

The May Review

“How much do you earn?” is an important question in contexts ranging from casual conversation to the most serious studies of economic well-being. As a result, economists have mined a wide variety of the surveys we produce at the Bureau of Labor Statistics for information on earnings. Joseph R. Meisenheimer II describes seven such sources in detail, along with an analysis of how these might be adjusted for price change over time.

Sharon P. Brown reports on the implementation of new models and procedures for estimating and benchmarking labor force estimates for the States. These “bivariate models with real-time benchmarking” are a significant enhancement of the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program.

Marta Norton provides a detailed description of the forces affecting recent movements in beef prices as measured in the producer price indexes. These forces included everything from the regular 9- to 11-year cycle of cattle herd expansion and liquidation to the bovine spongiform encephalitis (mad-cow disease) episode in late 2003.

Jonathan Weinhausen disaggregates the stage-of-processing model of price transmission to see which parts of the producer price index for intermediate goods may have the most impact on price change further downstream.

Amy E. Knaup contributes a report on firm survival and firm longevity based on the data from the relatively new Business Employment Dynamics program.

Klein Award winners

Congratulations to recent winners of the Lawrence R. Klein Award. Kenneth N. Fortson, a graduate student at Princeton University, was recognized for his September 2004 article, “The diurnal

pattern of on-the-job injuries.” Joshua C. Pinkston and James R. Spletzer of the Bureau of Labor Statistics won with their November 2004 article, “Annual measures of gross job gains and gross job losses.” An honorable mention went to Michael L. Dolfman and Solidelle F. Wasser for their article, “9/11 and the New York City economy,” in the June 2004 issue.

The Lawrence R. Klein Award program was established in 1969 to honor the best articles appearing in *Monthly Labor Review*. The award is administered by a private board of trustees drawn from retired senior officials and analysts. One award is given to an author from outside the Bureau of Labor Statistics and one to authors from within the Bureau.

Work stoppages in 2004

The number of workers idled because of lockouts and strikes in 2004 rose from the prior year while the number of days of idleness fell. There were 17 major work stoppages that began during 2004 and one major work stoppage that continued from 2003, resulting in 170,700 idled workers and 3.3 million workdays of idleness. Comparable figures for 2003 were 14 stoppages, 129,200 workers idled, and 4.1 million workdays of idleness.

In private industry, the largest number of stoppages occurred among the service-providing industries (seven) and in the manufacturing sector of the goods-producing industries (three). Of the stoppages in the service-providing industries, four were in the health care and social assistance sector and three were in the accommodation and food service sector. In State and local government, two stoppages were in the transportation and warehousing sector and one was in the health care and social assistance sector. To learn more about work stoppages, see “Major Work

Stoppages in 2004,” news release USDL 05-598.

Working poor in 2003

The working poor rate—the ratio of the working poor to all individuals in the labor force at least 27 weeks—was 5.3 percent in 2003, unchanged from the rate reported in 2002. The share of people classified as working poor was higher for women, 6.0 percent, than for men, 4.7 percent. The proportions for both groups were unchanged from the prior year.

As in earlier years, younger workers were more vulnerable to being poor than were older workers. High working-poor rates among younger workers largely reflect the lower earnings and higher rates of unemployment associated with having relatively little education and work experience. Among 16- to 19-year-olds, the working-poor rate was 9.4 percent in 2003 and among 20- to 24-year-olds, it was 10.0 percent. For more information, see *A Profile of the Working Poor, 2003*, Report 983.

Student employment, 1997–2003

Work activity for high school students was substantially higher at each successive grade attended in the years from 1997 through 2003. Forty-one percent of high school freshmen worked during the school year or the following summer, compared with 65 percent of sophomores, 79 percent of juniors, and 87 percent of seniors. Among high school freshmen and sophomores, young men were more likely to work than were young women. By the senior year, however, young men and women were equally likely to have jobs. To find out more, see “Work Activity of High School Students: Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997,” news release USDL 05-732. □