

Gradual Job Growth In County

The annual review of employment and unemployment in Santa Cruz County during 1967 was reported this past week by the statisticians of the California Department of Employment.

The average labor force in the county during the past year was 40,900, an increase of 1200 from 1966. Total employment was 37,800, an increase of 900, while unemployment jumped from 2900 to 3200, a gain of 300 with an average unemployment rate of 7.8 per cent compared to 7.3 per cent in 1966 and 9.1 per cent in 1965.

In this respect, and the problem of providing jobs to meet the labor force is of paramount importance, it should be pointed out that since August, 1967, the unemployment rate has been below the average for 1966, so the job picture has shown definite improvements.

The average figures for 1967 are up from the previous year only because of job problems in the January-April period.

Employment in the county reached its peak in October when there were 40,400 persons at work out of a labor force of 42,300, both all-time records for the area. Unemployment totalled 1900 that month, a jobless rate of 4.5 per cent.

Back in 1960, and that does seem a long time ago, we had a labor force of 31,600 and 28,800 employed. At that time we forecast that one of the major chal-

lenges confronting the county was the fact that we must produce at least 10,000 new jobs in the coming decade.

By 1967, we had produced 9000 new jobs in the county and in the peak months last year we were well above the 10,000 mark.

It is rather interesting to note just where the changes have occurred in the employment picture.

Going back to 1960, this is the difference.

There are 200 more jobs in the construction industry although we are still well below the employment peaks of 1963-64 in this field. There is an average of 2400 in the vital manufacturing industries, one of the keys to the general improvement in the overall job program.

Employment in public utilities is up 100 jobs, in retail trade there are 1500 additional jobs, while wholesale trade is up 100. There are 200 more jobs in the finance, insurance, real estate fields. Employment in government is up 1900 jobs, while agricultural employment dropped 200.

There are 400 more jobless out of a total gain in the labor force of 9300. (Because of the rounding of job figures the totals show a 100 person difference.)

While our seasonal fluctuations seriously affect the total job picture, it ap-

pears to be somewhat better in the early part of 1968 than it was a year ago with the outlook continuing good at least for the next few months.

The unemployment rate in Santa Cruz, on a statistical basis, looks poor compared to California and the nation, but the statistics don't tell the complete story because of the number of seasonal workers in both recreation and agriculture.

Unfortunately, the building trades still constitute a problem and the outlook in this field isn't exceptionally bright unless something unforeseen occurs in the housing trade.

The gain in manufacturing employment is definitely encouraging and could continue to be a leader in creating total job opportunities. A recent report of the Bay Area Council claimed that 100 new jobs mean:

Three hundred and fifty-nine people, \$710,000 more personal income annually, 165 more workers employed, \$229,000 more in bank deposits, 3 more retail establishments, \$331,000 more in annual retail sales.

Thus, the importance of creating more basic jobs has a material effect in providing a more stable economy for the entire community. In Santa Cruz, the need for a better balance in year-round jobs continues to be a community challenge.