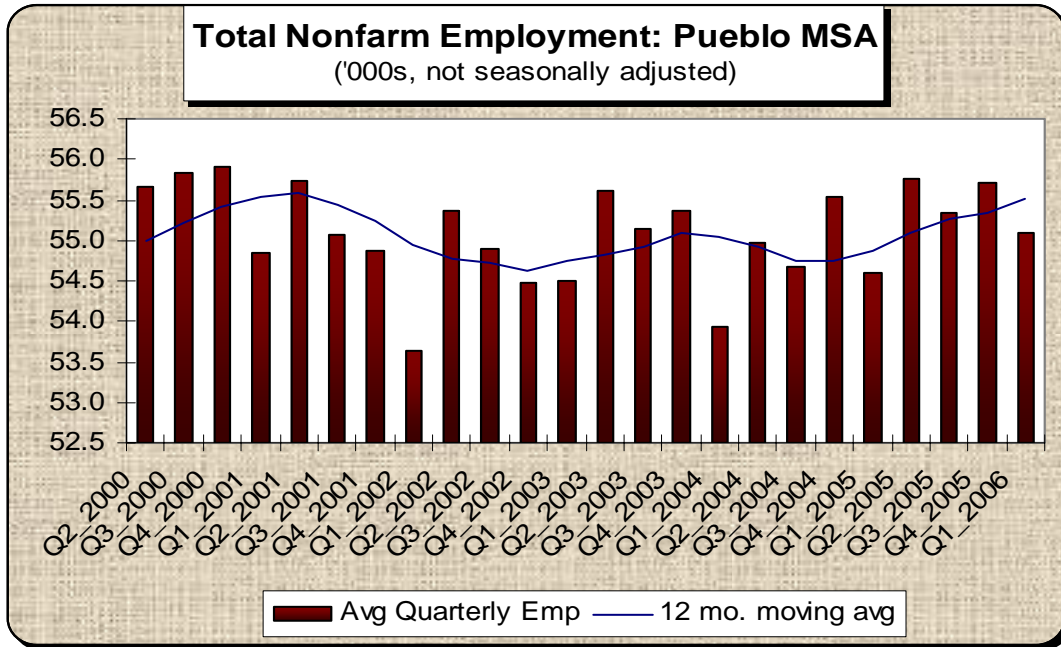


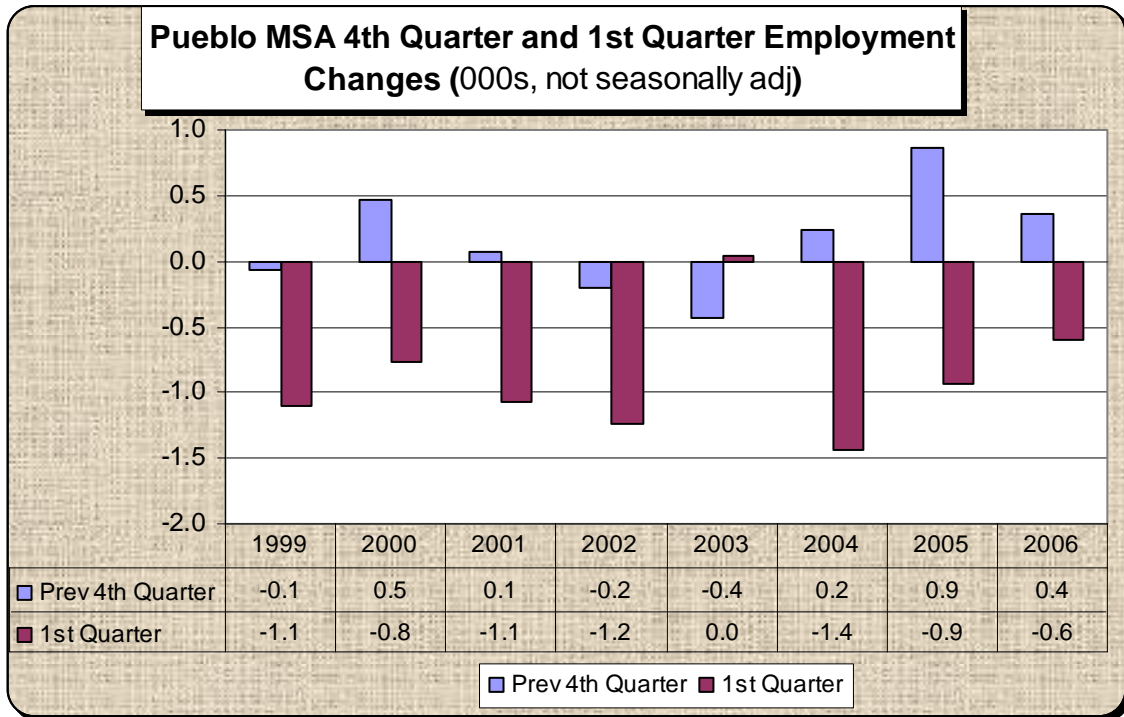
Pueblo MSA Preliminary Estimates: By Chris Akers

Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment: -600 (1.1%) (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

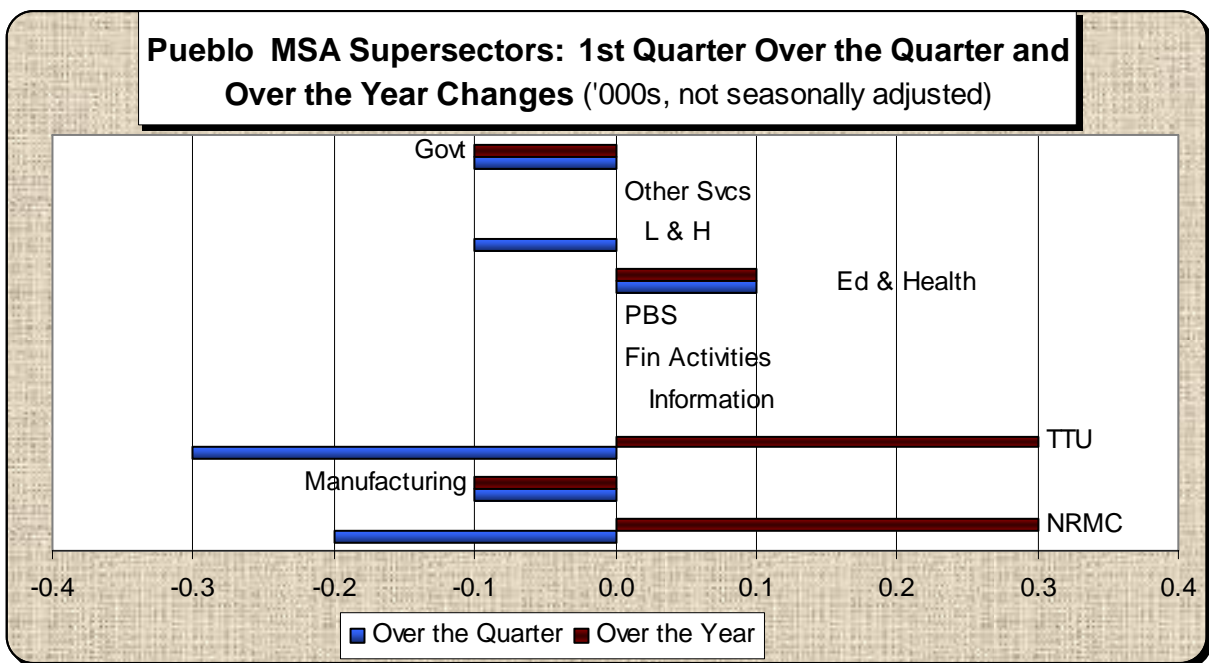


Employment in the Pueblo MSA fell by 600 in the 1st quarter, bringing average quarterly total nonfarm employment to 55,100. Of the six smaller MSA’s in Colorado, Pueblo experienced the weakest quarterly employment decline in magnitude and percentage terms. This decrease was 14.3% less than the expected (ten-year average) contraction of 700. The drop from the 4th quarter 2005 to the 1st quarter 2006 was due to normal seasonal hiring patterns. The 4th quarter holiday build up in 2005 added 400 workers to the payrolls, double the anticipated amount.

Five of the ten supersectors in Pueblo experienced over the quarter declines. Trade, transportation, & utilities (TTU) and natural resources, mining & construction recorded the most job losses, shedding 300 and 200, respectively. Education & health services, with an increase of 100, was the only supersector to add jobs over the quarter, while four supersectors remained unchanged from the 4th quarter.

