Employment trends in geoscience-related industries (April-September 2020)

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Current Employment Statistics dataset is used to examine monthly employment data for the primary industry sectors within which most geoscientists work. Since April 2020, monthly year-over-year employment levels were negative for nearly all geoscience-related industry sectors, with the exception of the oil and gas extraction, scientific research and development services, and federal government sectors, where year-over-year employment continued to be positive.

Year-over-year employment trends for many industries showed signs of rebounding from April’s declines in the months leading into August and September. As of September, two industries continued to show declining trends in year-over-year employment: oil and gas extraction and support activities for mining. Although year-over-year employment in the oil and gas extraction industry has remained positive during 2020, it declined from 6% in April to 2% in September. Year-over-year employment in the support activities for mining sector declined from -24% in April to -33% in August, thereafter stabilizing through September. The sharp increase in year-over-year employment in the federal government sector in August was due to the hiring of U.S. Census Bureau workers and not representative of geoscience employment trends within the federal sector. We will continue to report on the monthly employment situation in geoscience-related industries over the coming months as additional data becomes available.

We will continue to provide current snapshots on the impacts of COVID-19 on the geoscience enterprise throughout the year. For more information, and to participate in the study, please visit: www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/covid19

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