

CBER-DETR Nevada Coincident and Leading Employment Indexes¹

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Nevada's Coincident Index Rises and the Leading Index Falls

The Nevada Coincident Employment Index measures the ups and downs of the Nevada economy, using an index of employment variables. The Nevada Leading Employment Index also measures the ups and downs of the Nevada economy, providing a signal about the future direction of the coincident index. The coincident index provides the benchmark series that defines the employment cycle or reference cycle in Nevada. The leading index then tracks the economy relative to that reference cycle. A good leading index will provide signals about the future path of the reference cycle.²

Figures 1 and 2 depict the coincident and leading indexes with data through February 2019. Figure 1 encompasses four recessions in employment, including the most recent Great Recession. The peak of the last employment cycle in Nevada occurred in March 2007. The coincident index then regressed steadily through October 2009, where it bottomed out. Figure 2 shows the leading index and its movements relative to the recessions in the Nevada employment cycle captured by the coincident index. For the most recent employment recession the leading index provided a clear signal by peaking in January 2006, fourteen months before the coincident index reached its peak, and bottoming out in May 2009, five months before the coincident index bottomed out.

The February release tells a consistent, positive story for the coincident index and a mixed story for the leading index on a year-over-year basis. For the coincident index, the unemployment rate (inverted), household employment, nonfarm employment, and the insured unemployment rate (inverted) all moved in a positive direction. For the leading index, initial claims for unemployment insurance (inverted), the short-duration unemployment rate (inverted), and construction employment all moved in a positive direction, while the real 10-year Treasury interest rate (inverted), commercial permits, and housing permits moved in a negative direction.

On a month-over-month basis, the coincident index tells a generally positive story while the leading index tell consistent negative story. That is, for the coincident index, household employment, the unemployment rate (inverted), and the insured unemployment rate (inverted) all moved

Figure 1. CBER-DETR Nevada Coincident Employment Index



Figure 2. CBER-DETR Nevada Leading Employment Index



in a positive direction while nonfarm employment moved in a negative direction. For the leading index, the short-duration unemployment rate (inverted), initial claims for unemployment insurance (inverted), commercial permits, housing permits, the real 10-year Treasury interest rate (inverted), and construction employment all moved in a negative direction. The fall in the leading index follows a big jump upward in this index in January.

Overall, the coincident and leading indexes rose on a year-over-year basis by 6.8 and 2.8 percent, respectively. The coincident index now lies 17.2 percent above its previous peak, whereas the leading index lies 5.9 percent below its previous peak. See Figures 1 and 2.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily express those of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas or the Nevada System of Higher Education.

¹ Source: Center for Business and Economic Research ([CBER], 702-895-3191) in the Lee Business School at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR). Developed by Stephen M. Miller (director of CBER and professor of economics, 702-895-3969) and Mustafa Gunaydin (former graduate student in economics). DETR provided a grant to support Mr. Gunaydin's research during the development of the indexes.

² All series are initially not seasonally adjusted and then seasonally adjusted using Census X12. In some instances, our seasonally adjusted series differ from the seasonally adjusted data reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Nevada Coincident Employment Index includes four employment measures – household employment, nonfarm employment, the unemployment rate (inverted, since an upward movement in the jobless rate is a “negative”), and the insured unemployment rate (inverted). The Nevada Leading Employment Index includes six employment related measures – initial claims for unemployment insurance (inverted), the real 10-year Treasury rate (inverted), housing permits, commercial permits, construction employment, and the short-duration unemployment rate (inverted). While not employment variables, housing and commercial permits, as well as the real 10-year Treasury rate, closely relate to construction activity and construction employment. All data are seasonally adjusted and come from DETR, CBER, and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED® data. The description of the construction method is posted at <http://cber.unlv.edu/nvindices.pdf>. Data availability restricts our coverage in the two indexes to monthly series beginning in January 1976. The data series for household employment, nonfarm employment, the unemployment rate, initial claims, and the real 10-year Treasury rate all begin in January 1976. Housing permits and the insured unemployment rate begin in January 1980 and March 1987, respectively. Commercial permits, construction employment, and the short-duration unemployment rate begin in January 1988, January 1990, and January 2001, respectively. Thus, the coincident index uses three series through March 1987, when we add the insured unemployment rate. The leading index begins with two series and adds housing permits in January 1980, commercial permits in January 1988, construction employment in January 1990, and finally, the short-duration unemployment rate in January 2001.