

Minerals industry shields parts of Wyo from recession

## Job loss worst in 21 years

By MEAD GRUVER - Associated Press writer | Posted: Sunday, November 1, 2009 12:00 am |

CHEYENNE -- Another grim economic statistic for Wyoming: For the first time in 21 years, the state lost jobs and statewide payroll shrank from one year to the next.

The Wyoming Department of Employment on Friday released numbers that show the state lost about 3,000 jobs -- 1.1 percent of the total -- from the first quarter of 2008 to the same period this year.

Fourteen of the 23 counties shed jobs, and statewide payroll declined by roughly \$36 million.

"At the statewide level, it is unusual to see employment decrease like this," state economist David Bullard said.

Judging by the jobless rate, Wyoming's job market has only gotten worse since the first quarter. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose from 3.9 percent in February to 6.9 percent in September, although that was much better than the nearly 10 percent national rate.

Hardest hit between the first quarters of 2008 and '09 were Carbon and Lincoln counties, which together lost nearly 1,800 jobs. Many were jobs involving new pipelines and other gas-related construction, Bullard said.

Teton County lost more than 1,100 jobs, including about 500 in lodging and food service.

Laramie County lost 453 jobs, but payroll there increased by \$2.3 million. Job losses in areas including construction, manufacturing and retail trade were partly offset by gains in local government, including schools and hospitals.

Wyoming's minerals industry continued to shield parts of Wyoming from the worst of the recession.

Campbell County added more than 300 jobs in mining and about 1,000 jobs overall, an increase of 3.6 percent compared with the first quarter of 2008. Sublette County gained 350 jobs in the minerals industry -- including oil and gas -- out of a total of 534 new jobs.