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The Employment Development Department's July 2009 Ventura County jobs report, released Friday, is depressing. From the household survey we see that the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate rose from June's 10.3 percent to 10.9 percent in July. However, Ventura County's July seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate usually increases in the summer, due to school closures.

Another way to assess the labor market is to review year-on-year comparisons of the job count. We see that Ventura County's July job count was down 4.8 percent or 15,100 jobs compared with July 2008. This is the worst jobs data since 1991.

Only one major sector did not lose jobs from last year, the Education/Healthcare sector. Three sectors experienced job-losses greater than 1,000 jobs. Those were Retail Trade, Finance/Insurance/Real Estate, and Leisure/Hospitality. Three sectors lost over 2,000 jobs: Construction, Manufacturing, and Professional/Business Services.

The lost jobs in the Professional/Business Services, down 2,800, are particularly worrisome. These are workers who might be able to afford a home in Ventura County, and they are workers whose industries might have a chance at remaining located in Ventura County.