
City of Abilene, Kansas

2009 Labor Market Survey

Prepared and Submitted by:
The Community Development Department
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Purpose

In prior years, the City of Abilene has surveyed local major employers to collect data on number of employees, benefits offered, wages and job/housing balance. In order to improve on the information reported herein, the 2009 labor market survey was sent to over three-hundred businesses, non-profits, governments and other employers in the local economy. Recognizing the sensitive nature of some of the data, when appropriate the numbers are reported in the aggregate. The survey is limited in scope and it is suggested that this data be corroborated and compared with other data sources. Future surveys will be refined to provide a clearer picture of the Abilene labor market. The survey form is attached to this report along with detailed data. For existing and prospective businesses this survey may provide guidance for planning workforce investments and hiring activities.

Surveys were distributed to 380 businesses and eighty-eight (88) businesses responded for a response rate of 23.2%. This is lower than previous survey response rates while the number of surveys distributed was up significantly. Many of the entities that were sent surveys were very small businesses and home-based businesses that may not have staff other than the owner. Staff suspects that many of these entities either did not consider the owner an employee or the entity may no longer be in businesses. It should be noted that some of the areas significant employers, MIDCO Plastics, Abrasive Blast, banks and restaurants did not respond to the survey.

Employment

Exhibit 1 shows that there were 16 employers who reported having 20 or more full time employees. Of these employers 4 are public entities, 3 are manufacturers and 6 are retailers. Russell Stover is the largest overall employer in the community with 545 employees, which is a significant decrease from the previous year. However, Russell Stover pulls from a regional labor pool. Of their employees only 27.3% (149) reside in the Abilene zip code. Russell Stover imports employees from neighboring communities most notably 182 employees (33.4%) from Salina and 95 employees (17.4%) from Junction City. Duckwall-ALCO is the largest employer of Abilene residents with 304 (65.1%) employees living in the Abilene zip code. Duckwall-ALCO operates three facilities in Abilene: the corporate headquarters, primary warehouse and retail store.

There has appeared to be a significant decrease in employees given that the 10 largest employers saw an decrease of employees from 2,162 in 2008 to 1,895 in 2009 - a 12.4% decrease. The civilian workforce grew by 53 job seekers while the total number of people employed dropped from 10,127 to 10,038 (**Exhibits 2 & 3**). This reflects the growth in unemployment rate from 3.8% (2008) to 5.1% (2009), which was the highest unemployment experienced since 1996.

Exhibit 1: Employers With At Least 20 Employees Reported

Number	Company	Business Type	FT	PT
1	Russell Stover Candies	Manufacturing	545	0
2	Duckwall Alco Stores	Retail/Warehousing	456	11
3	Memorial Health Systems	Service	215	77
4	USD #435	Government	167	168
5	Dickinson County	Government	129	2
6	Great Plains Manufacturing	Manufacturing	122	0
7	Abilene Machine	Retail	118	3
8	City of Abilene	Government	60	15
9	Green Ford Sales	Retail	42	11
10	Holm Automotive Center	Retail	41	3
11	DS & O Rural Electric Cooperative	Utility	38	4
12	West Plaza Country Mart	Retail	35	136
13	Eisenhower Presidential Library & Museum	Museum	31	5
14	ADM Milling	Manufacturing	23	0
15	Don's Tire	Retail/Service	22	3
16	De Bruce Grain	Agriculture	20	0

Source: Community Development Department

Exhibit 2: Dickinson County Unemployment Rate (1976 to 2009)

