

Still a **COMPETITIVE** Employment Summer for Youth

The Utah economy is slowly improving, with employment gains once again being tallied. But does that mean the picture for graduating high school, college students, or youth looking for summer jobs has improved? I'm afraid I will have to say no to that one.

There are still too many unemployed people surrounding the labor force to make it a favorable environment for young people trying to find a job or carve their niche in the workplace. The pace of job creation—as it currently stands—is just not fast enough to put much of a dent in the unemployment rate. This creates high competition for young, inexperienced workers trying to attract attention and looking to get their foot into the economy's door.

This will mark the third summer where employment opportunities will be difficult for youth to obtain. In the boom year 2007, over 52,000 youth, ages 15 to 18, ascended into a job during that year's second quarter. Just two years later that number had fallen to only 21,000, and is

anticipated to have been equal to or less than that for second quarter 2010. The prospects for 2011 are not expected to be much better.

For youth ages 19 to 24, the tale is largely the same. Roughly 82,000 ascended into jobs in 2007's second quarter, but that number fell to 50,000 just two years later.

In addition, those young workers who do have jobs are finding that their foot may be in the door, but that's about it. Labor churning and the prospects of moving upward are at a serious standstill right now. With jobs scarce and opportunities limited, workers are staying put in their existing jobs, even if they wish they could move on to something else.

None of this is designed to discourage youth from seeking employment, although that may be an unfortunate side effect. Instead, it is meant to help seekers be more pragmatic about what they are facing. Jobs are available, but the competition is heavy. ●

In 2007, over 52,000 youth had jobs during the second quarter. For 2009 and the anticipated 2010 numbers, the figures fell to 21,000. Prospects for 2011 are not much better.