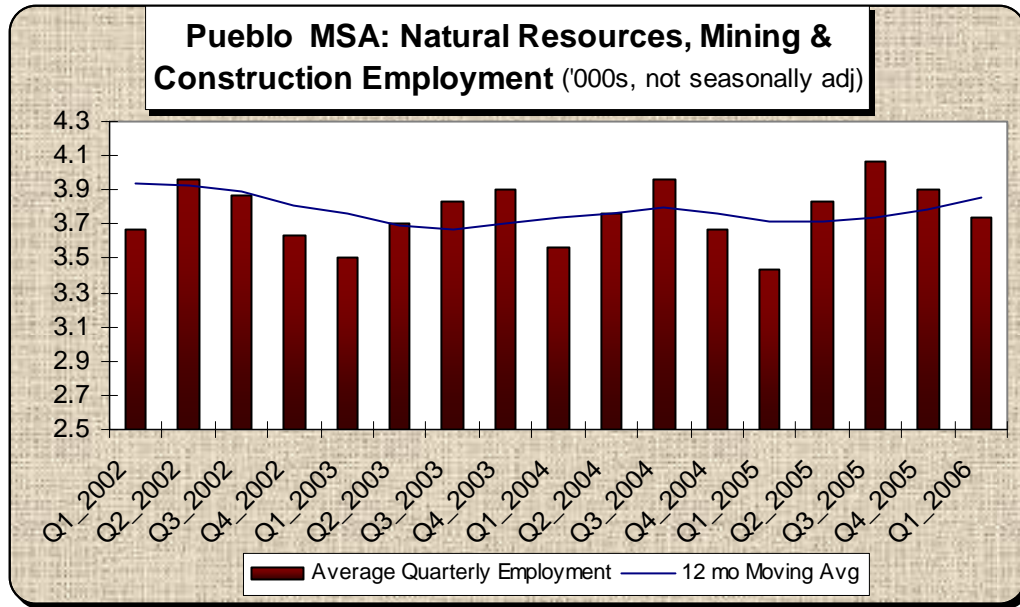


Payrolls are only 500 (0.9%) higher than 1st quarter 2005. Five industries in Pueblo - financial activities, information, professional & business services, leisure & hospitality and other services - were unchanged over the year. Manufacturing and government both shed 100 positions. Natural resources, mining & construction and TTU experienced the greatest over the year job growth of the supersectors, adding 300 jobs apiece, and education & health services inched up 100. The 0.9% annual expansion in Pueblo is the slowest of the state's seven MSAs. Although this is three times stronger than last quarter, it is 18.2% weaker than the average over the year growth experienced in 2005.

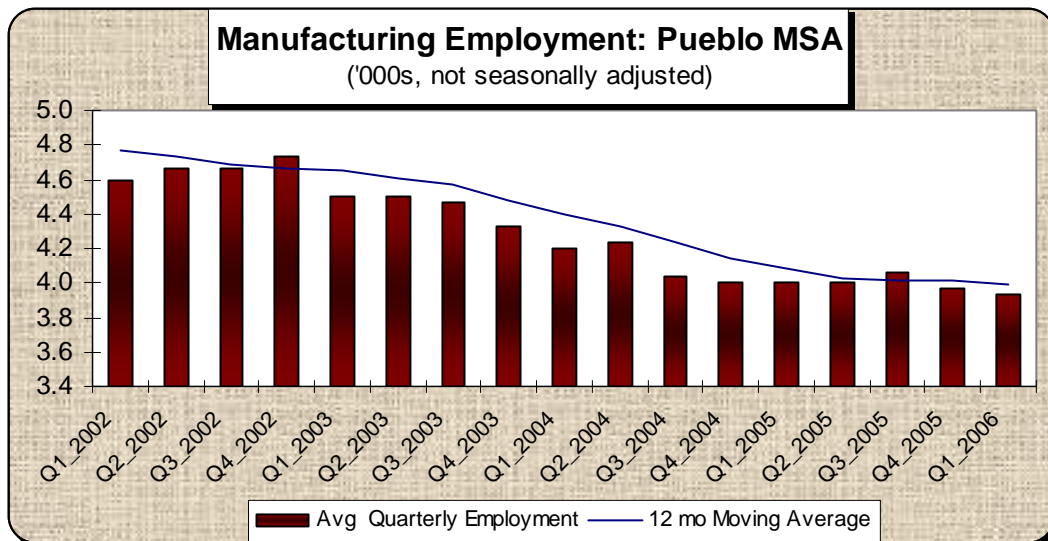


Natural Resources, Mining & Construction: -200 (5.1%)

Natural resources, mining & construction shed 200 jobs in the 1st quarter. This is on par with this quarter's average decline, attributed to decreased construction employment due to cold weather. Employment in natural resources, mining & construction has grown by 300 (8.8%) on an annual basis. This matches TTU in magnitude of expansion, but is the strongest percentage year over year growth in the MSA. Additionally it mirrors the strongest annual growth seen in this supersector since the end of 1999. The 12-month average employment in this supersector hit a trough at 3,700 during the first three quarters of 2005. Since then, it has been trended up 100 per quarter to the current 1st quarter average of 3,900.

