

# Michigan's Economy Leaped Forward in '63, Says MESC

Michigan at the end of 1963 has shown a year of solid improvement. Paced by a record-breaking automobile industry, the state's economy has moved upward in most of its major segments according to the Michigan Employment Security Commission. Continuing the upturn which began in September 1962, its economy and its labor market remained in high gear throughout 1963, with employment in each successive month topping the figure for the comparable month in 1962.

During the year, employment varied between a low of 2,610,800 in February and a high of 2,742,500 in December, passing the 2,700,000 mark in October and remaining above that figure for the entire fourth quarter.

Beginning the year at 2,625,800, employment declined seasonally during the first quarter but from then on the improvement was continuous except for the automobile changeover months of July and August.

Non-farm employment averaged 2,666,000 in 1963, the highest level in six years. The monthly average for 1963 was 54,200 above the average for 1962 and 123,000 above the comparable figure for 1961.

Experts have long said that two good automobile years "back to back" could not occur. It did, in 1963. Several times 1963 passenger car production came close to breaking all-time records and in October that all-time record was broken.

Production of 939,793 passenger cars and trucks in October set the all-time record of 904,377 set in 1956.

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in March of 1965. Production and sales of trucks have also had one of the best years in history. Among the major segments of Michigan's labor market, however, the year's improvement was greatest in manufacturing, where employment went up 24,200 or 2.6 per cent. Private non-manufacturing employment also improved considerably, rising 22,400 or 2.1 per cent during the year. Government employment went up 12,400 or 0.3 per cent.

MOTOR VEHICLE and equipment heads the list of growth industries, rising by 20,400 or 6.4 per cent during the year. The service industry was second on the list with a gain in employment of 12,600, construction third with 11,800 and local government fourth with an increase of 10,600.

Other smaller gains occurred in the retail industries, electrical machinery, textile mill products and apparel, printing, finance, real estate and insurance, mining, miscellaneous non-durables and federal and state government.

The Michigan Employment Security Commission, whose staff is 1,400, says the state's economy is thriving, lost 300 employees in this 12 months. Losses occurred in all of the remaining industries but none of them was large in comparison with the size of the industry.

IN COMPARISON with other years 1963 was particularly free from large scale labor-management disputes. The monthly average of labor disputes throughout the year was 1,400. This compares with 2,800 in 1962 and 9,500 in 1961. This freedom from labor troubles was a factor contributing to the continued improvement in employment throughout the year.

ALTHOUGH the reduction in unemployment was substantial during the year, it fell somewhat short of matching the employment gains. Ever since 1956 the state's labor force has been declining steadily. Between 1956 and 1962 the labor force declined more than 235,000. Most important of the several reasons for this decline has been out-migration and shrinkage of the labor force caused by the low birthrates in several years prior to World War II.

IN 1963, HOWEVER, the trend was reversed and the labor force began to move upward to a monthly average of 10,800. Some of the young defectors returned into the labor force have completed their education and better job opportunities have resulted in some net in-migration. This accounts for the fact that unemployment did not decline as much as the increase in employment.

UNEMPLOYMENT, TOO, continued to show improvement throughout the year, varying from a high of 216,000 in August to a low of 101,000 in November. The monthly average of unemployment for 1963 was 154,000, the lowest in

the entire current series of unemployment data which began in 1956. By comparison the average unemployment in 1962 was 192,400 and in 1961 it was 228,700.

The 1963 resurgence of manufacturing activity in the state resulted in bettering the 5 per cent unemployment ratio four times during the year. In May the rate was 4.7 per cent and in September 3.9 per cent and in October 3.6 per cent and in November 3.9 per cent.

This amazing showing created excitement in economic circles. For Michigan's unemployment ratio to fall below 4 per cent was a novelty considering that the 3.5 per cent in October was the lowest rate of unemployment in the last eight years.

THE CLOSING months of 1963 have provided a springboard for a favorable Michigan labor market in 1964. After breaking the precedent of two good automobile years "back to back," there are very strong indications of a third good automobile year.

