

YOUR BUSINESS

MARKETS IN A NUTSHELL

Who's hiring in Napa Valley?

As Napa residents, we often feel the pulse of our community through its bustling wineries, vibrant hospitality venues and the creative new experiences offered throughout the valley. But beneath the surface, subtle shifts are occurring in our local job market that could impact us all. Let's explore these changes and understand what they mean for our city and county.



REMY JACOBSON

Trends and sector shifts

Looking at Napa County as a whole, total employment reached 76,100 jobs in August 2024, reflecting modest growth of 1.5% over the past year. While this overall growth is positive, the numbers hide significant variations across different sectors.

Education and health services are booming

One standout sector is education and health services, which saw a strong 6.7% increase in job growth over the past year. This expansion is driven by the influx of young families moving into the area and the natural aging of existing residents. As demand rises for teachers, nurses and healthcare support staff, new job opportunities are opening in schools, hospitals and clinics. For those seeking stable, long-term careers, this sector presents a wealth of opportunity.

Construction takes a breather

In contrast, jobs in mining, logging and construction declined by 2.2%. This dip comes after an unusually high level of construction activity in 2023 when Napa County issued 331 construction permits valued at over \$136 million — primarily for single-family homes.

To put that in perspective, the previous year saw only 110 permits worth \$35 million. The recent slowdown suggests a return to more typical construction levels after last year's surge. While fewer new projects are underway, this doesn't necessarily spell trouble — it seems to be a normalization after a temporary boom.

Leisure and hospitality see modest growth

Napa's leisure and hospitality sector posted modest growth of 1.5%, reflecting cautious optimism in an industry still rebounding from pandemic-era disruptions. Steady, rather than rapid, growth may actually be a healthy sign, allowing businesses to keep pace with demand without overextending themselves. However, the sector's slow recovery could also signal broader uncertainties in tourism and discretionary spending, as visitors weigh their travel plans against economic headwinds.

Other sectors hold steady

Meanwhile, most other industries across the county have shown little to no growth, ranging between 0% and 1.5%. While jobs are still being created, many businesses appear to be in a holding pattern, waiting for clearer economic signals before expanding further or increasing hiring. This slowed growth is not

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Napa's Signum Architecture staff includes, left to right, Gabe Muracchioli, senior architect; Juancarlos Fernandez, partner; Paola Gutierrez Tumbarello, designer; Jacob Parks, designer; Anna Hjartø, designer; Kirsten Shinnamon Baker, senior architect; Jarrod Denton, partner; Ana Roby, designer; and Kris Laratta, designer.

'Exploring' solutions

Signum Architecture opens new Napa office

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Signum Architecture is enjoying its new home on Second Street in Napa as it expands its client base throughout the West Coast.

"We are completing a 50/50 mix of commercial and high-end residential projects, including boutique hotels, restaurants and wineries. (These are) nearby and in the Willamette Valley, the Walla Walla Valley, Paso Robles and France," said Juancarlos Fernandez, principal architect at Signum Architecture.

Jarrod Denton, also a principal architect at Signum Architecture, brings a unique set of skills to the practice of architecture from studying passive house technology. Such houses are structures that reduce carbon emissions through modifications like increased insulation.

Another feature that sets Signum apart is Fernandez's experience in designing buildings with natural light and natural ventilation while practicing in Mexico. Fernandez enjoys showcasing numerous aspects of the landscape, like views from high elevations.

Signum's knowledge base comes from Denton and Fernandez's 13 years of practice together and their additional prior work in Napa Valley and other areas.

The firm opened in St. Helena in 2011 and moved to Napa last year. Denton and Fernandez have found the new location has increased the team's ability to meet with clients, often downtown.

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Above and left: Inside the new Napa office of Signum Architecture. The business is located at 1675 Second St.

SUZANNE BECKER BRONK PHOTOGRAPHY

10 QUESTIONS | TIM LEONARD



NICK OTTO, REGISTER

Tim Leonard poses for a photograph on Sept. 27.

