The March *Review*

Long time readers of *Monthly Labor Review* may have thought we had missed something in our February issue, the longstanding platform for the annual analysis of employment and labor force developments. Fear not. We have moved the annual employment story to March and divided it into two sections. The move to March reflects the increased speed with which the basic payroll data on employment, hours, and earnings are benchmarked. Updates that used to be available in June are now ready by early February and can be incorporated in the annual story. The move to two articles is driven by the recent introduction of data on job openings and labor turnover. Trying to incorporate that stream of data into what had already been an increasingly bulky annual review was rejected in favor of the two-articles approach.

Teresa L. Morisi wrote the opening article on the basis of the Current Population Survey data gathered from households. While she reports that unemployment fell and employment rose by this measure in 2004, the pattern of recovery has been different than it has been in the average post-recession period.

Emily Lloyd and Charlotte Mueller analyze the payroll employment numbers and the job openings and turnover data that are gathered from business establishments. A strengthening in the employment data seemed to be confirmed by an uptrend in the job openings rate.

John Duke and Victor Torres present their analysis of multifactor productivity in the air transportation industry.

Maury B. Gittleman presents pay relatives that take into account the different composition of employment across metropolitan areas and the impact of the pay surveys being run at different times of the year in different cities.

Extended mass layoffs in 2004

For all of 2004, employers reported 4,879 extended mass layoff actions, down from 6,181 events in 2003. Manufacturing accounted for the largest share of extended layoff events in 2004—29 percent. However, this was the smallest share on record for this industry group. Since reaching a peak in 2001, the number of manufacturing events has declined by 56 percent.

In 2004, seasonal work continued to be the most frequently cited reason for layoff, accounting for 33 percent of all layoff events. The seasonal layoffs in 2004 occurred primarily in establishments engaged in food manufacturing, heavy and civil engineering construction, and in transit and ground passenger transportation. Permanent closures were 15 percent of extended mass layoff events in 2004. As was the case among all events, permanent closures were most numerous in manufacturing. See "Extended Mass Layoffs in the Fourth Quarter of 2004 and Annual Averages for 2004," news release USDL 05–264.

Seasonally-adjusted mass layoff statistics

Beginning with the release of January 2005 data, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is now publishing seasonally-adjusted mass layoff data. Seasonal adjustment accounts for the effects of events that follow a more or less regular pattern each year, making it easier to observe the cyclical and other nonseasonal movements in a time series. Six monthly mass layoff series are being seasonally adjusted—the number of layoff events and the number of associated initial claims for unemployment insurance for the total, the private nonfarm sector, and the manufacturing sector. The extended mass layoff data continue to be available quarterly on a not-seasonally-adjusted basis.

In January 2005, employers took 1,457 mass layoff actions as measured, after seasonal adjustment, by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month. Each action involved at least 50 persons from a single establishment, and the number of workers involved totaled 150,990, on a seasonally-adjusted basis. The number of layoff events had risen by 246 from December and was the highest for any month since January 2004. The number of initial claims due to mass layoff actions grew by 31,341 over the month, and was the highest for any month since October 2003.

Fatalities charted

Fatal Occupational Injuries in the United States, 1995–1999: A Chartbook (BLS Report 965) recently was posted to the Bureau of Labor Statistics website (www.bls.gov). The chartbook is divided into three sections; each begins with a short overview of the data which is followed by more specific data presentations. The "National Profiles" focus on specific types of fatal work injuries, sources of fatal injuries, and specific groups of workers.

The "Industry Profiles" present data for each major industry division, including the number and rate of fatal work injuries in that division as well as background on the demographic characteristics of the fatally injured workers and the fatal incidents. "State Profiles" focus on fatal work injury data for individual States, plus the District of Columbia and New York City. Each profile in this section includes data on the number and rate of fatal incidents, as well as charts and tables showing the types of events, occupations, and industries associated with fatal work injuries in a particular State or location. Summaries of the demographic characteristics of fatally injured workers also are presented in each State profile. □