

# Jobs Numbers Show Strength

By Joseph De Avila, Wall Street Journal

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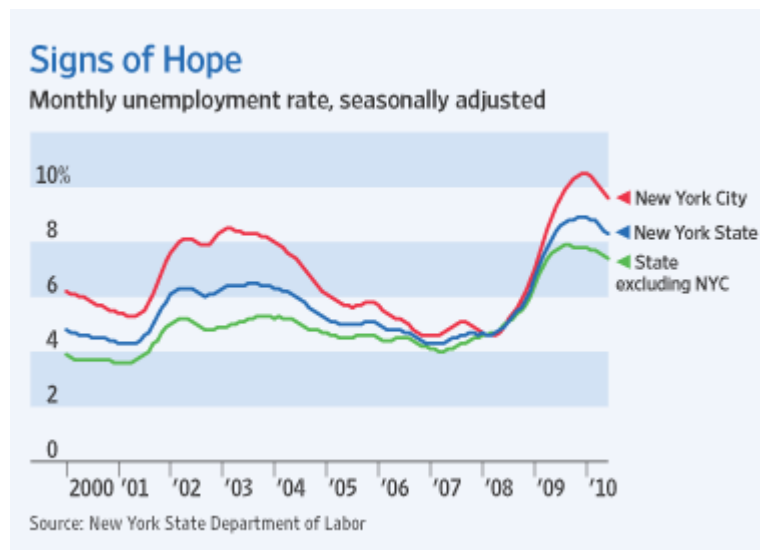
By JOSEPH DE AVILA

New York City employers' May hiring numbers offer evidence that a turnaround in the city's job market is under way.

The unemployment rate declined to 9.6% last month, compared to 9.8% in April and last year's high of 10.5%, the New York State Labor Department reported Thursday. The city's unemployment rate remained below the nation's figure, 9.7%.

The city's employment data mirrored regional trends. New York state's unemployment rate fell to 8.3%, from 8.4% in April. It's the state's lowest rate since April 2009. The state lost 9,500 private-sector jobs, the first drop in private employment for 2010.

The number of unemployed people in New York state dropped to 806,600 in May from 817,100 in the previous month, but it remains relatively high. About 511,400 New Yorkers collected unemployment.



New Jersey's unemployment rate declined to 9.7% in May from the April's 9.8%. Connecticut's unemployment rate also ticked down, to 8.9% in May from the previous month's 9%.

"We have had several good months. It's entirely possible that we will have a month that is a little weaker than average," said James Brown, an economist with the Labor Department. "But in general this has been a quick, strong turnaround."

New York City added 14,700 private-sector jobs last month, which is in line with the historical average for May, Mr. Brown said. It was city's fifth consecutive month of growth.

The professional services and employment services sectors added the most private jobs in May. Government jobs were also big gainers, but many of those were temporary Census workers.

After adjusting for seasonal changes, the city added 77,000 jobs in 2010's first five months, said James Parrott, chief economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute. "It's not a glowing report," Mr. Parrott said. "There is a continued private sector growth, but it was more moderate."

One growth business is the new Trump SoHo, which since opening in April has been adding workers in all areas, including in the restaurant, the front office and in engineering. "We have had better business demand since we opened the doors," said David Chase, general manager for the hotel. Trump SoHo has exceeded sales expectations by about 30%, he said.

In May, the hotel added 50 employees and by the end of July it expects to employ 425 people.

While the city continues to add jobs, many of the industries that were hiring many workers earlier this year, such as construction and restaurants, were among the biggest decliners in May. Growth also slowed in education and health and social services, Mr. Parrott said.