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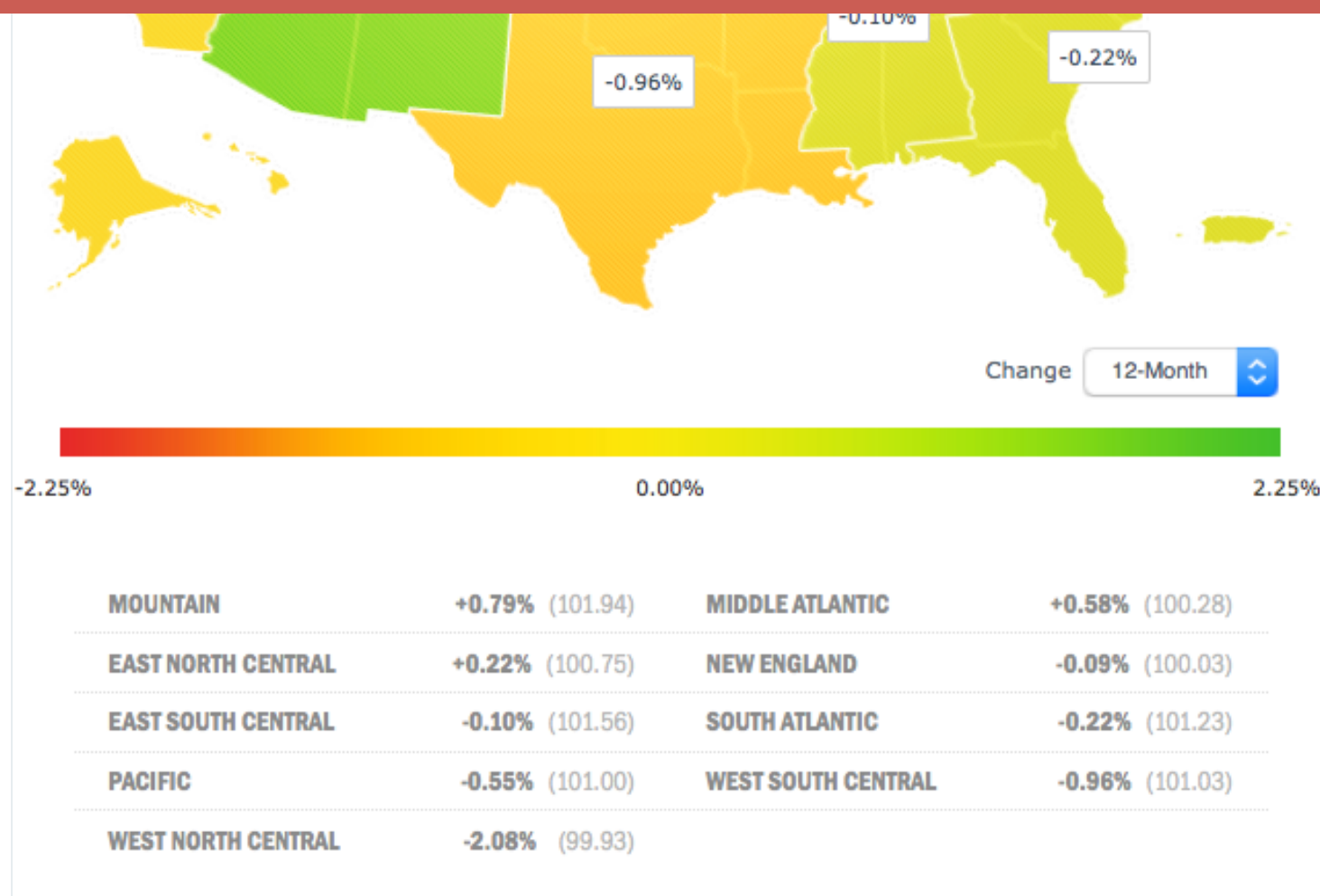
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retains the top spot among states for the second consecutive month. Dallas maintained its top ranking among metropolitan areas, while Seattle holds second place with ...

Mar. 03, 2016

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The [Paychex | IHS Small Business Jobs Index](#) added to its January gain with a February increase of 0.10 percent. At 100.75, the national index is just 0.08 off the pace set a year ago in February, which represented the high point of 2015.

The Mountain region remains the top-performing regional index while Washington retains the top spot among states for the second consecutive month. Dallas maintained its top ranking among metropolitan areas, while Seattle holds second place with another strong month. Other Services (except Public Administration)*, as defined by the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), ranked as the top industry sector, followed

by Construction, which had the best one-month growth rate among industry

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metro area results indicate stronger gains that we view as positive signs.”

The February 2016 Paychex | IHS Small Business Jobs Index

National Index

Up 0.10 percent from January to February, small businesses were able to expand on the gains achieved the previous month. At 100.75, the Paychex | IHS Small Business Jobs Index has regained all of its losses since April 2015. Over 100 for the 53rd straight month, the national index continues to indicate a solid expansion of small business jobs. Eighteen of the 20 most populous states analyzed had an index level above 100 in February.

Regional Employment

Up 0.79 percent year-over-year, Mountain continues to lead among regions with an index level of 101.94. Following the Mountain, the top-ranked regions are all three southern and the Pacific, consistent with the strong Sun Belt general job growth in 2015-2016. With strong gains in recent months, the South Atlantic is up 0.58 percent from November, the fastest three-month growth rate since 2012. Likely stemming from oil prices, the West North Central is now the lowest ranked region at 99.93, and also claims the lowest one-month and 12-month growth rates.

Note: Percentages displayed in the regional heat map reflect 12-month changes.

State Employment

Texas gained 0.21 percent from January to February, yet still managed to drop two spots to fourth place among states due to strong gains in Tennessee and Florida. According to the BLS, Tennessee and Florida ended 2015 with very strong gains in

terms of total jobs. At 103.52, Washington experienced a one-month increase of 0.36

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Metropolitan Employment

Seattle had a one-month gain of 0.50 percent in February as it remains solidly in second place among metros at 103.58. Still the top-ranked metro, Dallas increased just 0.09 percent to 105.77 after the steep drop-off in January. Miami hit a new record pace of small business employment growth as its index increased 0.40 percent from the previous month to 102.21. New York City is up 1.25 percent during the past year and moved up to the 10th ranked metro in February.

Note: Analysis is provided for the 20 largest metro areas based on U.S. population. The chart's dark blue bars reflect the index level and the light blue diamonds reflect the 12-month change.

Industry Employment

Up 0.37 percent from January to 102.49, the Construction industry had another gain in February, the fifth in the last six months. Education and Health Services ranks third among industries as its index climbed above 101 for the first time in two years. Other Services (except Public Administration) hit another new record high in February at 104.85 as small business employment growth continues to outpace other sectors. Manufacturing small business employment slowed 0.48 percent from the previous month as its index fell to 98.99, the lowest among industries.

Note: Analysis is provided for eight major industry sectors. The chart's dark blue bars reflect the index level and the light blue diamonds reflect the 12-month change.

– See more at: <http://www.paychex.com/jobs-index/news-release.aspx#sthash.KwpPzG7J.dpuf>

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