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#### **Our Mission:**

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.

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## **October Newsletter**

### **Lubbock MSA and Regional Unemployment**

Lubbock's MSA unemployment rate for October 2018 is 2.7%, down 0.3% from September's 3.0%. Midland MSA recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 2.1%, followed by Amarillo and Odessa MSA's at 2.5%. Austin-Round Rock, College Station-Bryan and Lubbock MSA's recorded the third lowest at 2.7% for October.

\*Employment estimates released by TWC are produced in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. All estimates are subject to revision. To access this and more employment data, visit [tracer2.com](http://tracer2.com).

### **Upcoming Events in 2019:**

**- South Plains Job Fairs -**  
- April 2019 -  
- October 2019 -


**- South Plains Career Expo -**  
~ October 2019 ~  
- 8:00am - 12:00pm -


**Hiring Red, White & You**  
Veterans Job Fair


- November 2019 -  
-10:00am - 2:00pm-

The TWC Lubbock MSA and South Plains WDA Economic Profiles provide a breakdown of employment by industry. Click on the images to the right to access the profiles.

(Image located on page 3)

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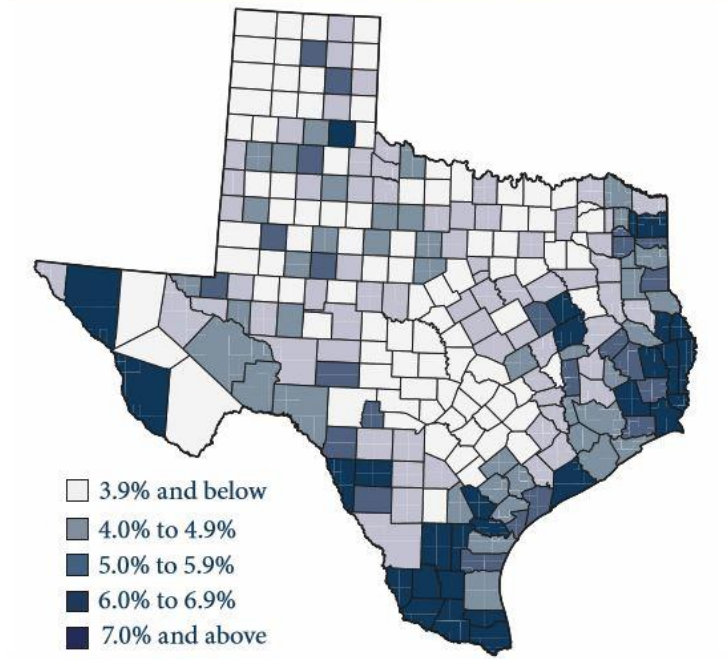
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS				
Metro Areas (Seasonally Adjusted)				
Metro Areas	Apr 2017	Monthly Change	Annual Change	Annual % Change
Abilene MSA	68,100	100	700	1.0
Amarillo MSA	121,300	-1,100	1,200	1.0
Austin-Round Rock MSA	1,021,900	-400	29,300	3.0
Beaumont-Port Arthur MSA	164,000	900	-800	-0.5
Brownsville-Harlingen MSA	143,000	100	2,700	1.9
College Station-Bryan MSA	115,900	-400	2,500	2.2
Corpus Christi MSA	192,400	-100	1,400	0.7
Dallas-FW-Arlington MSA	3,582,400	-18,000	99,600	2.9
Dallas-Plano-Irving MD	2,555,000	-15,600	76,600	3.1
Fort Worth-Arlington MD	1,027,800	-3,200	22,600	2.2
El Paso MSA	317,000	400	9,200	3.0
Houston MSA	3,044,300	13,700	44,000	1.5
Killeen-Temple MSA	146,600	500	3,600	2.5
Laredo MSA	104,000	100	2,300	2.3
Longview MSA	96,700	300	-600	-0.6
Lubbock MSA	146,300	-1,000	800	0.5
McAllen MSA	256,700	600	4,900	1.9
Midland MSA	87,800	-100	100	0.1
Odessa MSA	69,800	100	-200	-0.3
San Angelo MSA	48,600	400	-500	-1.0
San Antonio MSA	1,035,600	3,800	24,800	2.5
Sherman-Denison MSA	47,000	100	1,000	2.2
Texarkana MSA	60,200	-500	-800	-1.3
Tyler MSA	106,200	400	2,300	2.2
Victoria MSA	42,000	200	-300	-0.7
Waco MSA	120,400	600	2,200	1.9
Wichita Falls MSA	58,000	400	-100	-0.2

