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From the Phoenix Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/print-edition/2015/09/11/phoenix-area-looking-move-from-back-office-to-view.html>

Cover Story: Phoenix area looking to move from the rear cubicle to an office with a view

🔑 **SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:** Sep 11, 2015, 3:00am MST

Six years after the end of the Great Recession, the Phoenix area still is not making a lot of headway in landing high-wage technology and financial jobs.

The **Phoenix Business Journal**, in coordination with its 42 sister papers nationwide, is publishing information this week about what types of jobs dominate each market, and what they pay.



The story the numbers tell about Phoenix seems to keep repeating: Low-wage jobs dominate the market, and even the high-wage jobs don't pay as much as in the other big markets.

It's a market that has continued to rely on growth without considering what it wants to grow into, experts say.

"Historically, we've had short-term planning," said Jim Rounds, economist at Elliott D. Pollack & Co. "We need to start looking five to 10 years in the future."

While the slow recovery from the recession helped refocus economic developers in terms of what kinds of jobs the region needs, it didn't do much to actually bring in those jobs.

The Phoenix metropolitan area posted the most growth in sales representative jobs, with a 33.7 percent increase in the number of local jobs from 2009 to 2014.

The jobs that represent the greatest portions of the workforce tend to be lower-wage construction

and service industry jobs.

Rounds said although the majority of employment growth has been in low-wage jobs, it is still an economic growth indicator because those positions typically precede the high-wage jobs.

As for the recovery, he said it's taking our economy longer than normal to bounce back.

"Normally we see this level of recovery in three to five years," Rounds said. "In this case, we are looking at closer to five to seven years."

Experts say one major reason the Valley is not adding high-wage jobs is a failure to target industries that would yield such jobs. To ignite growth, Rounds said, the state's economy must grow from within— which means not relying on migration to solve the region's issues.

"We're seeing a financial profile of retirees and people still upside down on their homes," he said. "What we can control is competitive tax policy and where the government can step in to help."

Chris Camacho, president and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, said the Valley and state need to keep doing things that have been helpful in the past in attracting and retaining businesses.

"We need to remain pro-business, have low taxes, low regulation and keep producing talent," he said.

Producing that talent will fall mostly to the state's three public universities and its handful of private colleges.

"We have smart, young people coming out of these institutions. We should leverage out of that," said economics professor Dennis Hoffman, director of the L. William Seidman Research Center at Arizona State University.

Rounds, Hoffman and Camacho all cited Gov. Doug Ducey's plan to market Arizona as a source of growth.

"I applaud the governor's leadership. We need brand strategy, and to have a leader and a plan," Camacho said. "Our over-reliance on growth has been the first to fall."

Some of the state's economic wounds have been self-inflicted. With national headlines focusing on Arizona's anti-immigration Senate Bill 1070, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio and Senate Bill 1062, which would have allowed business owners to discriminate based on religious beliefs, it's not hard to imagine the state struggling to bring in new companies and jobs.

"The need for marketing exists when demand has slowed and the audience has eroded," Hoffman said.

Without being dependent on the natural growth the Phoenix economy enjoyed before the recession, he said marketing the state will bring in new companies and jobs.

Hoffman said his main concern is ensuring people on the other side of the country see more of Arizona than "Sheriff Joe and haboob videos."

Cassidy Trowbridge



Editorial Intern
Phoenix Business Journal