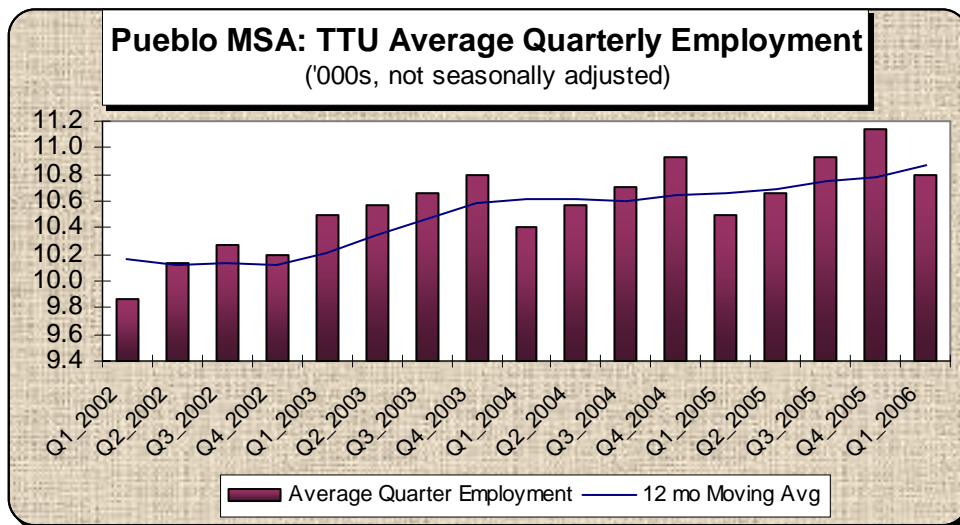


Manufacturing: -100 (2.5%)

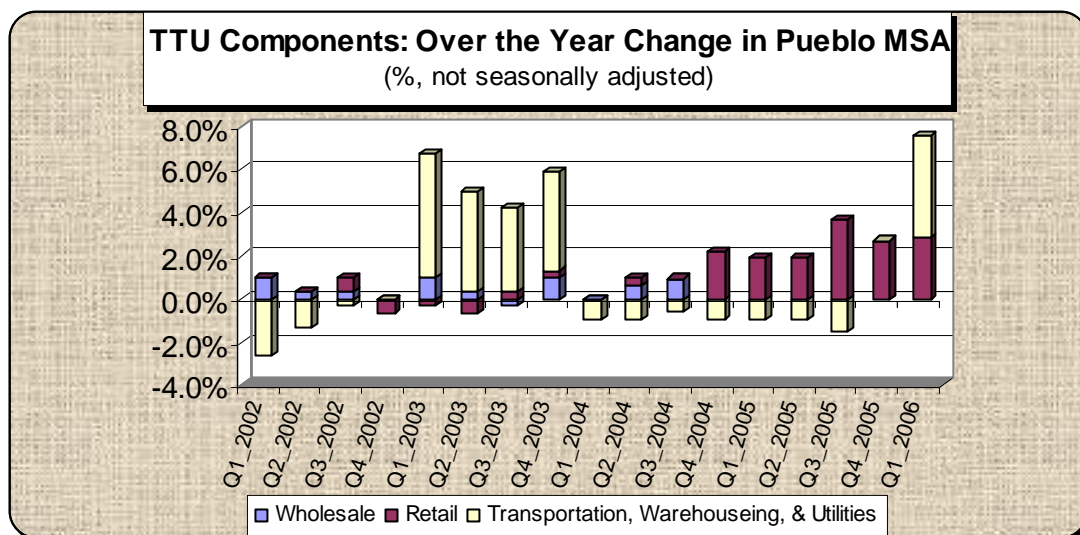


For the second consecutive quarter, manufacturing shed 100 positions. These losses offset the 100 jobs added in the 3rd quarter 2005, resulting in an over the year employment decline of 100 (2.5%). Annual average employment remained at a peak of 4,800 throughout 2001, before declining by 16.6% over the past four years, an average of 200 per year.

