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Five metros hit highest job levels in a decade

The Business Journals by G. Scott Thomas

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Recovery is more than a dream in Texas and Pittsburgh. It's a fact of life.

Only five of the nation's 100 major metropolitan areas are currently at their highest employment levels in a decade, according to an On Numbers analysis of [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) data.

Four of these high-flying metros are in Texas: Austin, El Paso, Houston and McAllen-Edinburg. The fifth is Pittsburgh.

On Numbers took the official job figures for October 2011 (the latest numbers available from the bureau) and compared them to previous Octobers dating back to 2001.

The following database shows each metro's current level of employment, along with the changes from its best and worst performances of the past decade.

The five metros noted are at the top of the best side of the ledger. They've posted changes of 0 percent, indicating that their current job numbers are their best since 2001. Detroit ranks last among the 100 major markets, currently sitting 16.6 percent below its best employment total of the decade.

The other side of the database indicates how far each market has risen from its worst employment total of the 10-year period.

McAllen-Edinburg is No. 1. Its total of 226,400 jobs in October 2011 is 38.4 percent above its worst reading since 2001.

At the bottom of the list are the seven major markets that are presently at their worst employment levels of the decade: Albany, N.Y.; Birmingham; Harrisburg, Pa.; Palm Bay-Melbourne, Fla.; Philadelphia; Sacramento; and Virginia Beach-Norfolk.

CHANGE IN METROPOLITAN EMPLOYMENT (2001-2011)

Metro area	Nonfarm jobs (Oct. 2011)	Nonfarm jobs (best, Oct. 2001-11)	Change from best to Oct. 2011	Rank ▲	Nonfarm jobs (worst, Oct. 2001-11)	Change from worst to Oct. 2011	Rank
Austin	786,200	786,200	0.00%	1	656,300	19.79%	3
El Paso, Texas	283,300	283,300	0.00%	1	253,900	11.58%	13
Houston	2,628,500	2,628,500	0.00%	1	2,271,400	15.72%	6
McAllen-Edinburg, Texas	226,400	226,400	0.00%	1	163,600	38.39%	1
Pittsburgh	1,161,300	1,161,300	0.00%	1	1,124,800	3.25%	43
San Antonio	851,100	854,300	-0.38%	6	750,500	13.40%	7
Washington	2,994,300	3,007,100	-0.43%	7	2,724,500	9.90%	17
Worcester, Mass.	249,800	251,600	-0.72%	8	241,000	3.65%	41
Madison, Wis.	350,200	353,100	-0.82%	9	329,800	6.19%	30
Oklahoma City	576,600	581,400	-0.83%	10	534,900	7.80%	25

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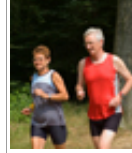
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