



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **October Economic Trends report for metro Milwaukee**

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MILWAUKEE – Monthly economic indicators for the metro Milwaukee area rose modestly in October, according to a monthly report by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC.) Thirteen of 22 available local indicators rose over year-ago levels, up from the 12 improvements registered in September.

“In aggregate and over several critical indicators, the economic trend has flattened out in recent months,” said Bret Mayborne, the MMAC’s economic research director. “Nonetheless, the metro area’s unemployment rate dropped under 3% for the first time in nearly two years. And Milwaukee’s manufacturing sector is experiencing its strongest gains in several decades. The jobs increase in manufacturing over the past four months is the highest we’ve seen in a data set that dates back to 1991, and current manufacturing job levels are higher than they were immediately before the pandemic.”

Highlights of the data include:

- The metro area has posted seven consecutive months of year-over-year job growth. But the rate of growth has slowed in this period, from a peak of 8.5% in April coming off of lows posted one year ago to the current growth of 1.3% (to 833,900.)
- By major industry sector, October job changes ranged from a 16.7% year-over-year increase in the leisure and hospitality sector to a 7.4% job loss in the financial activities sector. Overall, five of 10 major sectors posted employment gains from one year ago, four registered declines and one was unchanged.
- Metro Milwaukee’s seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate fell to 2.8% in October, 2.7 percentage points below year-ago levels and marginally lower than October rates posted in 2019 (3.3%) and 2018 (3.0%).
- Manufacturing jobs rose 8% in October (vs. one year ago) to 118,800. The percentage increases posted over the past four months in manufacturing are the highest registered in the available record (1991 to present) and current job levels surpass those posted immediately prior to the pandemic downturn.

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- Among manufacturing production worker indicators, the length of the average workweek fell 4.9% to 39.1 hours. The shorter workweek led to a small gain in average weekly earnings for such workers, up 1.3%, but average hourly earnings increased 6.5% (to \$24.63), ranking slightly above national consumer price inflation over the same time period (up 6.2%.)
- Supply chain issues continue to affect new auto registrations. Registrations fell 27.1% in October vs. year-ago levels, this indicator's fourth consecutive month of double-digit decrease.
- For the first time since June 2019, both local housing and real estate indicators tracked by the MMAC trended downward. Metro area existing homes sold fell 7.3% in October against year-ago levels while mortgages registered in Milwaukee County fell 8.1%.

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### Note

Seasonally unadjusted data is used in this analysis thus month-over-month job changes may be due to seasonal effects. A truer month-to-month trend is captured in seasonally adjusted data. Unfortunately for most metro areas the breadth of employment and unemployment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is almost exclusively released in not seasonally adjusted form. Total nonfarm employment is available as a seasonally adjusted series for the metro area.

The seasonally adjusted series showed a loss of 112,400 jobs in April 2020 (vs. March), the beginning of the Covid-19 recession. Since that time, the local economy added back 71,900 jobs cumulatively in the month-over-month record over the May 2020 to October 2021 period or 64% of the initial loss.

Statistical table attached.

## Metropolitan Milwaukee Business Indicators

### October 2021

	Month	Current month	Previous month	Year ago	% chg. from yr. ago	% chg. prev. month	% chg. year to date (1)
<b>ESTABLISHMENT DATA</b>							
Total nonfarm payroll employment (000)	Oct-21	833.9	832.7	822.9	1.3%	0.1%	0.6%
Construction, mining & natural res. (000)	Oct-21	33.8	33.1	35.7	-5.3%	2.1%	-7.0%
Manufacturing (000)	Oct-21	118.8	118.3	110.0	8.0%	0.4%	2.8%
Trade, transportation, & utilities (000)	Oct-21	142.2	140.3	142.2	0.0%	1.4%	1.6%
Information (000)	Oct-21	12.1	12.1	12.2	-0.8%	0.0%	-1.9%
Financial activities (000)	Oct-21	46.6	47.1	50.3	-7.4%	-1.1%	-4.7%
Professional & business services (000)	Oct-21	123.5	124.6	118.1	4.6%	-0.9%	5.1%
Education & health services (000)	Oct-21	160.2	162.2	168.4	-4.9%	-1.2%	-2.2%
Leisure & hospitality (000)	Oct-21	72.1	71.2	61.8	16.7%	1.3%	6.0%
Other services, exc. public (000)	Oct-21	44.8	44.9	44.5	0.7%	-0.2%	3.2%
Government (000)	Oct-21	79.8	78.9	79.7	0.1%	1.1%	-3.4%
<b>LABOR FORCE DATA</b>							
Civilian labor force (000)	Oct-21	812.2	817.8	806.6	0.7%	-0.7%	0.5%
Employed (000)	Oct-21	789.5	790.6	762.2	3.6%	-0.1%	3.5%
Unemployed (000)	Oct-21	22.7	27.2	44.4	-48.9%	-16.5%	-37.2
Unemployment rate							
Metro Milwaukee	Oct-21	2.8%	3.3%	5.5%	-2.7(4)	-0.5(4)	-2.8(4)
Wisconsin	Oct-21	2.3%	2.7%	4.3%	-2.0(4)	-0.4(4)	-2.7(4)
United States	Oct-21	4.3%	4.6%	6.6%	-2.3(4)	-0.3(4)	-2.7(4)
New unemployment compensation claims	Oct-21	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
<b>HOURS &amp; EARNINGS (mfg. production workers)</b>							
Avg. weekly hours (manuf.)	Oct-21	39.1	38.6	41.1	-4.9%	1.3%	3.3%
Avg. weekly earnings (2)	Oct-21	\$963.03	\$941.07	\$950.64	1.3%	2.3%	8.7%
Avg. hourly earnings (2)	Oct-21	\$24.63	\$24.38	\$23.13	6.5%	1.0%	5.3%
<b>HOUSING &amp; REAL ESTATE</b>							
Existing homes sold	Oct-21	1,759	1,813	1,897	-7.3%	-3.0%	6.7%
Mortgages (number) (3)	Oct-21	3,536	3,846	3,847	-8.1%	-8.1%	21.0%
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>							
Airport passengers	Oct-21	466,456	419,741	192,741	142.0%	11.1%	60.7%
New-car registrations	Oct-21	765	905	1,050	-27.1%	-15.5%	-4.2%
<b>OTHER INDICATORS (latest available)</b>							
Consumer price index (1982-84=100)							
United States (CPI-U)	Oct-21	276.589	274.310	260.388	6.2%	0.8%	4.2%

**Notes:** (1) The average or cumulative figure year-to-date vs. the same total one year ago. (2) Not adjusted for inflation. (3) Milwaukee County only. (4) Percentage point change.

Figures are not seasonally adjusted except where indicated (SA).

Figures are for metro Milwaukee (Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington & Waukesha counties) except where indicated.

**Sources:** Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development, Multiple Listing Service, Milwaukee County Register of Deeds Office, Mitchell International Airport, Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, and U.S. Dept. of Labor