

Pa. Business Survey releases quarterly roundup

1979 turned out to be a very good year for the economy of the Northeast metropolitan area. More residents of the area—an average monthly number of 257,600—held jobs in 1979 than had in any other year in the 1970s.

Unemployment, although a bit worse than in 1978, was under three preceding years. It worsened because the labor force increased to record size rather than because of job loss. In fact, continued growth in the size of the labor force was one of the more significant economic developments in 1979, although not necessarily a good one. Enlargement began slowly in 1977, picked up speed in 1978, and peaked in the first quarter of 1979. At midyear, growth ceased, but it resumed in the fourth quarter, when a new all-time peak was recorded.

It is this labor force growth that has fed unemployment. On average, some 25,000 people a month sought work unsuccessfully last year, about 1,600 more than did in 1978. This pushed the monthly average unemployment rate slightly above the preceding year, from 8.4 to 8.8 percent. While not good, this rate was certainly better than those of the three preceding years, when it

ranged around 10 percent.

Industries located in Lackawanna, Luzerne and Monroe counties gave strong support to the local economy last year in the matter of supplying jobs. A new all-time high point was reached in the first quarter. Although the job level sagged in the second and third quarters, most of the sage was erased in the fourth. The year ended with the job total close to the earlier peak.

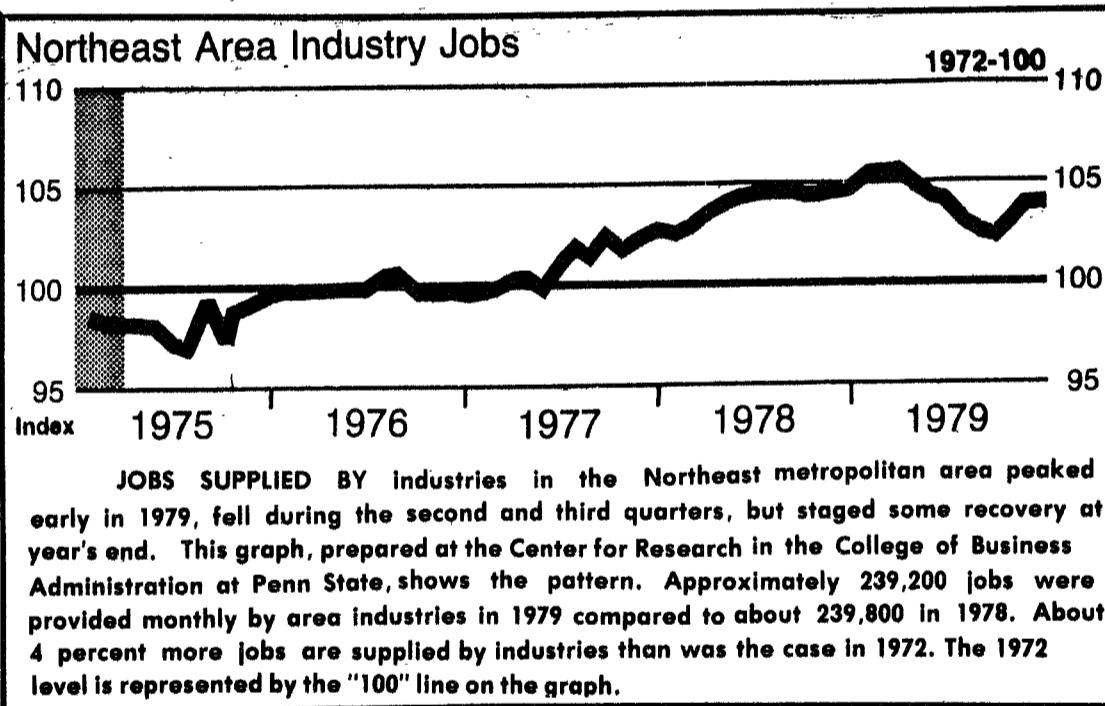
It was industries other than manufacturing that provided the strength. As a group, they supplied a monthly average of 168,000 jobs in 1979, up 1,200 from 1978 and a new record. The factories of the area employed fewer workers than they had in any of the previous four years—on average, some 70,400, down 1,800 from 1978.

