

## JOBS CONTINUE TO SLIDE, UNEMPLOYMENT UP

Wisconsin's job market slipped again in December, losing some 15,200 jobs from November to December 2009. Since the recession's start in December 2007, the state has lost 176,700 jobs – 6 percent of the pre-recession job base. As shown in Figure 1, the heaviest losses to date occurred between October 2008 and April 2009, followed by a leveling off between April and August 2009. Job loss has picked up speed again, with over 40,000 jobs lost in the last four months.

Wisconsin's unemployment rate jumped to 8.7 percent in December 2009, up 0.5 percentage points from November and nearly twice its pre-recession level (4.5 percent in December 2007). Wisconsin's unemployment rate had been declining steadily between a June/July peak (9.0 percent) and November 2009, despite sustained job loss during this time. Given recent consistent job loss, unemployment levels may continue to climb in months to come. (Table 1, Figure 3 on back page.)

Wisconsin's male workers have borne the brunt of job loss this recession, not surprising given their concentration in industries that have been hardest hit (i.e. manufacturing and construction, see below). In 2007 Q4, average unemployment rates for Wisconsin women (4.4 percent) and men (4.7 percent) were roughly equal. By 2009 Q4, the gender gap had widened considerably, with average unemployment rates in Wisconsin rising to 7.2 percent for women and 9.5 percent for men.

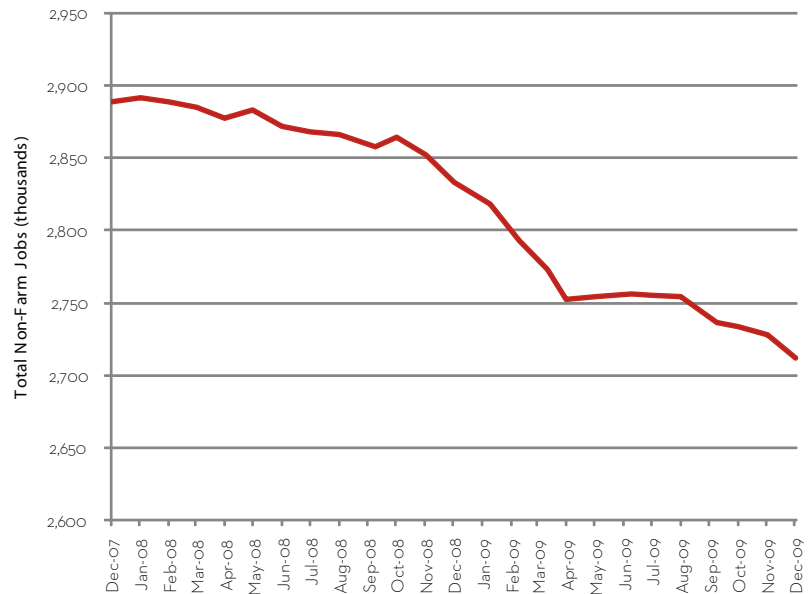
## MANUFACTURING DIPS, CONSTRUCTION PLUMMETS

Wisconsin lost 1,200 manufacturing jobs between November and December. Despite this loss, manufacturing jobs have held relatively steady since May 2009, a positive sign that this important industry might be stabilizing. Still, Wisconsin's manufacturing sector has 63,200 fewer jobs than when the recession started, representing an almost 13 percent loss within this sector and accounting for more than one-third of Wisconsin's total job loss.

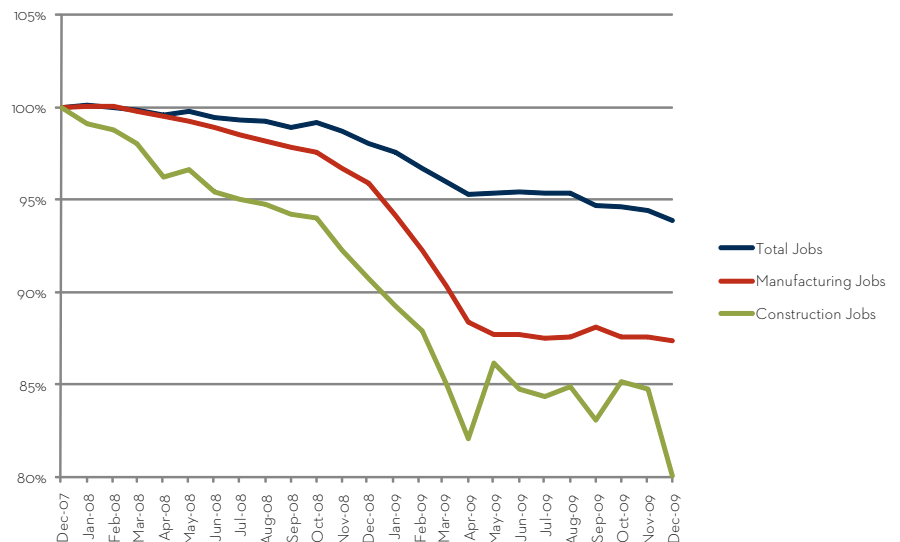
**Table 1**  
CHANGES IN UNEMPLOYMENT AND NUMBER OF JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO DECEMBER 2009