Output of passenger cars and retail deliveries are both maintained very high rates and inventories came favorably with the closing months of 1962. If predictions of a good automobile year materialize, manufacturing employment in Michigan should retain all of the gains achieved in the past two years and possibly edge slightly closer to the million mark.

Construction employment in 1964 should benefit from the many projects now moving from the planning to the actual work stage and a moderate anticipated upturn in residential building.

CONTINUED expansion of suburban shopping centers probably will expand employment in retail trade. The continued growth of activity in the finance, insurance and real estate fields is expected to yield additional new jobs.

TRAINING HAS been conducted in such varied skills as practical nurse, dental lab technician, sales person, meat cutter, stenographer, diesel mechanic, screw machine operator and welder. Programs ranged in length from two to 62 weeks.

NO training project is started unless the MESC first determines there is a need for training in a particular skill and a reasonable assurance of employment for the trainee. The MESC then places the trainees in jobs after training. Over 80 per cent of those trained have been placed in jobs.

MANY of those who received jobs and new skills from these programs were former welfare

# Survey Shows \$22,956,000 Spent for Food in B'ham

(Special to the Centric)

NEW YORK—Financially, the past year was a good one for most residents of Birmingham and they spent their money accordingly. As a result, retail merchants had a banner year. Nearly all of them were able to report substantial gains over 1962.

Sales of cars, food, furniture, clothing, drugs and other items were at a high level. The facts and figures on the local spending performance come from a nationwide survey made by the Standard Rate and Data Service. It shows how much was spent

for various commodities by people in each section of the country.

IN BIRMINGHAM, food was in a top position. The outlay in this direction amounted to \$22,956,000. It covered expenditures in grocery stores, butcher shops, supermarkets, bakeries and in other stores that sell food for home preparation and consumption.

Not included was the money spent in dining and drinking places. The take-home food bill represented 23 cents out of every dollar spent during the year in all

of the local retail stores.

If the \$22,956,000 food tab were divided equally among all of the local households, each one would have a bill of \$723 for the year.

ELSEWHERE in the United States food bills averaged \$1,051 per household and, in the East North Central States, \$1,095. Consumer buying strength was in evidence in other retail lines, also, the SRDS report shows. Gross sales of automobiles, motorcycles, trailers, boats and other automotive equipment came to \$26,484,000 in the year. It was

equivalent to 26 per cent of all retail spending.

Department stores and variety stores carrying general merchandise recorded a total of \$1,947,000, equal to 2 cents of the retail dollar.

APPAREL SHOPS, including those selling hats, shoes and clothing, accounted for \$13,588,000, or 13 cents. Stores selling home furnishings, furniture and household equipment had a \$4,980,000 year. They got 5 cents of the dollar. Another good year appears to be in the making for the nation's retailers. Consumers, most of them armed with more money than they had in 1962, thanks partly to the tax cut, are continuing to spend freely.



## The Y Cites Its Volunteers

Nearly 100 years of volunteer service was accumulated by the 55 Birmingham YMCA workers who were cited recently at an honors banquet. Bill Beck (left), Y executive secretary, looks on as Mrs. John Cowen, chairman of the Y Board, gives Bill Pratt a

medal in recognition of his nine years of volunteer swimming instruction he has given to the Y. Ready to congratulate Pratt, who led the volunteers in years of service, is C. Gerald Wood (right), general secretary of the Metropolitan Detroit YMCA.

clients. About 20 per cent of all the trainees were under 22 years of age. Unemployed youth form one of the largest elements of the total unemployment problem.

For the future the MESC is placing greater emphasis on training projects for those who lack prior work experience, such as youth, and those who because of illiteracy are unable to get or hold jobs.

The new bills recently passed by Congress will facilitate the expansion of training in these areas, and it is expected that by July 1 over 10,000 people will have received a new start in life.

Weight control doesn't always apply to proper diet; sometimes it's a question of controlling your car properly. The Institute for Safer Living reminds us that the average automobile weighs around 3,500 pounds. Out of control, this much weight can be a terrible destructive force.

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