**Highlights**  
(MSA industry data are not seasonally adjusted)

- Seventeen of 26 areas grew in April for a combined increase of 22,700 jobs. Nineteen areas grew over the year, while seven areas contracted.
- The Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA accounted for more than half of all area employment gains over the month. The MSA increased its annual growth rate to 1.5 percent.
- The San Angelo MSA grew fastest in percentage terms with a 0.8 percent April expansion. Per not seasonally adjusted industry data, Retail Trade and Other Services each added 200 jobs over the month, while Government was down 200 positions.
- The Dallas-Plano-Irving MD led in actual and percentage job growth annually. Professional and Business Services led all major industries with 21,000 positions gained, followed by Leisure and Hospitality with 10,900 jobs added.
- The Beaumont-PA and the Texarkana MSAs lost the most jobs annually. The loss of 2,100 jobs in Retail was primarily responsible for the contraction in the Beaumont-PA MSA, while employment losses in Texarkana were spread across industries.



## County Unemployment Rates



(Image located on page 6)

Click image to  
view full report:

Lubbock Metropolitan  
Statistical Area (MSA)



Click image to  
view full report:

South Plains Regional  
Workforce Development Area

Area	May 17				April 17				May 16			
	Area	Unemp	Rate	Change	Area	Unemp	Rate	Change	Area	Unemp	Rate	Change
State	100,000,000	1,000,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000,000	1,000,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000,000	1,000,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Lubbock MSA	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
County	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
City	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Non-Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Urban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Suburban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Rural Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Non-Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Urban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Suburban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Rural Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Non-Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Urban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Suburban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Rural Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Non-Metropolitan Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Urban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Suburban Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%
Rural Area	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%	100,000	1,000	1.0%	-0.1%

Click image to  
view full report:

Lubbock LAUS  
County-by-County  
Unemployment Rates

## CONNECTING WITH COTTON



Photo by [Artie Limmer](#)

Valerie and Doug Hlavaty on their cotton farm near Lubbock, Texas.

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When Valerie Jones met Doug Hlavaty while they were students at Texas Tech University, she knew very little about cotton. Sure, her father had picked cotton as a child, but by the time Valerie was born, he owned a heating and air-conditioning business and had left the fields behind. The fashion merchandising major soon fell for Doug, who had recently decided he wanted to join his dad on the family's cotton farm south of Lubbock after graduation. Now 40 years into their marriage, the couple is combining her love of fashion with his passion for growing cotton in a venture that could prove good for the entire industry — homegrown cotton clothing and textiles that tell a story.

### T-Shirt Idea Takes Hold

Valerie still recalls the first time she read about a fellow farming family that



turned its cotton into T-shirts. “I was totally intrigued,” she says. No wonder. She had worked in corporate advertising for the Hemphill-Wells department stores for many years. Later, she taught marketing at Lubbock’s Cooper High School for 10 years, before becoming an instructor in retail management at Texas Tech University, a position she still holds, while also assisting Doug with the farm.

For more than three years, Valerie researched the field-to-fashion idea, reading everything about cotton manufacturing that she could find and talking to those already involved in the process. Someone advised her to visit with the seed and chemical companies that Hlavaty Farms did business with, to gauge their interest and work out logistics.



