

## WISCONSIN JOBS DOWN SLIGHTLY

Wisconsin shed 800 jobs between September and October 2009, following a much more dramatic loss of 17,700 jobs between August and September. This two-month loss in employment followed several months of relative stability in the state's job picture. Since the recession's start in December 2007, Wisconsin has shed a net total of 153,600 jobs—a 5.3 percent loss. As shown in Figure 1, the heaviest losses occurred between October 2008 and April 2009, followed by a leveling off between April and August (during which time Wisconsin actually gained 1,600 jobs).

Wisconsin's unemployment rate in October was 8.4 percent, equal to September's rate and down 0.6 percentage points from a June/July peak of 9.0 percent. The relative stability of Wisconsin's unemployment level in recent months is an encouraging sign. Nevertheless, Wisconsin's unemployment rate remains nearly double its pre-recession level (4.5 percent in December 2007), and it is likely that the state's unemployment rate will climb in months to come.

(Table 1, Figure 3 on back page)

## CONSTRUCTION JOBS UP, MANUFACTURING SHOWS SMALL LOSS

The construction sector gained 3,500 jobs from September to October. Even so, the construction industry has been badly hit, its workforce shrinking some 14 percent, or 17,400 jobs, since December 2007. As the state heads into winter, construction jobs are likely to fall yet again.

Although Wisconsin lost 1,400 manufacturing jobs between September and October, manufacturing employment has held relatively steady over the last six months. Still, Wisconsin's manufacturing sector has 60,700 fewer jobs than when the recession started, representing a 12 percent loss within this sector and accounting for 40 percent of Wisconsin's total job loss. (Table 1, Figure 2)

Table 1

CHANGES IN UNEMPLOYMENT AND NUMBER OF JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO OCTOBER 2009

	<i>December 2007</i>	<i>October 2009</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
Unemployment	4.5%	8.4%	3.9	
All jobs	2,889,000	2,735,400	-153,600	-5.3%
Manufacturing jobs	500,000	439,300	-60,700	-12.1%
Construction jobs	123,800	106,400	-17,400	-14.1%

Figure 1

TOTAL JOB LOSS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO OCTOBER 2009

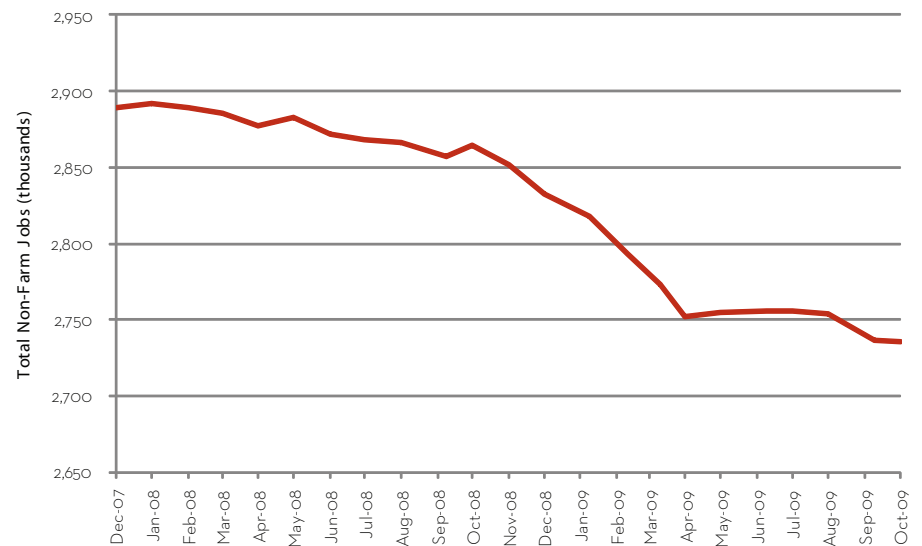
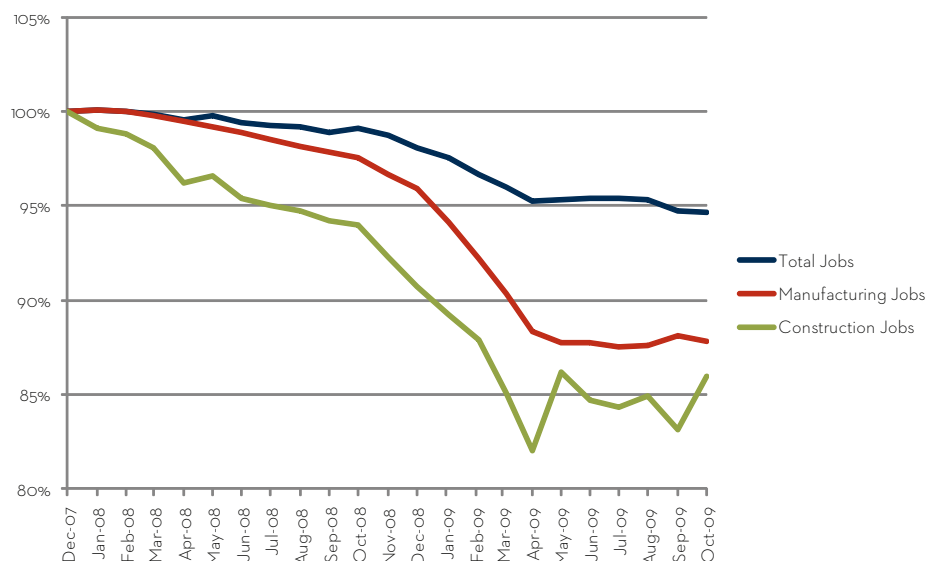