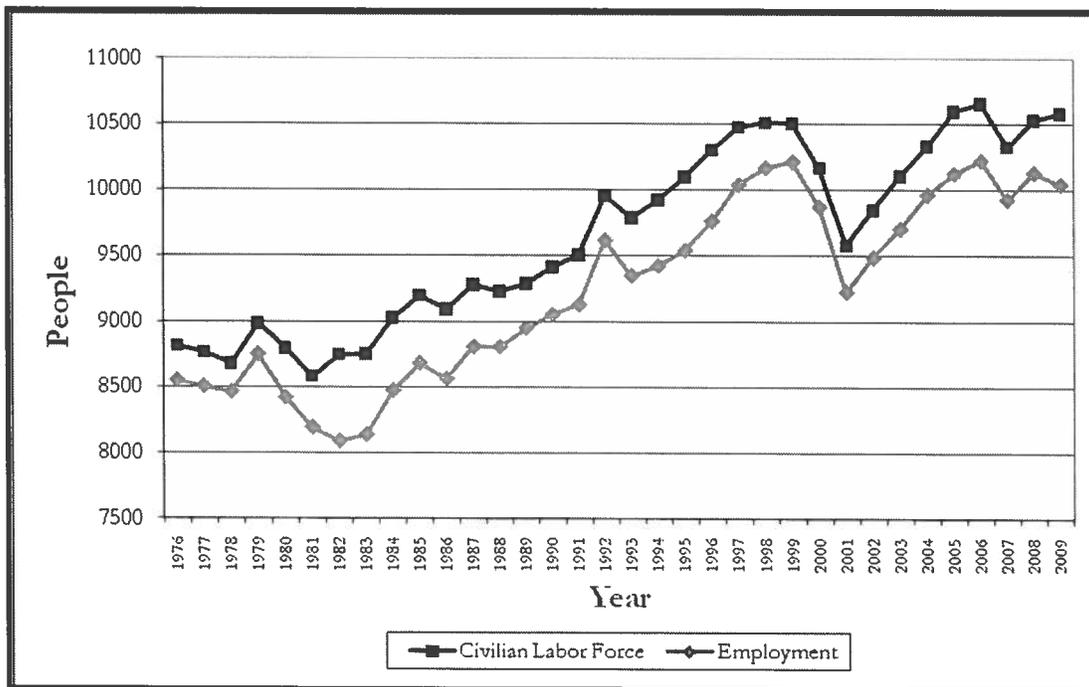
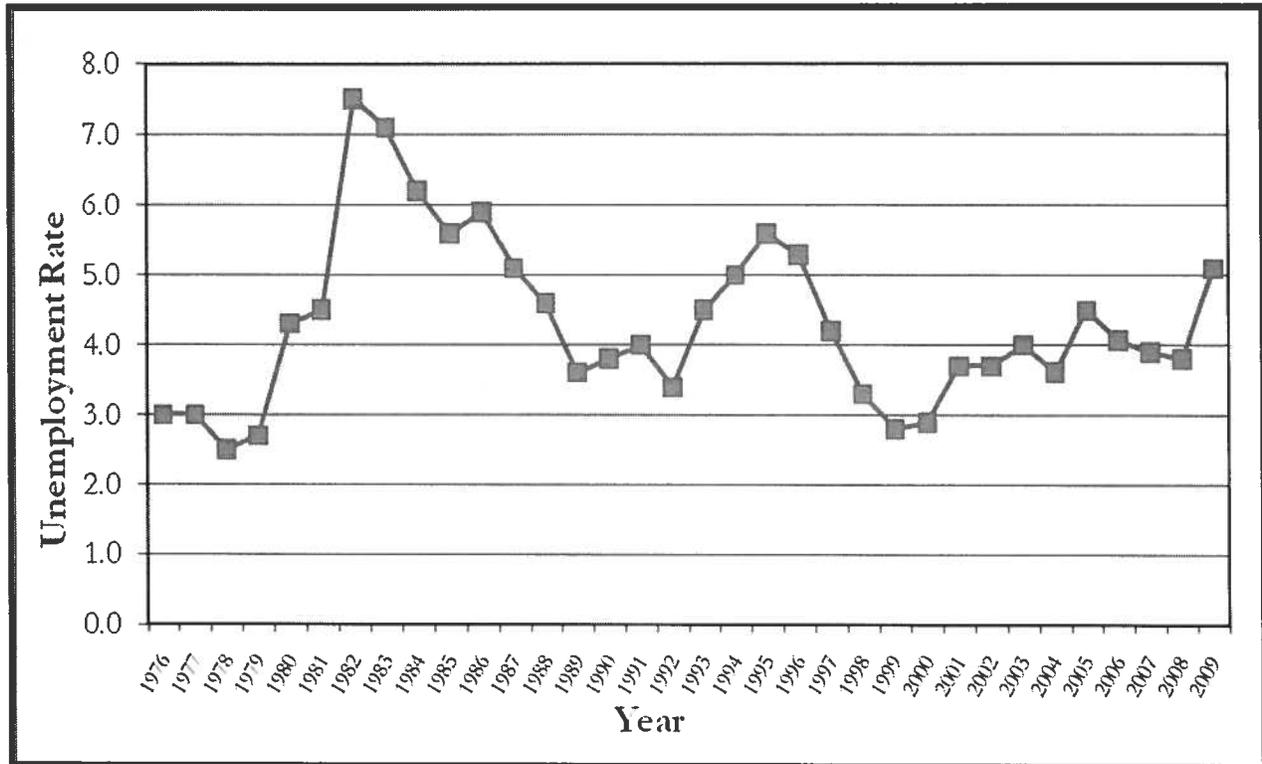


