\*If you have any suggestions or content you would like to see, shoot us an email. Thanks!\*

### **Our Mission:**

VORKFORCESOLUTIONS

The mission of the South Plains workforce system is to meet the needs of the region's employers for a highly skilled workforce by educating and preparing workers.

# **November Newsletter**

# Lubbock MSA and Regional Unemployment

Lubbock's MSA unemployment rate for October was 2.6%, down 0.3% from September. Amarillo and Midland MSA's recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 2.4% followed by College Station-Bryan MSA of 2.5%. Austin-Round Rock and Lubbock MSA's were at 2.6%.

\*Employment estimates released by TWC are produced in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. All estimates are

## **Upcoming Events:**

South Plains Career Expo Lubbock Memorial Civic Center ~October 23, 2018~

South Plains Job Fair Lubbock Memorial Civic Center -April 2018--October 2018-

> Hiring Red, White & You Veterans Job Fair -November 2018-

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Click image to view full report: Lubbock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

### (Image located on page 6)



Click image to view full report: South Plains Regional Workforce Development Area

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Click image to view full report: Lubbock LAUS County-by-County Unemployment Rates



What are oil and gas companies doing to embrace robotics and automation and what type of workers do they need to execute these missions?

Robotics, by definition, encompasses several different types of engineering that work to develop robots, which are then used to substitute for humans in a myriad of work environments. Robotics engineering isn't new; however, it has gained steam in recent years in the oil and gas industry as companies work toward safer, more efficient means of operations.



The right path forward is finding value and once you find value in automation and big data, then you get an efficient and costeffective way of playing in that space.

Frank Springett, Director of Engineering for Research and Development and NOVOS, National Oilwell Varco



"In the drilling space, most people look at robotics as 'how do we move tubulars from Point A to Point B?" said Frank Springett, National Oilwell Varco's (NOV) director of engineering for research and development and NOVOS. "NOV's been doing robotics in that sense for more than 50 years ... looking at just the mechanization and the machine – it's been happening for quite a while."

The company's latest foray into automated sequencing has been through NOVOS, a process automation platform that manages rig equipment to execute drilling programs. NOV has been working on NOVOS for five years.

"NOVOS is taking it to the next level with process automation," Springett told Rigzone. "Process automation is not necessarily looking at 'how do I move pipe from Point A to Point B?' It's 'how are we manufacturing a wellbore?"

With how efficient drilling operations are today, the importance of automation is becoming more prevalent, Springett said. He maintains that it is still a huge part of NOV's strategy.

"With the downturn, we have to be very selective of what we invest in," he said. "We see process automation has far greater reach into impact to customer operations than just one specific machine. Automation is a pretty big and important part of our strategy right now."

Still, Springett warns that automation and big data analytics for automation and big data analytics' sake is bad. You have to find the value.

"That's been a big focus for us," he said. "Our entire process for anything we're going to do data analytics on is to first find the value. What's the cost to the customer and how can we impact that? The right path forward is finding value and once you find value in automation and big data, then you get an efficient and cost-effective way of playing in that space."

#### What's Needed of the Workforce

The move toward robotics and automation has undoubtedly changed the skills companies are looking for in workers. But industry leaders maintain that they are not looking to replace workers, per se.

"We're not looking for robots to replace people. What we're looking for is to free up some of the routine tasks and automate them to get a safer environment," Smith said. "The skills of our workforce will have to upgrade a little, but it frees them up to absorb a lot of the other things we're doing."

Smith said skillsets include design and development of hardware and software over a robotics system, field operation and maintenance, troubleshooting, use of electrical controls and electric motors, to name a few. Dr. Eric van Oort, a professor in the Hildebrand Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering at University of Texas, is also the director of RAPID (Rig Automation & Performance Improvement in Drilling), a consortium of engineering students and researchers whose goal is to bring advanced automation technologies to the oil and gas industry. Van Oort spent more than 20 years working with Shell Oil Company before becoming a professor in 2012.

"Robotics gets a lot of interest from our students; they love this stuff!" van Oort told Rigzone. "We are at a watershed moment in the progressive adoption of automation and big data analytics and techniques in the

upstream industry. It's moving at an accelerated pace and operators are figuring out that they can have significant savings through these technologies."

He said industry roles such as roughnecks and roustabouts will be affected by automation and robotics. "Full automation with no people on the rig floor – you'll see that more and more. There'll be less people screwing pipes together," said van Oort. "It would be silly to think that pool of people would not be affected."

On the other hand, he said, it creates new subject areas for robotics, particularly data analytics and controls system engineers.

"Engineers are going to need to have skills in data analytics, writing control algorithms and control systems that make automated machinery work," van Oort said. "They'll be a shift to higher-level jobs, away from working at the rig site to sophisticated data analysis and control systems engineering."

It's engineers with these skills and abilities that will be in high demand.

"These are the engineers who will come fresh out of college with six-figure salaries. These will be the individual's companies will compete for, said van Oort. "Companies are actually calling me now and asking if I have people with these kinds of skills because those are the workers they want."

# Texas Adds 256,100 Jobs Over the Past Year

State unemployment rate falls to record low 3.9 percent

AUSTIN – The Texas economy added 71,500 seasonally adjusted jobs in October. Annual employment growth for Texas was 2.6% in October, marking 90 consecutive months of annual growth. Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 3.9 percent, setting a record for the lowest unemployment rate recorded in four decades.

Read the full press release.

Sources:

**Texas Labor Market Review** 

http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedPublications/2138\_TLMR-Current\_Edition.pdf

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