

Third quarter engineering unemployment data show mixed trends

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The unemployment rate for U.S. electrical and electronics engineers (EEs), which had jumped to a record high in the second quarter, has eased, according to third quarter data just released by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. For the engineering profession as a whole, the rate continued to climb, but more slowly.

The jobless rate for EEs dropped from 8.6 percent in the second quarter to 7.3 percent in the third. Quarter to quarter, the EE workforce grew by 26,000.

For civil engineers, the unemployment rate dropped from 4.7 percent to 3.6 percent, but for mechanical engineers, it rose from 5.6 percent to 9.5 percent. Overall, engineering joblessness rose to 5.9 percent, a 0.4 percentage point increase compared to a 1.6 percentage point increase in the second quarter.

The [unemployment rate](#) for computer professionals went from 5.4 percent in the second quarter to 6 percent in the third. Software engineers showed a slight decline (4.7 percent vs. 5 percent), while computer scientists and systems analysts experienced an increase (7.3 percent vs. 6.4 percent).

"These mixed data suggest that the worst may be passing, but we are still a long way from the levels of engineering unemployment we would expect to see in a strong economy," IEEE-USA President Gordon Day said. "We are also encouraged that announcements of layoffs in the high-

tech sector appear to have subsided, after peaking early in the year. A clear turnaround in engineering unemployment would be a very positive sign for the general workforce, since engineers create new jobs in many categories."

Source: IEEE-USA

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