Exhibit 3: Dickinson County Workforce (1976 to 2009)



Residency

Almost 63.8% of the reported employees live within the Abilene zip code (**Exhibit 4**). The most frequently cited barrier to employees living in Abilene is the lack of affordable housing.

Exhibit 4: Residency By Zip Code

Zip	Post Office	Total	Percent
67410	Abilene	1,968	63.8%
67467	Salina	324	10.5%
67416	Junction City	140	4.5%
67010	Solomon	132	4.3%
67442	Enterprise	107	3.5%
67016	Chapman	87	2.8%
67423	Herington	62	2.0%
67425	Hope	53	1.7%
66838	Manhattan	19	0.6%

Source: Community Development Department

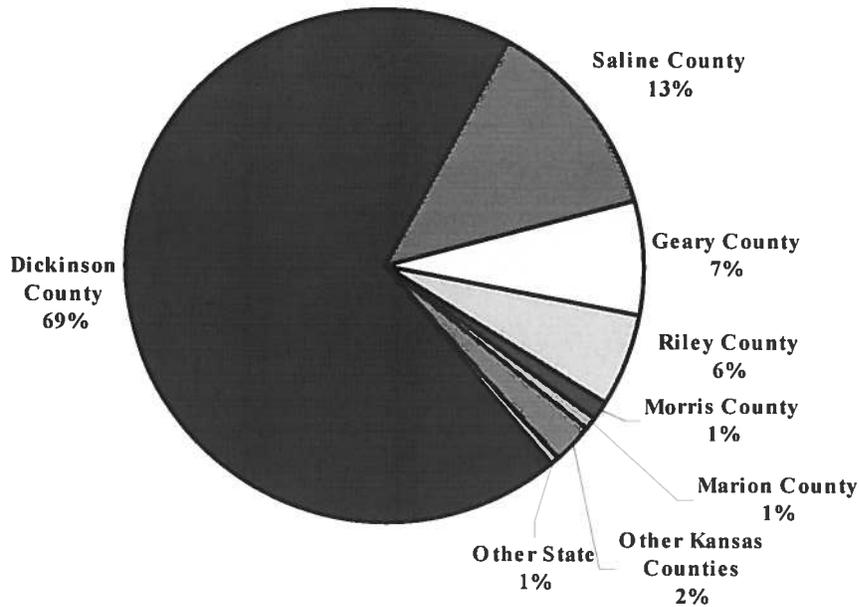
Exhibit 5 and **Exhibit 6** show the place of work for Dickinson County residents. Similar to the data presented in Exhibit 2, the number of Dickinson County residents who work in Dickinson County is just less than 70%. Almost 13% (1,214) of Dickinson County employees go to Saline County for work. Geary County and Riley County employment collectively account for another 13% of resident work places.

