



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2021

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WEAK EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY, BUT COULD GOVERNOR ABBOTT'S REOPENING OF TEXAS BE A TURNING POINT?

(HOUSTON) The Houston area added a much weaker-than-average 6,900 jobs in February as the region continues struggling to regain the hundreds of thousands of jobs lost since the start of the COVID pandemic, according to numbers released this morning by Workforce Solutions.

With only four of the eleven industry sectors reporting growth last month, Parker Harvey, an economist with the regional workforce development agency said there's still a big hole to climb out of. "February a year ago we added nearly sixty thousand jobs, which was in line with what we expect to see. Then we got the rug pulled out from under us when oil prices crashed, which was followed quickly by the pandemic-driven recession," he said. The not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate rose to 8.4 percent, two tenths of a percent higher than January, and still well above both the Texas and U.S. unemployment rates.

Despite the head winds, Harvey said there are signs of hope, "A year ago, the benchmark price of oil was less than \$25 per barrel, it's now trading at around \$60. Vaccine distribution continues to ramp up and the Governor's decision in early March to re-open the state fully could spur additional confidence in employers to bring workers back from the sidelines."

Additional labor market information including the detailed December report can be found at wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment data for January on April 17, 2021.

Pent-up demand for recreation and entertainment has created plentiful summer job opportunities! Hundreds of positions are available, and Workforce Solutions can help teens and young adults find them quickly. Text #GetPaid2021 to 40691 to learn more. Standard messaging and data rates may apply.

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ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: Workforce Solutions is dedicated to keeping the Gulf Coast region a great place to do business, work, and live. Our employer-driven, people-focused approach elevates the economic and human potential of the region to attract and retain the best employers, afford everyone the dignity of a job, and remain indispensable to the global economy. As the public workforce system for 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston region, we work in tandem with

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the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network to maintain the state's largest job-match database - WorkInTexas.com.

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