Private payrolls surge by 275,000 in April, blowing past estimates in biggest gain since July

CNBC
- The U.S. economy added far more jobs than expected in April as payrolls in the services sector grew by the most in more than two years, according to data released Wednesday by ADP and Moody's Analytics.

Private payrolls grew by 275,000 last month, the biggest increase since July, when they expanded by 284,000. Economists polled by Dow Jones expected private payrolls growth of 177,000.
Overall, medium-sized businesses, those that employ 50 to 499 people, led the way in jobs creation last month by adding 145,000 jobs. Jobs within small businesses, meanwhile, increased by 77,000 while large companies hired 53,000.

2019 Environmental & Energy Conference - Approved for CLE Credit!

The West Virginia Chamber's [2019 Environmental and Energy Conference](#) is less than two weeks away! This year's conference will take place on Wednesday, May 15th at the Charleston Marriott Town Center.

This year's program is packed with the latest and most important information your business needs to comply with state and federal environmental regulations. *If you are charged with ensuring regulatory compliance for your business, this is the place to be!* To view the full [agenda](#), please [click here](#). Among the subjects that will be covered are:

- An update from WVDEP Secretary Austin Caperton
- Human Health Water Quality Criteria and Nationwide Permits
- An Update on the Waters of the United States
- 401 Water Quality Litigation
- WVDEP Air Program Update
Space is filling up quickly, so register now and guarantee your spot at the 2019 Environmental and Energy Conference!

This conference has been approved for 6.8 CLE credits for West Virginia Lawyers. CLE credit is pending in OH, KY and PA

For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Amanda Pasdon at apasdon@wvchamber.com.

Register Now!

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Early Bird Registrations Now Open!

For more information visit: wvchamber.com

Early Bird Registration is open for the largest business event of the year! The 83rd Annual Meeting and Business Summit of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce will take place Wednesday, August 28 - Friday, August 30 at The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, WV. This three day event is the not-to-be-missed event of the year, where you can
meet and network with the best minds in business, government, education and policy in West Virginia. To take advantage of Early Bird Registration rates, please [click here].

**To reserve your room at The Greenbrier, you must first register for the meeting.** In your confirmation e-mail you will receive a code to provide to The Greenbrier staff when booking your room. To make your hotel reservation after registering for the meeting, please call Jessica Dowdy at 1-855-453-4858, option 2, and ask for the West Virginia Chamber Room Block. Rooms at The Greenbrier sell out during this event, so don't delay! [Register now!]

For **information about sponsorship opportunities**, please contact Amanda Pasdon at apasdon@wvchamber.com. We look forward to seeing you at The Greenbrier!

**Register Now!**

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**Rebecca McPhail and Steve Roberts: Be Warned West Virginia Businesses - Your Land Could Be Taken**

**The State Journal**

As leaders of the West Virginia business community, every business in the state should be deeply concerned about an extraordinary legal action being driven by the Jefferson County Board of Education to condemn the private property of Rockwool Group, a global manufacturer of building insulation who is constructing a new facility in the county.

If this legal maneuver succeeds it will have a chilling impact on current and future business development and destroy the ability of the state to attract new employers.

On April 12, the BOE filed a petition in State court to take immediate possession of Rockwool's private property in order to construct facilities for students with special needs. In its lawsuit, the Board of Education ignores that Rockwool obtained all required environmental permits from the DEP (air, water, land); all required site plan approvals from the City of Ranson to ensure its use complied to City law; all building permits, and is within all zoning uses applicable to its site.
Justice: Revenue collections top estimates in April by $53.6 million

WV MetroNews - April 15 was kind to the state of West Virginia. The tax collection deadline drove revenue collections for the month $53.6 million above estimates. "How many times do you think in the state of West Virginia, in its history, do you think we've had a number like that in a month?" Gov. Jim Justice asked at a Thursday afternoon state capitol news conference. Not many. Maybe never, according to state Deputy Revenue Secretary Mark Muchow. Muchow said the total taxes collected for the month, $605 million, was surely a one month record. Continue...

West Virginia News

Federal judge grants Rockwool the injunction it sought

Spirit of Jefferson - Imagine if the government used its power to shut down a mosque, simply because some citizens viewed the Muslim religion as strange. What if the organization targeted by the government was a gay nightclub, an abortion clinic or methadone treatment center? What if a government used its power to punish someone who challenged its aims, actions or authority? This afternoon, Chief Federal Judge Gina Groh voiced those questions before granting Rockwool an injunction to stop the Jefferson County Board of Education from seizing the company's controversial factory site in Ranson through eminent domain. Continue...

