

Commissioner Hope Andrade Interview for May 22, 2015

Pitts: Good day, I'm Debbie Pitts and I'm the Deputy Director of Communications for the Texas Workforce Commission and with me here today is the Texas Workforce Commission's Commissioner Representing Employers Hope Andrade. And we're here to talk about the latest labor market statistics for April.

Commissioner Andrade, you've had a chance to review those statistics, what do they tell you about the state of the workforce in Texas?

Andrade: Well I have good news, I'm proud to report that Texas added 1,200 in total nonagricultural employment for the month of April. Our state has enjoyed tremendous growth over the past 12 months. We've created 287,000 jobs since April of 2014. In fact, Texas added jobs for 53 straight months before we saw our first month of job losses in March of this year. So the fact that we've made a modest recover in April is great news for our state.

Pitts: How has the state's unemployment rate been affected?

Andrade: The unemployment rate has held steady at 4.2 percent in April. In fact, this is the lowest unemployment rate that Texas has seen in nearly eight years. The last time that our unemployment rate was this low was in July of 2007.

Pitts: Speaking of unemployment, there's been a lot in the news lately about layoffs in for the oil and gas industry and the impact that that has had in Texas. And we know that's very important. What can you tell us about that?

Andrade: We have seen some job losses in the Mining and Logging industry and those are most likely the result of downsizing in oil and gas in recent months, but seven of the eleven major industries actually added jobs in April. Fortunately the diversity of the state's economy and the strength of our Texas employers has helped to minimize the impact of those job losses.

Pitts: For those workers who have been impacted by those layoffs and the reductions in oil and gas and are out looking for work, what would you advise them to do?

Andrade: For those looking for work in any industry, there are definitely jobs available. What we keep hearing is that employers are continuing to look for workers. There are currently more than 268,000 job openings on our WorkInTexas.com website. I strongly encourage our job seekers to register online.

Pitts: [audio missing] With summer coming we know that there will be students out their looking for something to keep them busy this summer and they may be looking for summer jobs. What would you advise these students to do and what would you say to employers who may be considering hiring students for these seasonal jobs?

Andrade: I want to encourage our students to hit the pavement, visit WorkInTexas.com for the many job opportunities that are listed and to also start visiting the employers in their communities. Summer jobs

allow our students to gain valuable work experience so it helps them as they begin building their résumés and to show that they have valuable skills. For employers, I would highly encourage them to students for seasonal jobs. They will not only benefit from the work that our students contribute to their operations, they will also be helping to grow our workforce of the future.

Pitts: Thank you Commissioner Andrade. To find out more about the Texas Workforce Commission, please visit texasworkforce.org.