recession began, the construction industry has lost nearly a quarter of all jobs, and, if anything, today's report indicates more jobs losses will follow." —ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu

The nonresidential building construction sector lost 12,100 jobs in January, bringing the total number of jobs lost since January 2009 to 104,300, according to the Feb. 5 report produced by the U.S. Labor Department. The total number of nonresidential construction jobs stands at 671,200, 13.4 percent below January 2009 levels. (See [what this means](#) below)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Nonresidential specialty trade construction posted its largest monthly job loss since March 2009, shedding 48,100 jobs in January. Year-over-year, nonresidential specialty trade construction has lost 383,400 jobs, or 16.1 percent of its workforce. Heavy and civil engineering construction employment was unchanged for the month but is still down 109,100 jobs for the year.

Residential building construction shed 8,800 jobs in January and is down 16.9 percent, or 119,700 jobs, since the same time last year. The construction industry as a whole lost 75,000 jobs for the month and 926,000 year over year.

Across all industries the number of jobs fell by 20,000 in January, compared to a revised report showing a loss of 150,000 jobs in December and a gain of 64,000 jobs in November. Year-over-year, employment shrank 3 percent – a loss of more than 4 million jobs. The unemployment rate is now 9.7 percent, marking the first time it has been below 10 percent since September 2009.

What This Means

"Rarely is a data release as difficult to interpret as today's jobs report. Data emerging from the DOL's establishment and household surveys, which make up the information in the report, provide plenty of ammunition for both economic optimists and pessimists," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "Optimists will undoubtedly focus on the unemployment rate, which is below 10 percent, and the evidence of job growth emerging from the household survey, which generally is believed to be an indicator of small business job growth in the short term, and therefore will find evidence that small businesses are expanding again.

“Pessimists are more likely to focus on the establishment survey, which shows that job losses not only continue but have been considerably worse than previously estimated,” Basu continued. “Based on revised data, it is now estimated that the nation has lost 8.4 million jobs since the recession began as opposed to the prior estimate of 7.2 million jobs.

“ABC members are likely to be more affected by the results of the establishment survey than the household survey,” said Basu. “After all, construction continues to hemorrhage jobs, most profoundly among specialty trade contractors. Since the recession began, the construction industry has lost nearly a quarter of all jobs, and, if anything, today's report indicates more jobs losses will follow.”