

Employment

# Job Development

12/8/74

Although employment is deteriorating across the nation, Santa Cruz County was doing a pretty good job in creating more employment.

This unusual situation occurred at the same time the area was encountering increased unemployment in a sort of contradictory development.

In the past year, for example, there were 1600 more people at work in the county and 1000 more unemployed in the October to October comparison.

The area has always been one of higher than usual unemployment due to the high number of seasonal workers in the county and the fact that in many families there were several wageearners.

October is the normal high point of employment in the county and this year was no exception with 43,800 persons at work in non-agricultural fields and 5900 in agricultural for a total work force of 49,700.

Unemployment, including persons residing in the county but normally working outside the county, was set at 4100, up 1000 from last year.

The October jobless rate was 6 per cent in the county, compared to 4.8 per cent a year ago.

In the state the unemployment rate for October was 8.1 per cent compared to a national

figure of 6 per cent.

However, as has previously been reported the job situation took a rapid turn for the worse in November as the national jobless rate went to 6.5 per cent and today, the state reported California's unemployment rate at 8.7 per cent.

While no figures will be available for the county for several weeks, it is estimated that the unemployment rate may be as high as 12 per cent at the present time, reflecting the recession trend.

In the past two or three years there has been a rather drastic change in work patterns in the county. Instead of gradually decreasing from the October high, employment has declined more in November and December than during past years.

Last year the decline was attributed to the early rains, a factor which doesn't apply this season.

Obviously, this year there has been a combination of events which have created more severe pressure on the job market.

The latest employment report from the state shows that retail trade continues to dominate the job force with 9500 workers while government and service industries account for 9100 workers each.

There were 8900 at work in manufacturing during October, a figure that has declined since that time. However, it is also estimated that work in government has increased since the state report.

The 5900 at work in agriculture during October is an annual high and farm work will be cutback due to normal seasonal changes.

Work in the construction trades has held up fairly well except for the big drop in residential building, the field which employs the most people in the building trades.

The Watsonville Freeway project has been completed, but there will be some work on the East Cliff sewer project until bad weather sets in along with work at Mission Hill Junior High and at UCSC.

In the state the jobless problem took a big turn for the worse in November with a loss of 120,000 jobs. Most of the lost jobs were in the automobile and related industries along with a continued decline in home construction.

It is all too obvious that the job situation is getting serious and deserves quick action by government wherever possible.

It the downward trend is not contained, it will put a tremendous burden on the welfare system at a time when we can least afford it.