

News Release

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Employment Engine Continues to Rev, Even in Tight Labor Market Conditions

**Comment on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation Report
Gad Levanon, Chief Economist, North America, The Conference Board**

Employment increased by 313,000 jobs in February after increasing by 239,000 jobs in January.

In the past couple of months, a gap has opened between softening hard data and still very strong confidence measures, which made it hard to assess the state of the economy. Today's employment numbers strengthen the view that the US economy is still on a strong growth trajectory. These numbers also make it clear that employment growth did significantly accelerate in response to the improvement in the overall economy during 2017. Employment growth was especially strong in the goods producing sector, where 254,000 jobs were added in the past three months, more than in any other 3-month period since 1984.

Despite the strong employment growth, the unemployment rate did not decline, but again because of happy news as the labor force participation rate rose by 0.3 percent. With employment growing more than twice the rate needed to keep the unemployment rate stable, further decline in the unemployment rate is all but guaranteed.

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