Business is 'spinning'

Tim Leonard sells vintage (and new) vinyl + more at Napa record store.

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Tim Leonard, the owner of Right On Napa!!! Vintage Vinyl in Napa, said the thing he loves most about his business is the people who support his record store.

"I truly miss them when I don't

see them regularly," wrote Leonard. Plus, "I enjoy the thrill of the hunt for out-of-print records. It appeals to the collector in me."

He also enjoys setting people up with stereo systems "and helping them either get started on this wonderful journey or get re-acquainted with their old records again."

1. What was your first job?

Outside of delivering newspapers and mowing lawns, my first real job was in a bookstore/record store, believe it or not, when I was

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THE INTERNET MARKETER

The impact of AI on the wine industry

Those of us in the digital media/SEO/website businesses tend to think that artificial intelligence (AI) innovation is all about us. Well, a lot of it is because we're about the basics. We produce content and build websites, and those websites have to show up in search engines. These are fundamentals for every business in every sector.

AI is being adopted by a wide range of industries

The integration of AI in the wine industry marks a significant shift from traditional practices to one that is more tech driven. AI is playing a role in vineyard management and the winemaking process.

Wineries are using AI-based platforms to collect information from the fruit. With a batch of grapes, AI can simulate fermentation, the winemaking process and the value of compounds found on the grape's seeds and skin.

Wineries are using sensors and analytics for everything from monitoring vineyards and optimizing production to e-commerce platforms to sell their wine.

AI technologies like mobile app Tule Vision are being used to monitor water stress levels in plants. Growers take a short video of their plants, and the resulting data measures mid-day leaf water, indicating plant "thirstiness."

Tech giant Cisco Systems developed sensors that gather data on plant temperature, light intensity and humidity that affect vineyard health. AI data provides immediate insights on soil management, disease detection and pest control.

AI's ability to process massive data sets helps forecast weather conditions. This is especially important now as climate changes have created weather

extremes. We've had winters with excessive rainfall and years of draught with extended periods of soaring temperatures.

Robots powered by AI help monitor plant health, identifying the optimal time to pick and prune a grape — a kind of precision harvesting.

All of these AI technologies produce data that are helping growers make more informed decisions about vineyard health and grape quality.

Legal industry is ahead of the curve

Harvey is an AI platform for editing legal documents and doing research. A suite of products for all practice areas, Harvey celebrated its two-year anniversary. Validating their success, they recently received Series C funding led by venture capital heavyweights Google Ventures, with participation from OpenAI, Kleiner Perkins, Sequoia Capital, Elad Gil, and SV Angel. This \$100 million investment at a \$1.5 billion valuation will enable Harvey to continue to scale.

Financial services industry has become a frontrunner in AI adoption

According to WifiTalents, 69% of banks are already using AI for data analysis and improving customer service.

High adoption rates are partly due to availability of infrastructure — our fast computer connections, hardware, software and the cloud to host it all. This translates to speedy processing of large data sets at lower costs and the ability to scale. Banks are also interacting with customers on a 360-view level now that we're all working virtually. Think about it — no one goes to a bank anymore.

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Jacobson

From A6

unique to Napa. It reflects a trend being witnessed across the United States.

Why these changes matter

For those seeking new opportunities or considering career changes, these trends offer insight into where the jobs are — and where they aren't. The booming education and health services sectors, in particular, suggest there's strong demand for skilled professionals. Training or shifting to these fields could lead to stable, rewarding

careers.

By staying informed and adapting to these changes, we can better navigate Napa's evolving job landscape. As these trends develop, I look forward to keeping our community updated and helping residents make informed decisions for the future.

Remy Jacobson is an Investment Advisor Representative offering Securities and Advisory Services through United Planners Financial Services (UP), Member: FINRA, SIPC. JWM and UP are independent companies. Views are based on current conditions and may change; no future guarantees. For more information, visit jacobsonwealth.com.

Questions

From A6

a senior in high school. Marcellus New York, a bedroom community outside of Syracuse.

2. What's the worst job you ever had?

I was a manager at TGI Fridays for a week in San Francisco.