Photo by Dylan Lowery

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“At the time, we were growing a lot of FiberMax,” Doug says. “So, I called my guy at Bayer to find out who we needed to talk to about such a thing. It turned out I’d already met him through a ‘Walk to Emmaus’ retreat.”

The Hlavatys and the Bayer representative began chatting about the prospect of following Bayer FiberMax seed all the way through to its final form. Before long, they were proceeding with a plan, visiting a textile mill and sewing companies in South Carolina. Together, they created 2,500 Texas Tech University rally towels for FiberMax from sustainably grown e3-certified FiberMax 1830.

## Taking on Synthetics

Still, the wheels continued to turn. When Valerie went looking for Texas Tech–branded cotton polo shirts to wear to the university’s annual Celebrate Cotton football game and discovered there were none, she recognized an opportunity. “Under Armour is just dominating that market,” she says, referring to a manufacturer that relies on synthetic fabrics, “even here in the South Plains where we grow 3.5 million acres of cotton — and it’s some of the highest quality in the U.S.”

Doug agrees. “No doubt,” he says, extolling the strength and softness of their e3 cotton. “We’re inching closer and closer to Pima in quality.”

*“What they are doing has the potential to diversify their business in the future and create marketing opportunities for other cotton producers, as well.”*

– Jason Gandy, Capital Farm Credit

And yet, most of the cotton they work so hard to grow — and for which they are paid 68 cents per pound — ends up in products overseas instead of in local stores. This is despite ballooning consumer interest in locally grown products. While the prospect of producing an American-made shirt that consumers could connect all the way back to the farm interested Doug and Valerie, they weren’t 100 percent sold on the idea until their grown children endorsed it.

“What really got us excited,” Valerie says, “is our children got excited. And not only are they millennials — the target market — but if this grows into a successful business, it’s something they could take over one day.”

The Hlavatys emphasize that they weren’t motivated by business possibilities, however, but by pride in their product and the opportunity to advocate for the cotton industry.

## Homestead Cotton Co. Is Born

Once a plan was formulated, Doug and Valerie, along with their children Brint and Shay, formed Homestead Cotton Co. as a sister company to Hlavaty Farms. Son Blake and his wife, Ashley, who live in Allen, Texas, serve as advisors. Next, they started working directly with Craig Industries Inc. and White Plains

Knit Fabrics Inc. in South Carolina to develop premium textiles and clothing for custom orders.

This past summer, they designed and sold their first batch of shirts to a major corporation that will use them as a promotional tool. “They’ll give them to their employees and customers to showcase the high-quality product made from the cotton in this area,” says Doug.



Photo by [Artie Limmer](#)

The T-shirts above also are made from the family’s own cotton.

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## Long-Range Goal: Sell Retail

At the present time, the Hlavatys are focused on marketing their shirts and towels to allied industry partners, such as seed companies, chemical companies and equipment suppliers, but they hope that someday their cotton products will be offered by local and online retailers.

“I love going into retail stores,” Valerie says. “So, I’ve been stopping in, visiting with my friends and learning more about particular brands that they think might be interested in us.”

And while it’s exciting to have a big order to fill and numerous prospects, Doug and Valerie are most excited about the potential to share the story of cotton with a wide audience.

“The American farmer is just so hardworking and passionate, and such an amazing steward of God’s land,” she says. “We want the world to know that. I think we’ve progressed pretty far in a year and a half,” Valerie adds.

– *Katrina Huffstutler*

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## **Texas Adds 32,300 Jobs Over the Month of October**

*State unemployment rate is 3.7 percent in October*

AUSTIN – Texas has added 32,300 seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs in October. The State has experienced 28 consecutive months of employment growth.

Read the full [press release](#).

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### **Sources:**

**Texas Labor Market Review**

[http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedPublications/2138\\_TLMR-Current\\_Edition.pdf](http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedPublications/2138_TLMR-Current_Edition.pdf)

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