

Businesses expect record hiring levels this summer

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. businesses are expected to continue their high levels of hiring this summer, according to a survey released today by temporary staffing firm Manpower. Milwaukee-based Manpower's quarterly employment survey of more than 15,000 companies nationwide showed that 32 percent of those interviewed intend to increase their work forces this summer, while only 5 percent plan staff reductions. Fifty-nine percent expect to maintain their current staffing levels.

In comparison, 30 percent of firms surveyed a year ago anticipated summertime increases and 5 percent planned for decreases. Those were also the figures for the spring months of 1998.

Manpower's survey, a highly regarded indicator of economic growth, comes at a time when nationwide unemployment is at 4.3 percent, the lowest it has been since 1970. With so few people out of work and looking for jobs, companies are having to employ increasingly creative techniques to attract and retain qualified workers.

At the same time, the survey results provide little support for forecasters and policymakers who are predicting that economic growth will slow in coming months. In the first three months of 1998, the economy grew at a 4.2 percent rate adjusted for inflation, but some analysts have recently suggested that will drop to 2 percent or 3 percent.

Manpower's study asked employers about their intentions to hire workers during July, August and September - but in today's tight labor market it's less clear than usual that those plans will be met.

Manpower chief executive Mitchell S. Fromstein said the latest data do not represent a

dramatic change from the trends of the past year. Instead, it shows a "clear continuation of significant job growth across the nation," he said.

"We're seeing the strongest indication of net hiring strength since the third quarter of 1978, when 34 percent of firms intended to hire and 6 percent planned decreases," Fromstein said. "There are still more jobs to fill than qualified people to fill them."

The survey found that the retail and service industries, in particular, are searching for workers. For example, 36 percent of retail companies expect to conduct further recruiting this summer, while only 4 percent plan to trim their staffs. This represents the brightest hiring outlook for the industry in two decades, Manpower said.

The retail industry, perhaps more than any other, is having trouble finding enough workers. Some retailers have responded by increasing wages, only to find that such a lure alone doesn't get results. They've also had to advertise more, host job fairs, offer workers shorter shifts and look to nontraditional labor pools such as senior citizens. Some have even gone the route of many high-technology companies and offered current employees a bonus for referring new workers.

Bruce Van Kleeck, vice president of member services for the National Retail Federation, said in an interview last month.

The Manpower survey also examined job prospects by region, finding that Midwestern companies are expected to lead the nation in hiring in the summer quarter.

The outlook for the Southern region, which includes Maryland, Virginia and the District, is also positive. The survey found that "the need for additional

workers among services firms will surpass seasonal expectations and government jobs will be much more plentiful than usual."

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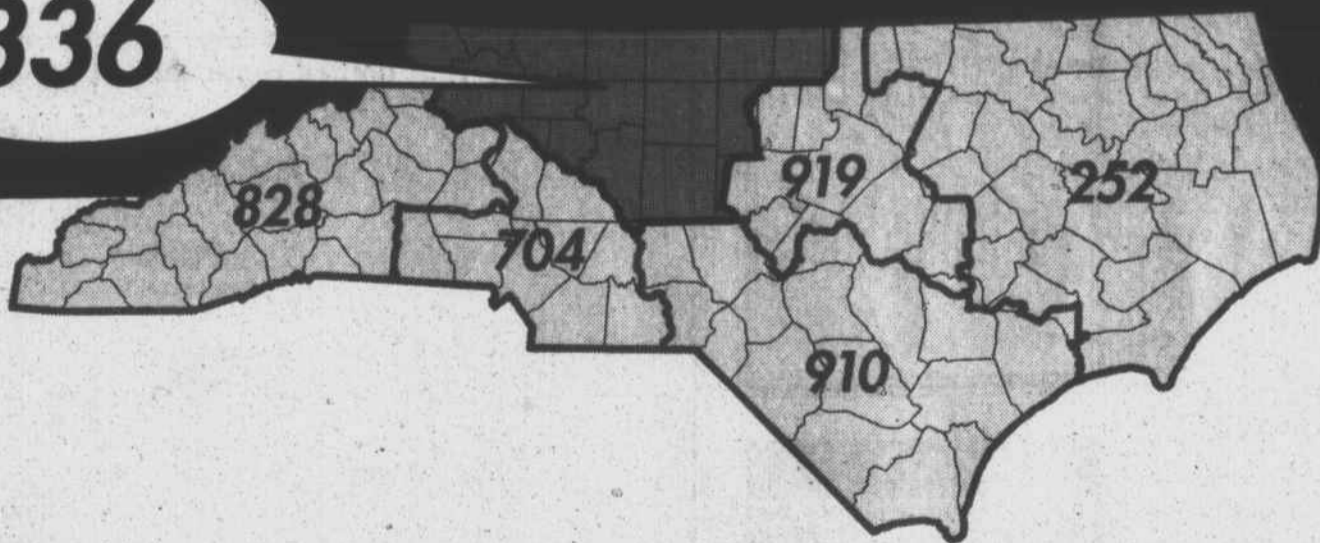
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North Carolina's area code in the Triad area is now 336.

