

## ANOTHER DECLINE IN WISCONSIN JOBS

Wisconsin lost 21,700 jobs between August and September 2009, a notable decline following 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 156,800 jobs—a 5.4 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.

Wisconsin's unemployment rate in September was 8.3 percent, down .5 percentage points from August and down 0.7 percentage points from a June/July peak of 9.0 percent. This marks the second consecutive month-to-month decrease in Wisconsin's unemployment level. Nevertheless, Wisconsin's unemployment rate remains significantly higher than its pre-recession level (4.5 percent in December 2007), and given that unemployment tends to lag job loss, many still expect to see the state's unemployment climb above 9.0 percent in months to come. (Table 1, Figure 3 on back page)

## MANUFACTURING REMAINS STABLE, CONSTRUCTION DIPS

Wisconsin's manufacturing sector gained 1,200 jobs between July and September, a positive indication that this crucial industry might be stabilizing. The rate of job loss in manufacturing slowed notably beginning in April 2009, and jobs have remained relatively stable between May and September. Still, Wisconsin's manufacturing sector has 61,200 fewer jobs than when the recession started, representing a 12 percent loss within this sector.

The construction industry lost another 3,100 jobs between August and September. Since the recession's start, Wisconsin has shed 21,800 construction jobs, an almost 18 percent loss. The spike in construction jobs between April and May 2009 (5,100 jobs) was a welcomed trend and the first time construction jobs had risen since May 2008. However, the last four months have seen construction jobs fall yet again, with 4,700 jobs lost between May and September. We can expect to see these numbers fall further as the winter months approach. (Table 1, Figure 2)

Table 1

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

	<i>December 2007</i>	<i>September 2009</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
Unemployment	4.5%	8.3%	3.8	
All jobs	2,889,000	2,732,200	-156,800	-5.4%
Manufacturing jobs	500,000	438,800	-61,200	-12.2%
Construction jobs	123,800	102,000	-21,800	-17.6%

Figure 1

**TOTAL JOB LOSS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO SEPTEMBER 2009**

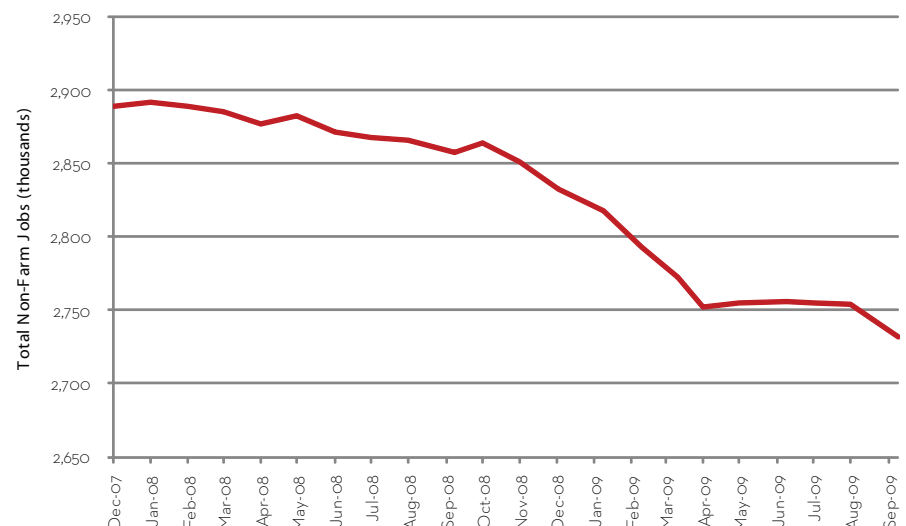
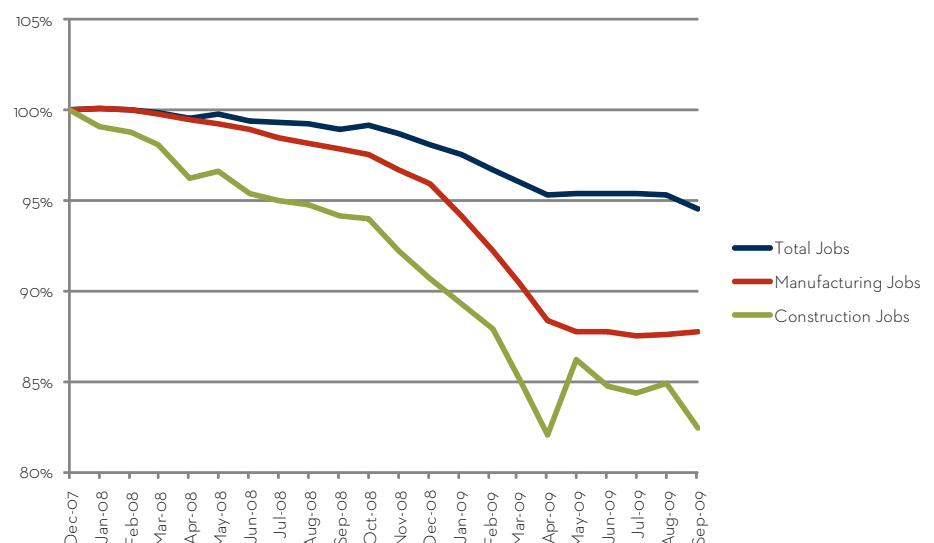


