

# Opinion

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*Employment*

Sentinel Editorial

## The Job Outlook

Although Santa Cruz continues to have a relatively high degree of unemployment, the employment picture continues to improve at a better than average rate.

In October, the jobless rate was 9.6 percent, a full two points above the state average and even more compared to the national report.

However, by comparison with a year ago the jobless rate has declined by 17 percent, reflecting 1,000 less people on the unemployment roll in the county.

At the same time, employment within the county was up and total employment showed 4,700 more persons at work than a year ago, a remarkable 6.7 percent gain.

In the year, the labor force increased by 3,700 persons, a gain of 4.9 percent.

And in a somewhat surprising situation unemployment did not change between September and October even though September was the high month for employment this year. There were 73,600 persons at work in September and 73,100 in October with a corresponding drop in the labor force.

Between September and October there was a decline of 875 jobs within the county, 775 in agriculture and 100 in nonagricultural work.

Wholesale and retail trade remained the number one employer with 12,975 jobs, followed by 11,475 governmental jobs, 10,200 jobs in the services and 9,575 in manufacturing, despite the strike which idled 200 or so Lockheed employees.

On a classification-by-classification basis, this is what happened to work in the county in the past year:

Construction 2,400, up 75 jobs; manufacturing 9,575, up 150 jobs, 50 in durable goods and 100 in nondurables; transportation and public utilities 2,475, down 25; wholesale trade 1,575, up 25; retail trade 11,400, up 275; finance, insurance and real estate 1,775 jobs, up 100; services 10,200, up 475 and government 11,475, up 325.

Farm employment totaled 6,050, the same total as a

year ago, but down 775 from the harvesting peak in September.

During the months ahead there will be a peak in retailing with the holiday season, then employment will decline for next two months on a seasonal basis.

One interesting subject in the employment field is the utter lack of political interest by the county and the city in industrial development.

One supervisor said he wasn't interested in furthering clean, light industry, preferring tourism.

It is somewhat difficult to relate that position to the hard facts about manufacturing jobs in the county. Monterey County is exceedingly proud of its manufacturing efforts, but during most months of the year, Santa Cruz County has more work in industry than Monterey County. In the September report there were 9,950 manufacturing jobs in Santa Cruz, 9,800 in Monterey County.

But there were 3,400 jobs in durable goods in this county compared to 2,100 in Monterey County. In this county there were 5,175 jobs in food processing, 4,500 in Monterey.

Despite the lack of governmental support, especially in some planning sectors, manufacturing is a major element in the employment field.

The jobs are more permanent and create far more work than tourism, whose jobs are more seasonal. In recent years work in the services field has been dominated by the increase in the health services, more so than tourism in motel and recreational fields.

Considering the fact that when we talk about figures in the employment and jobless reports we are talking about people now living in the county, there is a definite need for greater interest in developing jobs of all nature.

And here as well as throughout the nation, the need can only be met by creating jobs in the private sector, not in government.