



AGC of America

THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA

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**CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT JUMPS BY 58,000 IN FEBRUARY TO HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE 2008;
YEAR-OVER-YEAR GROWTH IS BROAD-BASED AND TOPS PRIVATE-SECTOR RATE**

Association Urges Educators, Public Officials at All Levels to Spread the Word about Industry's High Pay and Opportunities While Enhancing Career and Technical Education Funding and Programs

Construction employment increased by 58,000 jobs in February to the highest level since November 2008 with gains in both residential and nonresidential segments, according to an analysis of new government data by the Associated General Contractors of America. The association urged public officials to strengthen training and education programs to help students and current workers better prepare for careers in the high-paying construction field.

“These numbers match what many contractors have been telling the association—that demand remains strong for a variety of construction projects and that firms are still hiring, when they can find qualified workers,” said Ken Simonson, the association's chief economist. “The increase from January to February was the largest one-month gain since 2007, which probably reflected the exceptionally mild weather conditions in much of the nation in February. However, the year-over-year growth was similar to the industry’s employment growth rates since last spring, showing that the job gains in February were not solely weather-related.”

Construction employment totaled 6,881,000 in February, an increase of 58,000 from the upwardly revised January total and an increase of 219,000 or 3.3 percent from a year ago. The year-over-year growth rate was almost double the 1.8 percent rise in total nonfarm payroll employment, Simonson noted. Furthermore, average hourly earnings in construction amounted to \$28.48 or 9.2 percent more than the average for the overall private sector, he said.

Residential construction—comprising residential building and specialty trade contractors—added 18,900 jobs in February and 136,200, or 5.3 percent, compared to a year ago. Nonresidential construction (building, specialty trades, and heavy and civil engineering construction) employment increased by 38,500 employees in February and 82,600 employees, or 2.0 percent, over 12 months.

Association officials noted that continuing growth in construction depends on having an adequate supply of new workers to replace those who retire or leave the industry for other reasons. The association [urged](#) lawmakers and government officials to expand and fund employment and training programs to equip students and workers with the skills needed to become productive construction employees.

“Average pay in construction is 9 percent higher than in the private sector as a whole, and opportunities for advancement are plentiful,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “But we need educators and government officials at all levels to revitalize and better fund programs to prepare the next generation of construction craft workers and make students aware of the career opportunities.”

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