3. What job would you like to try/not try?

That's a tough one because I have the best job ever.

Try: Master gardener.

Not try: Hot air balloon pilot (I'm afraid of heights).

4. How did you get into owning a small business?

It was a pivot out of the wine industry. I enjoyed many years hosting some wonderful people and have made some lifelong friends (as well as a love of great wine), but it was a chapter in my life, and I felt stifled and needed a change. COVID helped me open my mind to thinking of what I might like to

do and be happy doing. I really felt, and still do feel like, I have more challenges to tackle and more to accomplish.

5. What is the biggest challenge your business has faced?

The biggest challenge was the supply chain issues just after the COVID epidemic. That seems to have worked itself out now.

6. Who do you most admire in the business world?

My wife, Marie Leonard of Marie Lyall Interior Design. She is unbelievably talented in her design world, but she also has been a great resource to me due to her many years in retail. She possesses such a great analytical mind.

7. What's one thing Napa could do to help local business?

Encourage people to support local business. It's been sad to see a couple of recent closures of family-owned businesses lately. When you support a local, the money stays local.

8. If you could change one

thing about your business or industry, what would it be?

It would be nice if artists didn't release as many colored variants of the same title to create a certain collectability. In one recent release, there were almost 40 different color variants of the same release. Who wants 40 versions of the same record? Also, it's not good for the environment.

9. What's something people might be surprised to know about you?

I am a classically trained chef — 1983 Culinary Institute of America grad. Some instructors I had would make Gordon Ramsey blush.

10. What is one thing you hope to accomplish in your lifetime that you haven't yet?

I'd like to try retirement. I hear it's wonderful. But what would I do? Probably listen to records all day.

Right On Napa!!! Vintage Vinyl is located at 2375 California Blvd., Suite A (near Lucky supermarket) Napa; 707-224-4050.



SUZANNE BECKER BRONK PHOTOGRAPHY

Signum Architecture has a new office in Napa but works in the valley and beyond.

Signum

From A6

"Our location also makes it easy for us to reach out to city and county agencies, from the city of Napa's Planning Department to the Napa County Building Department. I can even visit the hardware store to see what supplies and fixtures are in stock," said Denton.

Denton and Fernandez's familiarity with the slopes of Napa County is extremely valuable.

"A lot of the available land for wineries and residences is up in the hills, not on the valley floor," said Denton.

Denton, who is originally from Bend, Oregon, came to the Napa Valley during his high school years. He then studied engineering at Pacific Union College in Angwin.

Fernandez, who is from Guadalajara, Mexico, graduated from Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) in Jalisco. He fell in love with the Bay Area a few years into his professional career. Fernandez moved to the Napa Valley soon after.

The principals got to know one another by working together at a St. Helena architecture firm. Later they decided to go into business for themselves.

The firm's name "Signum," which is Latin for "design," pur-

posefully does not include the partners' last names.

"We want the name of the firm to have longevity. That way we can pass it down to the next generation of architects," said Denton.

One of Signum's achievements is designing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified hospitality areas and production facilities for local wineries. Their list includes Cade Estate Winery, Odette Winery and HALL Winery.

"It's easy to design a beautiful tasting room. It's hard to design a production facility that's easy to work in and a safe environment to process grapes. We are proud when a winery tells us that we really understood the crushing and fermentation processes," said Fernandez.

Signum specializes in designing wine caves, which may be tunneled out of tufa, volcanic rock, in the hills, and constructed with shotcrete, concrete applied by spraying, at lower elevations.

The architects learned from the 2017 and subsequent wildfires how to create homes that will withstand the new impacts of climate change.

"Embers tend to nestle in crawl spaces and ventilated attics. Now none of the houses we build have crawl spaces and unvented attics," said Fernandez.

When the firm rebuilt homes in the hills, they listened to what

their clients wanted to change.

"One owner used to have to climb 40 steps to reach his front door. We rebuilt the home so now he can pull into the driveway and walk on a flat surface to the entryway," said Fernandez.