	<i>December 2007</i>	<i>December 2009</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
Unemployment	4.5%	8.7%	4.2	
All jobs	2,889,000	2,712,300	-176,700	-6.1%
Manufacturing jobs	500,000	436,800	-63,200	-12.6%
Construction jobs	123,800	99,100	-24,700	-20.0%

**Figure 1**  
TOTAL JOB LOSS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO DECEMBER 2009



**Figure 2**  
PERCENT CHANGE IN MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, AND TOTAL JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO DECEMBER 2009

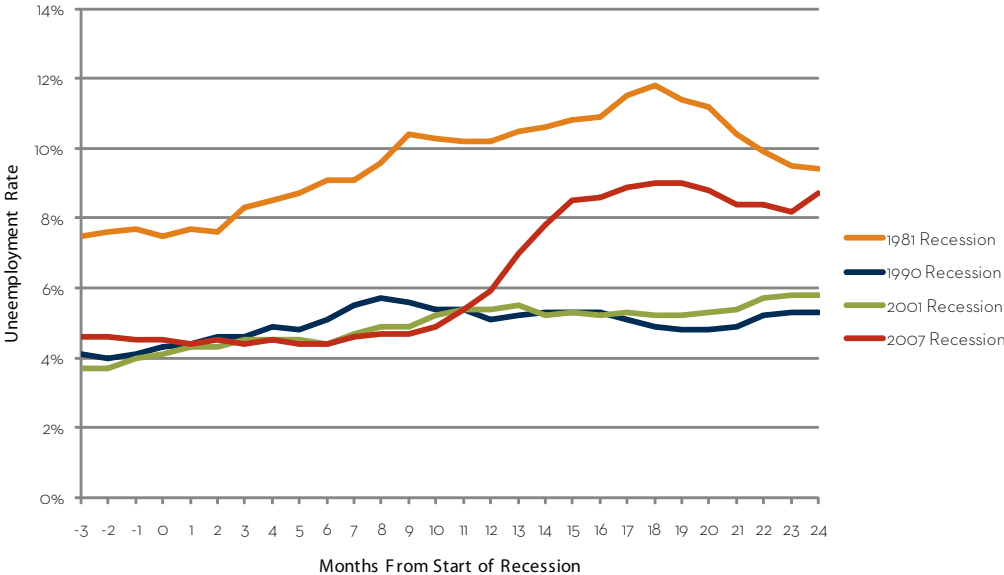


The construction sector lost another 5,800 jobs between November and December, bringing the total number of construction jobs to 99,100, its lowest (seasonally adjusted) level since February 1994. The construction industry has seen its job numbers shrink dramatically over the course of the recession, with jobs down 20 percent (24,700 jobs) since December 2007. (Table 1, Figure 2)

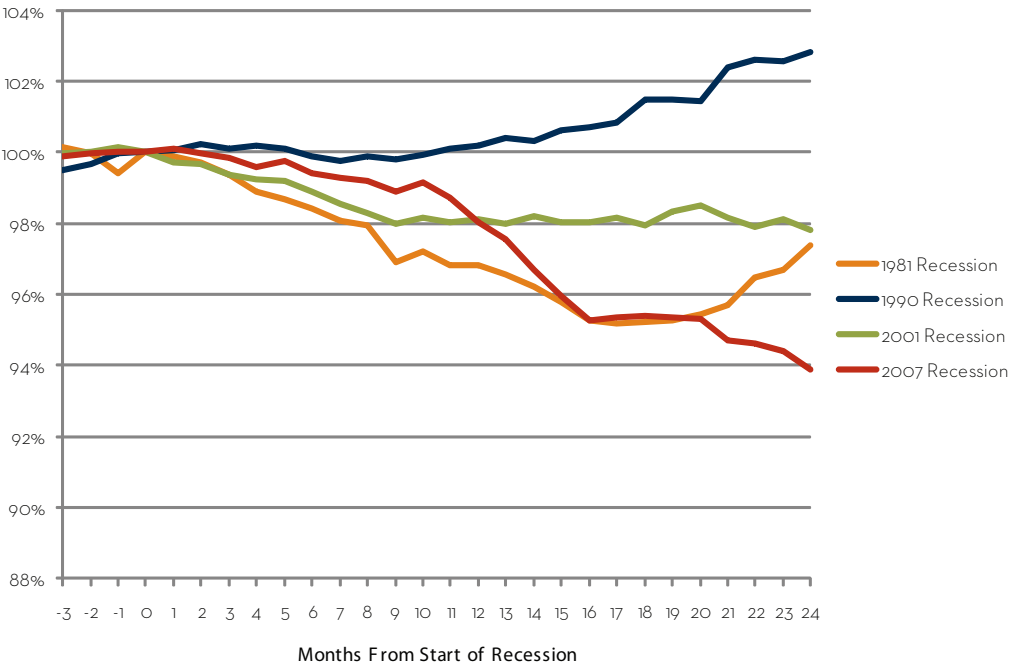
**JOB LOSS OUTPACES PAST RECESSIONS**

The current recession has just hit the two-year mark, and while there are some positive signs of GDP growth in recent quarters, that growth is clearly not yet generating gains in the job market. Indeed the severity of this recession stands out in comparison to the three most recent downturns of 2001, 1990, and 1981. In terms of total jobs lost – now 6.1 percent – this recession is substantially worse than the very difficult recession of 1981. We have lost more than 175,000 jobs, and we have yet to post labor market gains. (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).