336



North Carolina is growing, with lots of new residences and businesses, increasing the demand for fax machines, computer modems, and phones.

To accommodate this growth, the Triad and surrounding area has a new area code. As of June 15, 1998, you must use the new area code, 336, instead of 910 for calls to and within the highlighted area.

If you live in the Triad area and your phone number begins with any of the prefixes listed at right, your area code will change.

Please make a note of this change and remember that you may also need to reprogram telecommunications equipment like cell phones and PBX's (consult your vendor), speed dialers, fax machines, etc., to make sure your calls reach the residence or business you want them to reach.

Local numbers and rates will not be affected by the change. If you have any questions about area code 336, please call us at 1 800 964-7941. Or visit us at www.bellsouth.com/areacode for more information.

202	241	288	342	377	416	475	537	580	631	672	712	744	775	810	861	906	936
206	242	292	344	378	418	476	538	581	632	674	713	745	776	812	869	908	957
207	243	294	345	379	420	478	541	584	633	676	714	746	777	813	870	909	961
208	246	297	348	380	421	492	542	585	634	679	715	747	778	816	871	913	963
209	248	299	349	381	422	495	543	586	635	680	716	748	779	817	873	917	969
210	249	301	351	382	430	498	544	591	636	681	717	749	781	819	874	918	970
212	250	302	352	384	431	499	545	593	637	682	718	750	782	821	877	920	971
213	257	312	356	385	434	502	546	595	638	683	719	751	783	824	878	921	972
214	258	314	357	386	441	503	547	597	643	684	720	752	784	830	879	922	973
218	260	315	359	387	446	504	548	598	644	685	721	757	785	832	880	923	977
221	261	316	361	388	447	505	549	599	650	687	722	758	786	835	881	924	978
222	263	317	362	393	448	506	550	601	651	688	723	759	787	837	882	927	981
225	266	319	364	402	454	508	554	606	657	691	725	761	789	841	884	932	983
226	269	320	365	403	460	510	556	607	658	694	726	764	795	847	885	936	984
227	271	321	366	404	461	513	558	613	659	696	727	765	797	849	886	939	985
228	272	325	367	406	463	514	559	616	660	697	728	766	798	851	887	940	992
229	273	332	368	407	465	516	562	621	661	698	729	767	801	852	888	941	993
230	274	333	370	408	466	519	565	622	663	699	730	768	802	853	889	943	994
234	275	334	372	409	467	526	566	623	664	705	731	769	803	854	896	945	996
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240	286	339	376	414	474	536	578	629	670	710	741	774	809	859	905	954	

The prefixes indicated in plain text changed to the 336 area code on December 15, 1997. The cellular prefixes indicated in bold will not change until December 15, 1999, as ordered by the North Carolina Utilities Commission. BellSouth customers may place calls to these cellular prefixes using either the 910 or 336 area codes from December 15, 1997 through December 15, 1999. After December 15, 1999, the area code for these cellular prefixes will be 336.

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