Trade, Transportation, & Utilities (TTU): -300 (2.7%)



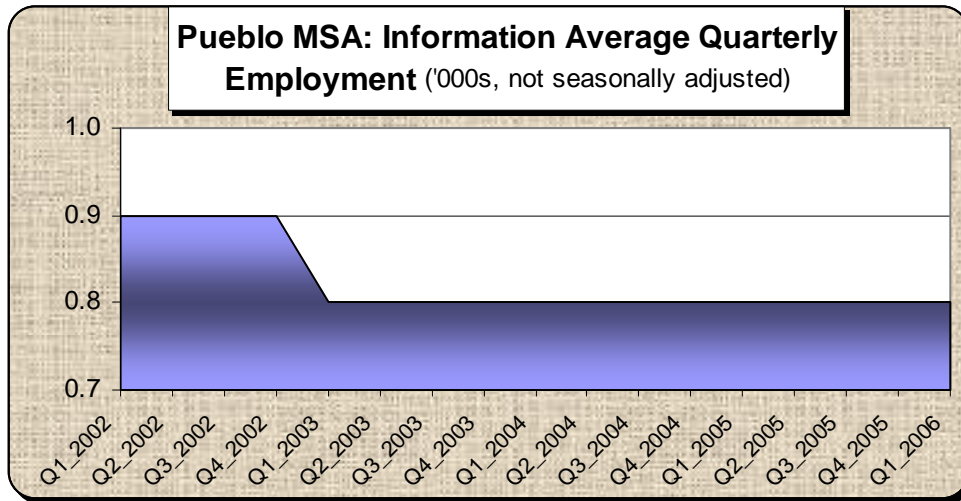
In the 1st quarter, TTU payrolls fell by an anticipated 300. Retail trade shed 300 positions over the quarter, as employers in this sector trimmed their seasonal staff following the holidays. Wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing & utilities employment levels remained unchanged at 1,300 and 2,200, respectively. Average annual employment in TTU hit a trough in 2002, and then added an average of 125 positions a quarter through 2003 before leveling off at 10,600 in 2004. It then edged up 100 and remained level over the first three quarters of 2005. During the last two quarters, employment's twelve-month moving average increased by 100 jobs per quarter to a peak of 10,900.



Over the year, employment in TTU has increased 300, growth of 2.9%. Retail trade accounted for two-thirds of this gain with a 2.8% annual expansion and transportation, warehousing, & utilities grew by 100 (4.8%) over the year. Wholesale trade payrolls have remained unchanged for nine straight quarters.

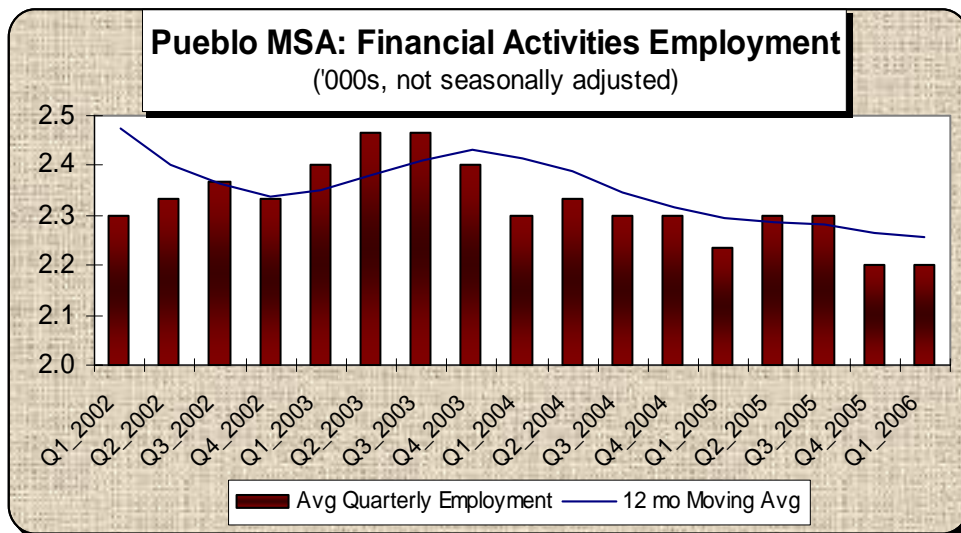
Information: Unchanged

Employment in information remained unchanged during the 1st quarter. For thirteen consecutive quarters, total employment has been stagnant at 800. Before falling to its current level, information employment remained at 900 for eight straight quarters. Industry wide employment stood at 1,000 for four years from 1997 to 2000. Information is the smallest supersector in Pueblo, comprising less than 1.5% of the total nonfarm workforce.