Figure 2

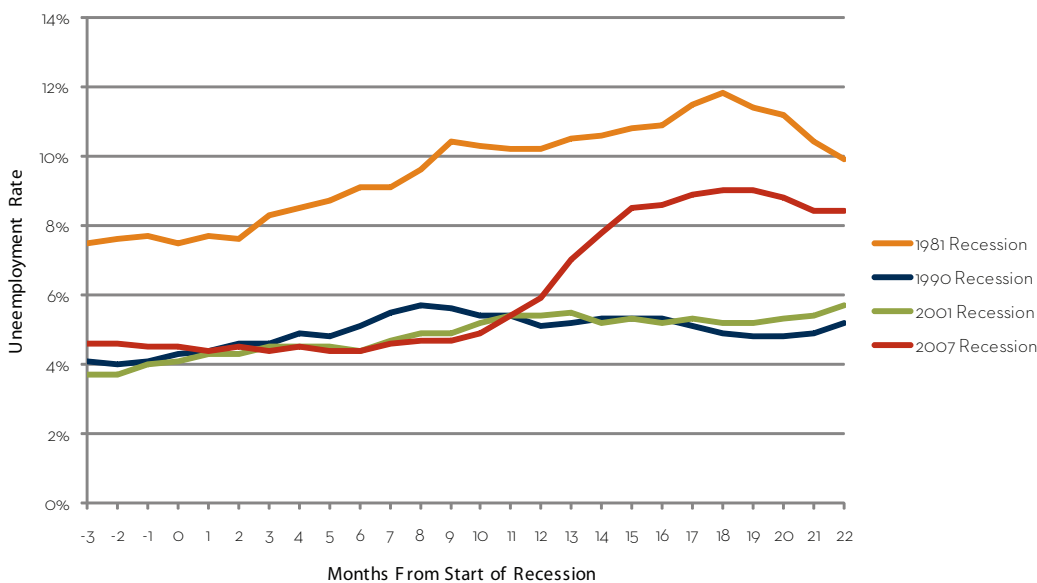
PERCENT CHANGE IN MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, AND TOTAL JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO OCTOBER 2009



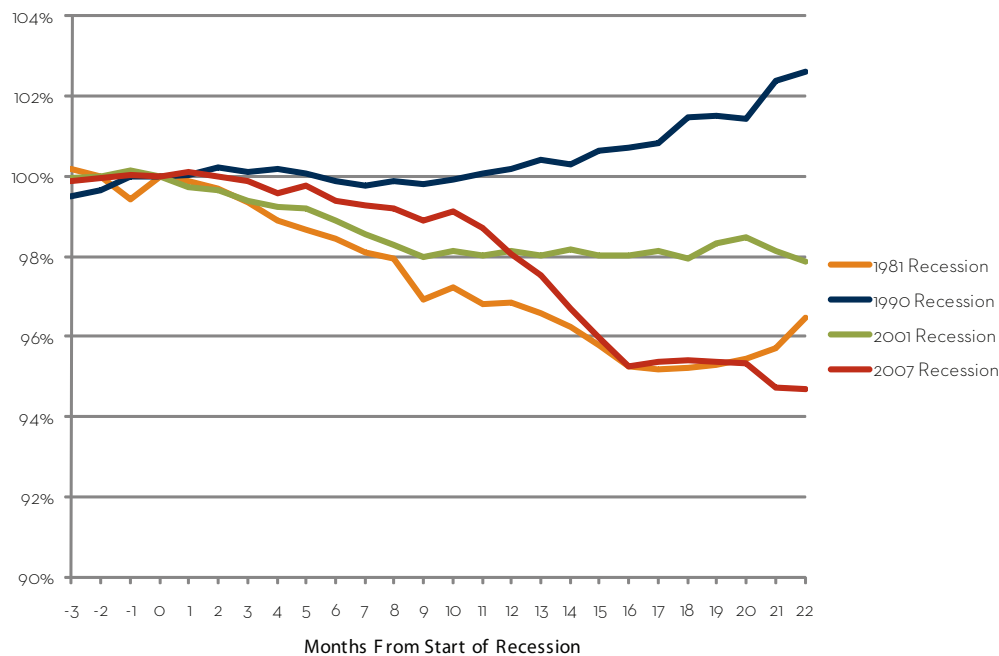
## JOB LOSS NOTABLY WORSE THAN RECENT RECESSIONS

The severity and length of the current recession stand out in comparison to the three most recent downturns of 2001, 1990, and 1981. Notably, the current downturn has surpassed the infamous recession of the early 1980s with respect to percent of jobs lost (5.3 percent). Wisconsin's unemployment rate is still well below 1980s levels, but our state's unemployment rate has not necessarily reached its peak. (Figures 3 and 4)

**Figure 3**  
WISCONSIN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN CURRENT RECESSION, COMPARED WITH 1981, 1990, AND 2001 RECESSIONS



**Figure 4**  
PERCENT CHANGE IN WISCONSIN JOBS IN CURRENT RECESSION, COMPARED WITH 1981, 1990, AND 2001 RECESSIONS



Wisconsin Job Watch, a monthly publication of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), provides a snapshot of Wisconsin's job picture and reports on key recession trends. The numbers provided in this report are based on seasonally-adjusted Bureau of Labor Statistics data compiled by the Economic Policy Institute ([www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org)).

The Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) is a policy center and field laboratory for high road economic development – a competitive market economy of shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and capable democratic government. Housed at University of Wisconsin-Madison, COWS has been supporting progressive policy innovation since 1991. For more information, visit [www.cows.org](http://www.cows.org).

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