

# Job Picture Continues To Improve

Employment in Santa Cruz County set another all-time record in October in perhaps what must be regarded as the most phenomenal report on employment in the county since records have been maintained by the state department of employment.

There were 42,700 persons at work in the county in October, a gain of 2300 over the same period a year ago while the number of jobless, 1900, was the same as in October, 1967.

As a result the unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 per cent, the lowest in the county since a similar rate was set back in September of 1960.

But more important is a comparison in the job picture since February, 1967. In the succeeding 18 months, employment in the county was up 8300 jobs or a fabulous 24.1 per cent.

Actually, in Santa Cruz County, it isn't fair to compare the working force in February with that of October as February is normally a low employment month while October is a high employment period. However, the difference was so great we felt it worth emphasizing.

On a more equitable basis, comparing this past October with the same month a year ago we have these facts:

The labor force jumped from 42,300 to 44,600, an increase of 2300 or 5.4 per cent.

The number of persons at work jumped from 40,400 to 42,700, an all-time record, representing an increase of 2300 workers and a percentage gain of 5.7 per cent.

Meanwhile, the number of jobless held constant at 1900. The jobless rate (compared to the labor force available) dropped from 4.5 per cent to 4.3 per cent.

By comparison, the jobless rate in the county in February of this year was 10.4 per cent; it dropped to 6.7 per cent in April, to 6.5 per cent in June, to 5.8 per cent in August and to 4.3 per cent in October.

As we have stated before, the labor force appears to be increasing at a rate somewhat higher than the general population growth which may well be due to the fact that more and more families have more than one wage-earner.

In the type of new jobs produced this year, the county has gained 500 new workers in manufacturing industries, 100 more engaged in public utility operations, 200 more in retail trade, 400 more in the services field, 600 more in government and 500 more in agriculture, due in part to an increase in orchard activity and a lengthening of the season in snap beans and strawberries.

By total employment, retail and wholesale trade account for 8800 jobs in the county, closely followed by the manufac-

turing industries with 8500 workers, including 4300 in food, 700 in other non-durables and 3500 in durable goods work.

The service field provides 7600 jobs with 6500 in government, 6200 in agriculture, 2200 in the construction industry, 1400 in public utilities and 1200 in finance, real estate and insurance. Other types of work provide 300 jobs.

It is interesting to note the importance of manufacturing in Santa Cruz County, a factor often overlooked in the general economic picture. By comparison, in neighboring Monterey County where 18,800 persons were at work in retail and wholesale trades, only 7200 were engaged in manufacturing activities compared to 17,700 in government, 13,600 in the services and 11,800 in agriculture.

Durable goods manufacturing accounted for only 1600 manufacturing jobs in Monterey County with the bulk of the manufacturing employment in food and other nondurables.

Monterey County, incidentally, reported a gain of 1900 jobs in the past year while unemployment there dropped from 3000 to 2800. There were 81,400 people in jobs there in October.

All in all, the employment outlook in Santa Cruz County was the best thus far this decade and, while it doesn't appear to be headed upward to any degree, it also doesn't seem likely to decline.