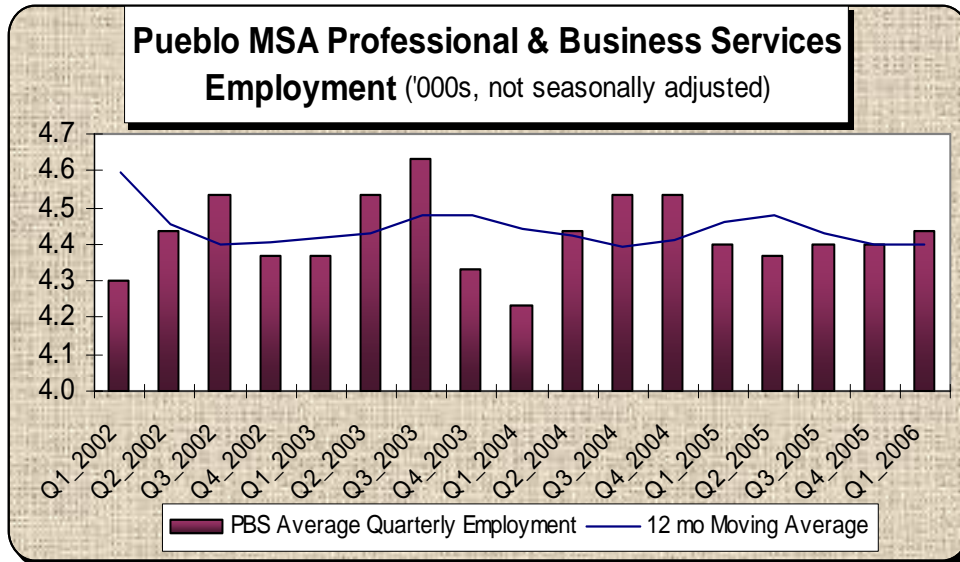
Financial Activities: Unchanged

Financial activities employment in the 1st quarter remained unchanged from the previous quarter. Likewise, industry payrolls are at the same level they were one year ago. Over the past five years, Pueblo was the only MSA in Colorado to experience a contraction in financial activities employment. Pueblo was also the only MSA to have average annual population growth of less than 2% from 1990 to 2003. Due to this slow growth, Pueblo did not enjoy the strong housing market that low interest rates created in the other areas of the state. Annual average employment in this industry remains 500 (17.9%) below the late 1999 maximum and is 200 (8.3%) below the recent 2003 peak.



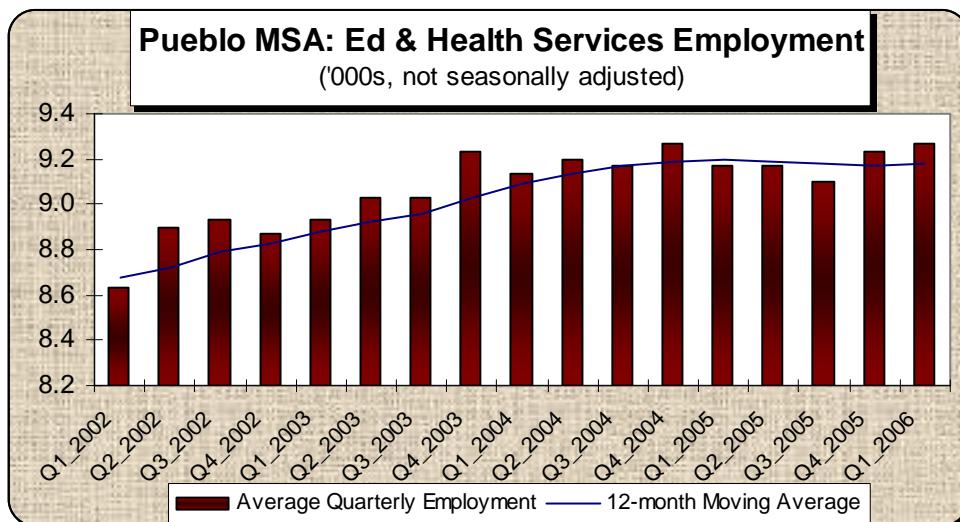
Professional and Business Services: Unchanged

For the fifth consecutive quarter, employment in professional & business services remained at 4,400. Annual average employment in this industry peaked in the 1st quarter 2001 at 5,100, and then it declined by nearly 10% over the following year. For the past four years, twelve-month average employment has displayed zero growth, with levels oscillating between 4,500 and 4,400.