U.S. energy official: West Virginia has a wealth of opportunity

WV MetroNews - A handful of state leaders got the chance to discuss energy issues regarding West Virginia with national officials on Tuesday at the state Capitol. One of those lawmakers was state Senator Ryan Weld (R-Brooke), who called the meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette "productive." "We covered a myriad of topics," Weld told the media afterward. "It's not just coal anymore when it comes to West Virginia, It's coal and natural gas. I think that President (Trump) has a desire to expand this nation's energy grid because there are concerns for safety." Continue...
Carbon activated company to open in Mount Hope

**WV MetroNews** - A business that uses carbon to clean the air and water announced plans Thursday to open a location in Fayette County. Officials with Carbon Activated Corporation were in Mount Hope to announce the creation of 55 new jobs with an average salary of $47,000 a year. U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito welcomed the news. "I'm thrilled Carbon Activated Corporation is coming to Mount Hope," Capito said in a statement. "West Virginia remains a leader in energy and environment solutions, making our state the perfect place for CAC to invest. With a willing workforce and bountiful natural resources, West Virginia is exactly where corporations like Carbon Activated should be."  

Berkeley BOE drops countersuits against 3 parents; countersuits from teachers remain

**WV MetroNews** - Countersuits filed against three parents suing the Berkeley County Board and other defendants have been dropped, but those parents may be sued by some of the teachers. That civil suit stems from allegations Pack's daughter Adri was abused while attending Berkeley Heights. Alleged verbal and possibly physical abuse were caught on a recording device Pack had placed in Adri's hair last fall. Adri is a student with special needs and is non-verbal.  

Charter schools to likely be revisited during upcoming special session

**WV MetroNews** - Though heavily disputed during this year's regular legislative session, the topic of charter schools will likely be back on the table when the West Virginia Legislature holds its special session. "We're looking at lots of things that relate to school choice," House Speaker Roger Hanshaw said earlier this week on MetroNews "Talkline" with Hoppy Kercheval. "We know this is a topic that has a lot of people talking. It had a lot of people talking back during the regular session, and it's still got a lot of people talking now."
Politifact: Gee correct about WV's lack of STEM graduates

Charleston Gazette-Mail - Is West Virginia trailing its neighbors in science, technology, engineering and math in higher education? West Virginia University President Gordon Gee said so during his State of the University address on March 19. "Our state has fewer science, technology, engineering and math graduates than any neighboring state," Gee said. We decided to see if Gee was correct. We defined a "neighboring state" as one that shares a border with West Virginia: Maryland, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.  

State leaders react to $37 million settlement with McKesson

WV MetroNews - Gov. Jim Justice said Thursday the $37 million settlement of the state's opioid lawsuit against the pharmaceutical company McKesson was not enough for his liking but it's probably the best option for the state. Justice said everyone that came to him said the settlement was the best the state could expect. "I don't think it's enough. I know how wealthy this company is but at the same time, I'd rather take the money and get on what we need to be getting on with rather than just lose the money," Justice told reporters Thursday at the state capitol.

Verso announces Luke mill to close permanently

Mineral Daily News-Tribune - Verso Corporation (NYSE: VRS) today announced it will permanently close its paper mill in Luke, Maryland, in response to the continuing decline in customer demand for the grades of coated freesheet paper produced at the mill, along with rising input costs, a significant influx of imports, and rising compliance costs and infrastructure challenges associated with recent environmental regulation changes. The closure, which is expected to be complete by June 30, will reduce Verso's coated freesheet production capacity by approximately 450,000 tons, reducing total annual paper production capacity to approximately 2.7 million tons.

Federal investigation focuses on floor relief dollars in West Virginia
**WV MetroNews** - U.S. Attorney Mike Stuart says his office is investigating the use of federal flood dollars in West Virginia following the catastrophic 2016 flood. "Rest assured, my office is working with appropriate federal agencies to investigate the issues of disaster relief, and use of federal funds related to the historic 2016 floods and I can assure our citizens that any party that abused their position of authority, violated the public trust, or misused taxpayer dollars will be held accountable, if warranted," Stuart stated today.  