There is evidence, though, that despite a reduction in the number of workers, factory output held up rather well. The average factory work week held steady at 36.9 hours, which had been the average in 1978, and was longer than in earlier years. More electricity was used for industrial output in 1979 than in several prior years. By the end of last year, however, usage was

relatively low, although the work week had not yet shortened. A shorter work week may materialize, however. Industrial use of electricity is measured over the entire month, whereas the workweek is recorded at mid-month, and cannot reflect what happens a week or two later.

More than half of the area's economic activity takes place in Luzerne County. There, manufacturing jobs have been dropping in number since 1976. The drop has cost the county some 3,300 factory jobs, whereas the area's net drop in that period was 1,200 factory jobs. Lackawanna County gained 2,100 factory jobs in the interval. On the other hand, Luzerne gained more nonmanufacturing jobs from 1976 to 1979 than did Lackawanna—some 4,300 in comparison with 2,800. Otherwise the two counties shared about the same economic changes in 1979.

If it is assumed that 1980 will be a year of mild recession, then this area can expect a prompt and parallel turn in its own economic fortunes. Traditionally, this area is inclined to be somewhat harder hit than other Pennsylvania areas in recession times; but it is facing this possibility from a position of strength.



2-year programs spark interest

This fall marked the highest enrollment ever in the Associate Degree Program at Highacres. Consequently, the Collegian decided to investigate the Associate Degree Program to discover why the program is so popular among today's students.

Last fall, 25% of the incoming freshman class, 240 students, were enrolled for an Associate Degree. The following programs are available: Medical Laboratory Technology; Letters, Arts and Sciences; Mechanical Engineering Technology; Nuclear Engineering Technology, and Sociology.

The newest of these programs is the Medical Laboratory Technology, or MLT/program. The students spend one year here at Highacres and another year at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hazleton

gaining clinical experience. Unfortunately, because of limited laboratory facilities only twelve students can be accepted in this program each year. The administration and faculty are presently trying to get the MLT program accredited so more hospitals will participate in it. Highacres is the only campus to offer the MLT program.

The Associate Degree that seems to offer the highest financial benefits is the Nuclear Engineering Technology Degree. This program was started four years ago when the Chemical Engineering Associate degree program was phased out. The maximum starting salary of a Penn State NET graduate was \$22,200. Highacres and the Altoona Campus of Penn State offer the NET program. Because of re-

cent controversies concerning nuclear power, enrollment in the NET program is currently down.

The record enrollment last fall resulted from a steady increase in enrollment in the Associate Degree Program since 1973. The enrollment projection is for a continuing increase for at least the next five years. In the summer of 1981 Highacres will begin a two-year program for physical therapy assistants. This is only the second program of this sort in Pennsylvania and the first in the Penn State system. Another reason for the increase in enrollment is that Highacres offers an excellent placement service for two-year degree graduates. Many companies come here to recruit the Associate Degree graduates.

ROTC marches toward memorable year's end

As the school year ends, so ends another year for the Highacres ROTC, a year filled with interesting and memorable activities. One of the first activities were rides on two UH-1 "Huey" army helicopters. Firing M-16's and an overnight hike were other activities partaken. Probably the most exciting events of the year, however, were the swimming lesson and the riot. One may ask, "How can a swimming lesson be so interesting?" The answer is simple. The ROTC participants wore combat boots, fatigue uniforms, and web gear; they carried a simulated M-16 rifle; and they were blindfolded. To add to the feat, they had to dive off of the Highacres gym high dive. Spectators viewed the event

through the hall windows, and, fortunately, no one drowned. The riot, which had taken place at Fort Indiantown Gap, was staged to give M.P.'s at the fort riot control training. ROTC members proved themselves to be very good rioters.

The final activity of the year will be the Awards Day on May 15. ROTC members will be present as a forty piece Army band marches through the campus. All students and faculty members are invited to attend.

Also, five Hazleton ROTC sophomores will attend ROTC Basic Camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky, for six weeks this summer, where they will be trained in an assortment of soldierly skills.



An ROTC member participates in the swimming drill.

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