

The December Review

In an economy with the size and complexity of the one in the United States, it is not surprising that workers employed in nontypical work schedules will be found. Using data from the Current Population Survey, Terence McMenamin finds that substantial shares of workers' schedules do not follow the traditional "9-to-5, Monday through Friday" mode. Through the use of flexible work schedules and alternate shifts, workers and their employers are striving to meet the scheduling demands of their specific industries. While the proportion of workers on alternate shifts has changed little in the last few years, the percentage with flexible schedules has risen sharply since the mid-1980s.

By overlaying employment data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages onto seismic hazard information provided by the California Geological Survey, Richard J. Holden, Donna Bahls, and Charles Real produce tabulations and maps that correlate estimated intensities of a possible serious earthquake in northern California with employment levels in the San Francisco Bay Area. The purpose is to assess potential business and economic losses from this form of a natural disaster. While the authors are continuing to refine their methodology, their article demonstrates the expanding possibilities that combined geocoded data sets can offer for analysis, planning, and risk management.

Social scientists have paid increasing attention in recent years to the phenomenon of "nonwork," or that combination of unemployment and being outside the labor force due to retirement, disability, or other reasons. Greg A. Greenberg

and Robert A. Rosenheck extend the analysis in this issue with a comparison of the extent of nonwork among military veterans and nonveterans. There has long been intense interest in the labor market activities of service veterans, in regard both to their absorption in the economy shortly after their period of service and to longer run career outcomes. Differentials among veterans who served in different eras or theaters also are of interest, and the authors give particular focus to nonemployment by age cohorts.

Jennifer L. Raynor publishes for the first time in the MLR this month in the form of a visual essay comparing civilian labor force statistics across 10 industrialized countries. The measures presented include unemployment and labor force participation rates, employment-population ratios, and industry distributions of employment. Unemployment rates in 2006 in two European countries, Germany and France, were notably higher than in the other countries under study. Employment increased in recent decades in each of the countries, but the rates of growth varied widely.

Nonmetropolitan area occupational data now available

Among the vital inputs to the BLS labor market projections published in our last issue are data derived from the BLS Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program. Data for the Nation, States and metropolitan areas are produced by a cooperative effort between BLS and State Workforce Agencies from a sample of more than a million business establishments collected over a 3-year period.

That large sample size enables the production of employment and wage estimates for many subnational areas. Currently, for instance, such estimates are produced for more than 400 metropolitan areas. We have introduced data recently for more than 170 nonmetropolitan areas, or those parts of States lying outside of the metropolitan areas. Most States contain between one and six State-defined nonmetropolitan areas that, combined with the metropolitan areas, exhaust the geography of the State. The OES data for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas can be found at www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm □

A note to subscribers

Due to unanticipated budget constraints, this issue of the *Monthly Labor Review* is the last for fiscal year 2008 (the year ending at the end of September) that will be printed in a paper edition. The *Review* will continue to be posted on the Internet on the Bureau's Web site at www.bls.gov/pub/mlr. Archival issues of the magazine going back through 1981 also are available there. BLS will reconsider printing in a paper edition for fiscal year 2009. We regret any inconvenience to our readers.

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