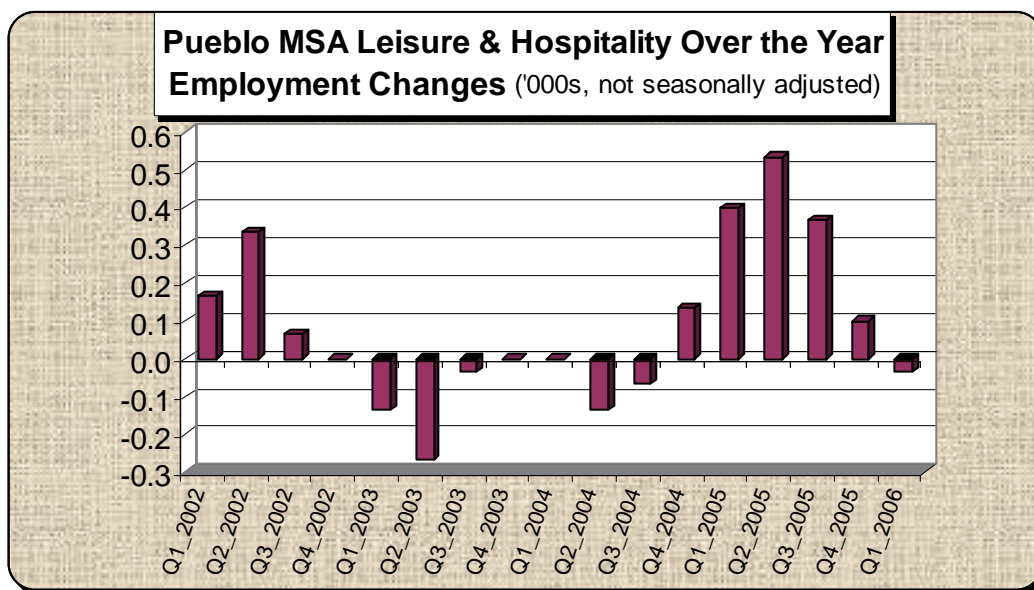
Education and Health Services: +100 (1.1%)

Education & health services was the only supersector in Pueblo that expanded this quarter, with 100 new hires. Since last March, supersector payrolls have added 100, growth of 1.1%. From 2001 to 2004, this industry has exhibited the strongest and steadiest growth of supersectors in the MSA. During this period, education & health services grew at an average annual rate of 2.1%. However, this growth has subsided recently and the twelve-month average employment has remained unchanged for the past seven quarters.



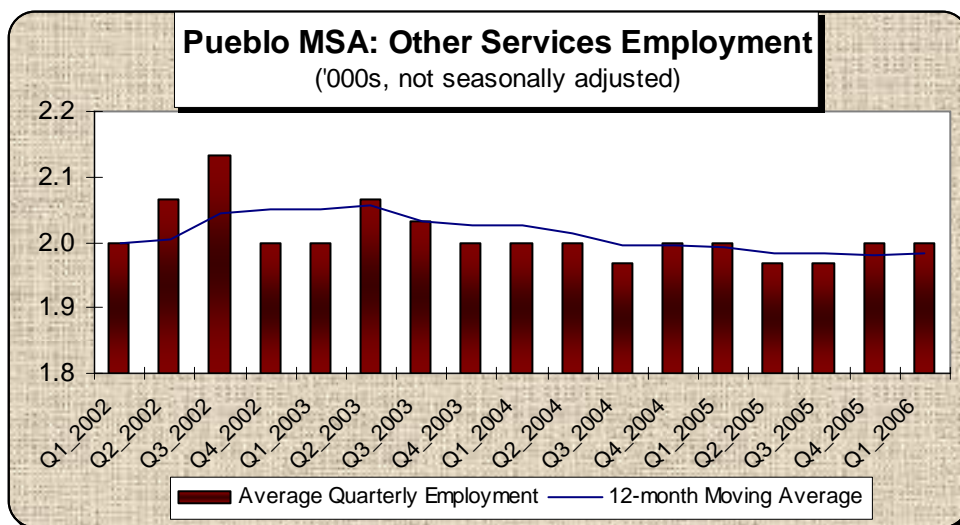
Leisure and Hospitality: -100 (1.6%)

Average quarterly employment in leisure & hospitality fell by 100 in the 1st quarter. Historically, leisure & hospitality employment in Pueblo peaks in the 3rd quarter when the state fair is held and summer tourism is at its highest levels, then declines over the 4th and 1st quarters, before increasing again with the approach of summer in the 2nd quarter. Annual average employment reached a trough of 6,000 in the second half of 2003 and remained at this level throughout 2004. Since then, it has gained an average of 1.3% per quarter to its current level of 6,400. Over the year, industry employment was unchanged, marking the first time in more than a year that this industry did not experience an annual expansion after averaging 5.8% annual growth in 2005.