Exhibit 5: Dickinson County Resident Work Place – Table

Place of Work	Number	Percent
Dickinson County	6,671	69.3%
Saline County	1,214	12.6%
Geary County	691	7.2%
Riley County	573	6.0%
Morris County	101	1.0%
Marion County	76	0.8%
Other Kansas Counties	235	2.4%
Other State	65	0.7%
Total	9,626	100.0%

Source: Kansas Department of Labor; based on 2000 U.S. Census

Exhibit 6: Dickinson County Resident Work Place – Graph



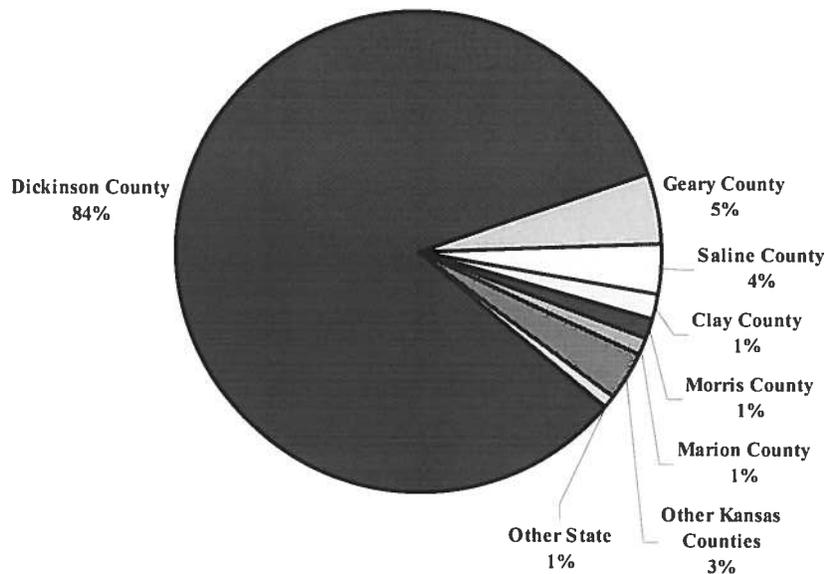
Dickinson County also imports employees from other counties. Over 83% of those employed in Dickinson County live in Dickinson County (**Exhibits 7 & 8**). An additional 8.3% of those employed in Dickinson County are from Geary (4.7%) and Saline (3.6%) Counties.

Exhibit 7: Residency of Dickinson County Workers - Table

Place of Residency	Number	Percent
Dickinson County	6,671	83.5%
Geary County	376	4.7%
Saline County	285	3.6%
Clay County	116	1.5%
Morris County	113	1.4%
Marion County	105	1.3%
Other Kansas Counties	253	3.2%
Other State	69	0.9%
Total	7,988	100.0%

Source: Kansas Department of Labor; based on 2000 U.S. Census

Exhibit 8: Residency of Dickinson County Workers - Graph



Dickinson County exports a net 1,627 employees to 6 counties in the region. Dickinson County exports a net 929 employees to Saline County. For every Saline County resident working in Dickinson County there are 4.3 Dickinson County residents working in Saline County. Although the overall employee count is lower than Salina, a higher export ratio exists with Riley County

(9.2). Dickinson County is a net importer of employee from the less populated counties in the area, however, the number of employees is relatively small compared to the I-70 counties.