Figure 2

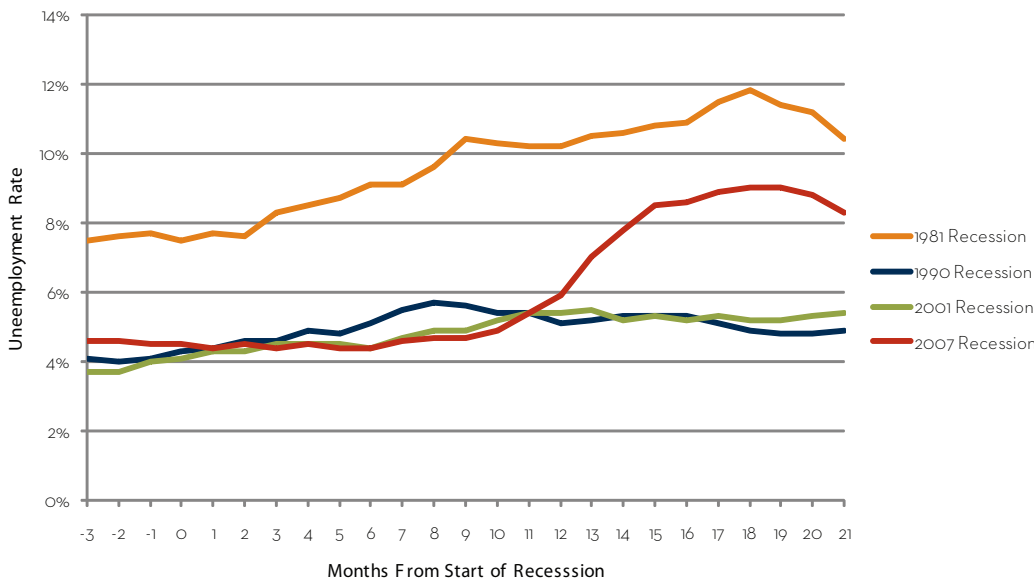
**PERCENT CHANGE IN MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, AND TOTAL JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO SEPTEMBER 2009**



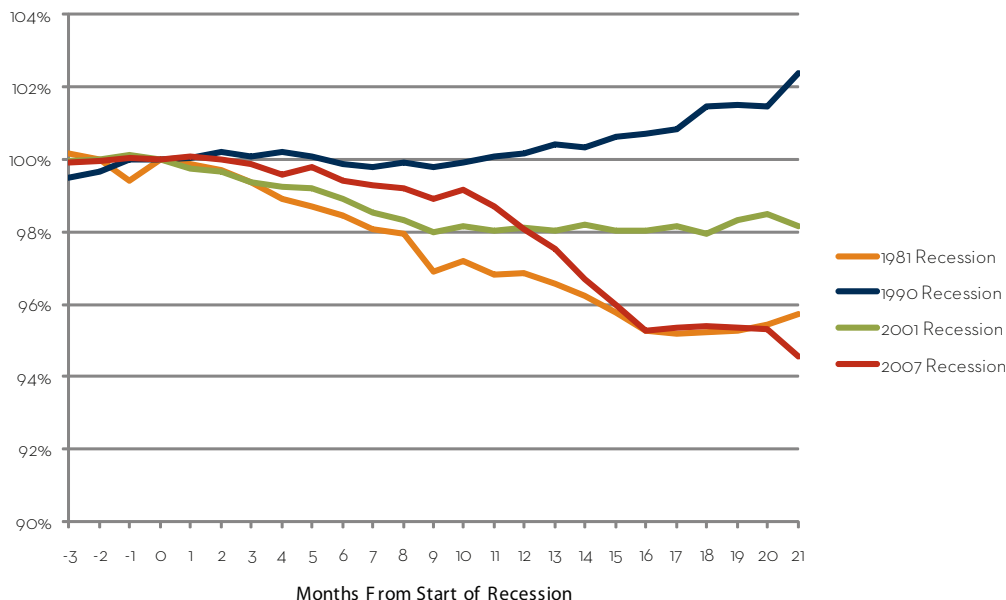
## JOB LOSS SURPASSES THAT OF 1981 RECESSION

This has been a long and difficult recession, especially when compared to the 1990 and 2001 recessions. Those past recessions officially lasted eight months each; the current recession is in its 21st month. More noteworthy, the current downturn has now surpassed the recession of the early 1980s with respect to percent of jobs lost (5.4 percent). Though Wisconsin's unemployment rate is still well below 1980s levels, 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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