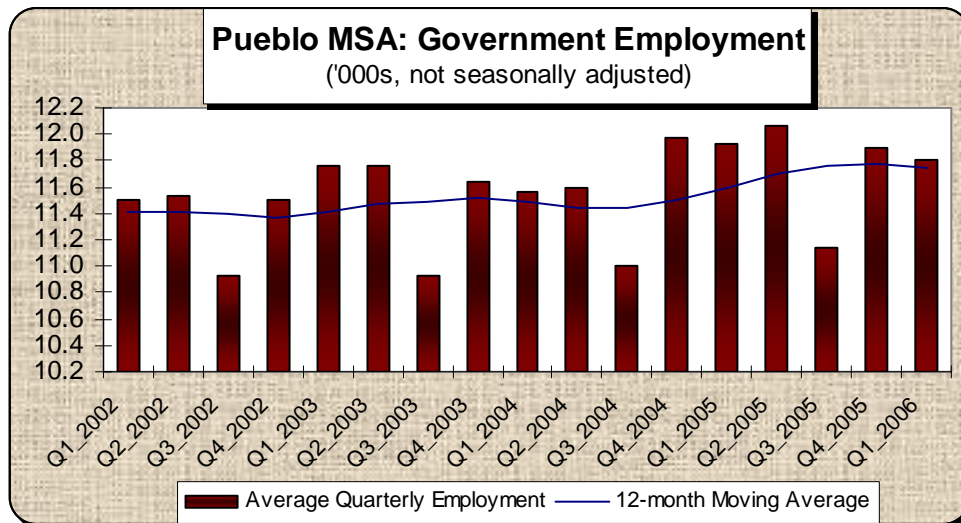
Other Services: Unchanged

For the eleventh consecutive quarter, the number of people working in other services remained at 2,000. Average employment peaked at 2,100 in the 2nd quarter of 2003, then fell to 2,000 and has remained at this level since.

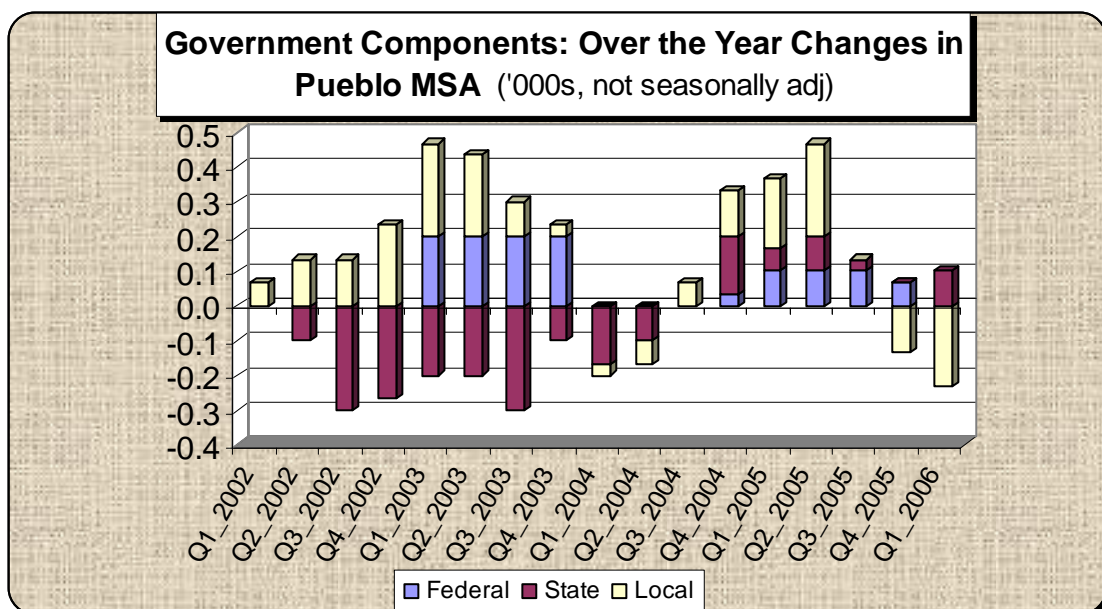


Government: -100 (0.8%)

During the 1st quarter 2006, government employment decreased by 100. This decline was driven by the loss of 100 jobs in State government. The State's educational component fared even worse, shedding 200 positions over the quarter. Federal and local government employment was unchanged this quarter. The Federal government has 1,000 workers on its payrolls, comprising 8% of the industry employment in Pueblo. The local level employs 6,400 people, accounting for 53% of supersector employment. State government now employs 4,500 in Pueblo, or 39% of public employees.



Over the year, State government added 100 new hires, but this advance was offset by the loss of 200 positions at the local level, while the Federal level was unchanged. The 0.8% annual contraction in this industry marks the first time in six quarters that government failed to exhibit year over year employment growth.



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Please reference, Source: "Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Labor Market Information".