Exhibit 9: Employee Export/Import Ratios

Neighboring County	Export	Import	Difference	Ratio
Saline County	1,214	285	929	4.3
Geary County	691	376	315	1.8
Riley County	573	62	511	9.2
Morris County	101	113	-12	0.9
Marion County	76	105	-29	0.7
Clay County	29	116	-87	0.3
Total	2,684	1,057	1,627	2.5

Wages & Benefits

The Kansas Department of Labor publishes median wages for various occupations.¹ For statistical analysis purposes, Dickinson County is within an area encompassing a 62-county region. The region roughly includes all of the counties west of Dickinson County except a couple of counties in the Wichita metropolitan area. The region median wages are lower than Abilene's for bookkeeper, janitorial, general labor, industrial electrician, production equipment operator, product assembly, warehouse, equipment maintenance and computer technicians. (**Exhibit 10**). The region median wages are higher than Abilene's for secretaries/receptionists, general office, sheet metal fabrication, industrial painter, welders, truck drivers, mechanics, salesmen and draftsman.

¹ Workforce Planning Guide & Wage Survey, 2005 edition; Kansas Department of Labor, available at http://www.dol.ks.gov/lmis/wagesurvey/ws2008/wagesurvey_2008.html.

Exhibit 10: Wages

Job Category	Unskilled		Skilled			DOL
	Hourly Wage		Hourly Wage		Abilene	Area 1
	Low	High	Low	High	Median	Median
Secretary/Reception	\$8.08	\$10.13	\$11.27	\$14.74	\$10.00	\$10.58
Bookkeeper	\$9.69	\$12.08	\$11.59	\$14.70	\$11.93	\$11.60
General Office	\$8.79	\$10.86	\$11.56	\$15.86	\$11.00	\$11.23
Janitorial	\$8.56	\$10.18	\$11.88	\$12.59	\$10.33	\$8.88
General Laborer	\$8.56	\$11.46	\$11.17	\$14.90	\$10.85	\$9.78
Sheet Metal Fabrication	\$11.00	\$11.50	\$13.22	\$16.41	\$12.00	\$20.63
Industrial Painter	\$7.25	\$11.00	\$10.84	\$15.32	\$11.34	\$14.32
Industrial Electrician	NR	NR	\$14.50	\$23.35	\$18.35	\$16.27
Production Equipment Operator	\$9.59	\$12.42	\$13.75	\$17.25	\$12.50	\$12.08
Production Assembly	\$9.22	\$12.51	\$10.89	\$13.77	\$11.33	\$9.02
Welders	\$11.75	\$13.75	\$11.89	\$16.04	\$12.59	\$12.66
Warehouse	\$10.00	\$13.50	\$10.42	\$12.53	\$11.00	\$9.78
Truck Driver	\$10.19	\$13.72	\$12.42	\$15.75	\$13.47	\$16.31
Mechanics	\$10.98	\$12.35	\$14.73	\$20.91	\$13.58	\$14.06
Equipment Maintenance	\$11.44	\$15.36	\$13.64	\$16.38	\$13.50	\$12.01
Salesman	\$10.00	\$13.00	\$11.04	\$18.75	\$12.00	\$16.77
Draftsman	\$8.63	\$10.50	\$12.67	\$16.71	\$11.50	\$17.37
Computer Technician or Operator	\$10.82	\$10.50	\$11.83	\$14.98	\$12.00	\$11.48

Source: Community Development Department & Kansas Department of Labor, 2009 and 2008

Abilene companies offer a wide array of benefits. **Exhibit 11** shows the percent of Abilene businesses that offer health insurance, sick leave, vacation leave and/or retirement plan. All of the responding employers provide or offer health insurance, retirement plans and vacation leave. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the responding employers offer sick leave.

Exhibit 11: Benefits

Benefit	Percent
Health Insurance	55.3%
Sick Leave	50.6%
Vacation Leave	71.8%
Retirement Plan	54.1%

Source: Community Development Department, 2009

Thirty-nine percent (38.8%) of the responding employers offer other benefits, including:

- Holiday Pay;
- Personal Leave;
- Bereavement Leave;
- Prescription Coverage;
- Dental Insurance;
- Vision Insurance;
- Disability Insurance;
- Life Insurance;
- Christmas Bonuses;
- Production Bonuses;
- Profit Sharing;
- Uniforms; and
- Merchandise Discounts.