Denton's advice for design professionals in Napa Valley is to maintain and grow connections with former clients.

"The Napa Valley still has that small-town feeling, where you know your neighbors. We like to close a project with the client being happy. That way local wine-makers and real estate brokers remember us well," said Denton.

Fernandez adds local architects should take note of the built environment around a client's property.

"Looking at the designs of surrounding wineries and homes helps us understand what structure will be unique and stand apart, yet still fit in," said Fernandez.

Denton said business owners should retain a general curiosity.

"Explore, be open-minded and look for multiple solutions to a problem. In addition, when you come up with a design solution, work to refine it. Make every line purposeful," said Denton.

For more information, visit signumarchitecture.com.

You can reach reporter Jennifer Huffman at 707-256-2218 or jhuffman@napanews.com

BIZ BUZZ

Grgich Hills Estate names Colangelo & Partners as agency of record

Grgich Hills Estate announced Colangelo & Partners as its new agency of record.

Colangelo & Partners, a fine wine, spirits and lifestyle public relations agency, will lead strategic communications efforts at Grgich Hills Estate, according to a news release.

"We're honored and excited to represent such a storied winery with a profound influence on Napa Valley's history," said Gino Colangelo, president of Colangelo & Partners. "Our goal is to communicate Grgich Hills Estate's unique heritage, its leadership in regenerative agriculture, and its enduring tradition of crafting world-class wines with both longtime enthusiasts and new audiences."

"We are thrilled to have Colangelo & Partners support us in our communications efforts as we honor the legacy and values of the Grgich and Hills families," said Violet Grgich, president and co-owner of Grgich Hills Estate.

Colangelo & Partners will manage media relations and strategic partnerships for Grgich Hills Estate, "focusing on promoting the winery's diverse luxury portfolio, progressive and effective farming initiatives, and exceptional visitor experience." Info: grgich.com

Pattison receives Lifetime Achievement Award from dental journal

Dimensions of Dental Hygiene, the Journal of Professional Excellence, announced Napa Valley resident Anna M. Pattison, RDH, MS, as the 2024 Esther Wilkins Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

This award is presented each year "to recognize the distinguished career of a worthy individual who has consistently and effectively contributed to the enrichment of the dental hygiene profession," said a news release.

With more than 50 years as a dedicated dental hygienist, educator, administrator, editor, author and speaker, "Pattison



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Anna M. Pattison, RDH, MS

has made a monumental impact clinical dental hygiene," said the release.

Pattison is perhaps best known for co-authoring the "seminal" textbook "Periodontal Instrumentation," said the release.

Jersey Mike's partners with Queen's Cancer Wellness Program

Napa's Jersey Mike's Subs restaurant is partnering with Providence Queen of the Valley Medical Center's Cancer Wellness Program in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month.

From Oct. 14-20, Jersey Mike's will be donating 10% of all sales to support the Cancer Wellness Program.

Jersey Mike's Subs is located at 627 Trancas St. in Napa.

Info: jerseylikes.com; 707-501-4747.

Nine North Wine Co. names DeLaRosa head of sales

Nine North Wine Co. a portfolio of small production handcrafted wines founded in Napa Valley's Stag's Leap District in 2000, announced the appointment of Marty DeLaRosa as the new head of sales in California.

"With a distinguished background in the wine industry,

Marty brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success to our team," said a news release.

Prior to joining the Nine North team, DeLaRosa was the director of sales at Trinitas Cellars and has held sales leadership roles for both Houdini Labs and Makeen Technologies in the cannabis and technology industries, according to the release.

"We are thrilled to welcome Marty to Nine North," said Elijah Pfister, partner at Nine North Wine Co. "His deep understanding of the wine industry and entrepreneurial attitude will be key aspects to his success here."

"I am excited to be part of such a dynamic and forward-thinking company," said DeLaRosa.

Nine North Wine Co. is owned and operated by Leslie and Elijah Pfister, in partnership with Bacchus Capital Management.

Info: 707-226-5511; ninenorth-wines.com

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