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**Woody Thrasher says Gov. Justice's 'pause' caused flood relief delays**

**WV News** - Woody Thrasher addressed what went wrong with a flood recovery program he oversaw as the West Virginia Commerce Secretary during an in-depth interview Thursday that dove headfirst into the controversy that ultimately led to his resignation. Thrasher, who less than a month ago announced he would challenge his former boss, Gov. Jim Justice, for the Republican gubernatorial nomination next year, said the governor and his staff are to blame for the RISE flood recovery program not rebuilding more homes sooner. "If I had been governor, I would have worked with those around me," he said. "I would have shown up for work every day. I would have sat down across the desk, and I would have said, 'Where is this program?"  

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**'Do you really want to take that on?' Manchin freezes governor's primary**

**Charleston Gazette-Mail** - West Virginia's senior senator continues to flirt with the concept of leaving Congress to run for governor, leaving a race frozen and onlookers scratching their heads. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., won reelection and a six-year term in November. By January, he began teasing the notion of challenging incumbent Gov. Jim Justice in 2020. He elucidated those remarks this week in a radio interview with WV MetroNews. "By this fall, with all of my family involved, I should be able to make a decision," he said.  

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**Justices say methods used to determine coal property values don't violate state Constitution**
**West Virginia Record** - The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals recently ruled that the methods used under state code to determine the value of coal properties does not violate the state Constitution. "The circuit court concluded that the method of valuing coal properties as prescribed in the Code of State of Rules violated neither the statutory requirement of assessment at 'true and actual value' nor the constitutional equality requirements of Article X, Section 1 of the West Virginia Constitution and the Equal Protection provisions of the United States and West Virginia Constitutions," the April 29 court opinion said. Justice Margaret Workman authored the majority opinion affirming the ruling by the Marshall County Circuit Court. Justice Evan Jenkins dissented and authored his own opinion.  

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**Editorials / Op-Eds**

**Hoppy Kercheval: A possible solution to stalemate on education reform**

WV MetroNews

Governor Jim Justice, Senate President Mitch Carmichael and House Speaker Roger Hanshaw have met to try to find common ground on the most contentious issues heading into the special legislative session on education in a few weeks. Lawmakers and the Governor could not agree during the regular session on a comprehensive education reform bill, so the special session will be a reboot. The most disputed issues-charter schools and education savings accounts-have not been resolved, but there just might be a way forward.  

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**Bill Bissett: Further deconstructing #TheStruggleToStay in West Virginia**

West Virginia Record

Whether it is driven by a topic of public policy, politics or something that perplexes me, I tend to let the words of my opinion editorials (op-eds) roll around in my brain for some time before moving my thoughts to text. While this submission is no different, it is also connected to the strong reaction, both mostly positive and somewhat negatively, to some recent thoughts I shared with your newspaper entitled, "We can tell West Virginia's story the best."
Hoppy Kercheval: Trump's economic ace in the hole

WV MetroNews

Washington, and the media that cover the Capital, are currently obsessed with Attorney General William Barr's Congressional testimony about the Mueller Report. The political agendas of both parties played out during the Senate hearing, while House Democrats cried foul when Barr refused to show up for their questioning. If you follow the news, the Barr controversy is inescapable, and partisans see the hearings and media talk shows as opportunities to score points on the opposition. However, I wonder if the rest of America has the same passion for the rumpus. Continue...

Garrett Ballengee: Lack of education options promotes inequality

Charleston Gazette-Mail

Four-and-a-half miles. By car, a distance that can easily be covered in under 10 minutes. Yet, in many respects, those same 4 1/2 miles represent something else, something worlds apart. Four-and-half miles represent the difference between bright futures filled with opportunities and cloudy futures filled with struggle, frustration and unrealized potential. Kenna Elementary is, by objective metrics, a wonderful elementary school. 96.8 percent of its fourth-graders met the state's mathematics standard, while nearly 81 percent met the English language arts standard. On the other hand, Mary C. Snow Elementary is struggling. By comparison, 9.3 percent of its fourth-grade students are meeting the state's mathematics standard, and only 2.3 percent meet the standard in English language arts. Those numbers are excruciatingly, frustratingly bad. Continue...

Upcoming West Virginia Chamber Events
West Virginia Chamber 2019 Environmental & Energy Conference

May 15, 2019

Register Now!

West Virginia Chamber 2019 Annual Meeting & Business Summit

August 28-30, 2019

Register Now!

West Virginia Chamber 2019 Women's Leadership Summit

December 4-5, 2019