



**HOUSING: Texas Leads Nation in Production of Mobile Homes**

**T**exas is the nation’s largest producer of manufactured or “mobile” homes and the second-largest consumer. Manufacturers in the state were responsible for 27 percent of mobile homes fabricated nationwide in 2014, according to the Manufactured Housing Institute. Approximately 1.9 million Texans reside in manufactured housing, accounting for 7.4 percent of the Texas housing market, according to the 2013 American Community Survey’s five-year estimate.

The state makes up 10 percent of the nation’s 18 million people living in manufactured homes and ranked 23rd in the nation in share of residents living in mobile homes.

Consumers benefit from access to cheaper housing. The average mobile home in Texas cost \$60,200 in 2013, far less than comparable conventional single-family housing, according to the 2013 U.S. Census’ American Housing Survey. Additionally, manufactured home purchasers generally don’t require a large line of credit similar to a mortgage, and residents are known to have a higher satisfaction rate than those who rent housing such as apartments, according to researchers at Duke University.

There are downsides to mobile home living, including a rate of depreciation that is 3–4 percent faster than “stick-built” housing. In addition, local zoning regulations have created a shortage of mobile home parks, leading to spikes in demand and rising land rents.

—Emily Gutierrez



**LABOR: Fewer Texans than U.S. Average Hold Two or More Jobs**

**T**exas was one of seven states in which fewer than 4 percent of workers held more than one job in 2014, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The national average was 4.9 percent, a rate that’s held constant since 2010.

In all, 11 states were below the national average, with most located in the South. While 3.9 percent of Texas workers had more than one job, Florida had the lowest incidence, 3.3 percent. Conversely, the highest rate of multiple jobholders was in South Dakota, 8.7 percent, followed by Vermont, 8.5 percent, and Nebraska, 8.4 percent.

The availability of full-time jobs, including overtime hours, may partly explain why there are fewer multiple jobholders in Texas, where the unemployment rate averaged 5 percent in 2014 (compared with 6.1 percent nationally). Hours worked in nonfarm jobs averaged 36.5 hours per week in 2014 in Texas, BLS data show. By comparison, the national private sector average was 34.5 hours.

The U.S. multiple-jobholding rate, which peaked at 6.2 percent in 1996, is based on the BLS Current Population Survey. Respondents are regarded as being multiple jobholders if they hold two or more wage or salary jobs.

—Michael Weiss



**ENERGY: U.S. Plans to Exchange Light Crude Oil for Mexico’s Heavy Oil**

**E**ven as Congress weighs ending a 40-year ban on oil exports, an agreement has been reached that would allow the U.S. to swap its light, sweet oil for Mexico’s heavy sour crude. The deal, recently approved by the U.S. Department of Commerce, is permitted under provisions of the 1975 export ban, although this is the first time any licenses will be issued.

Since the emergence of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, the U.S. has produced an abundance of light, sweet crude oil, much of it from Texas shale oilfields. As a result, light crude imports fell and exports of oil to Canada, which are exempt from the ban, increased from 46,000 barrels per day in 2011 to 491,000 barrels per day by January 2015, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).

U.S. refineries, many retrofitted to handle the high sulfur, heavy crude, are ill-equipped to handle so much light, sweet shale oil. In turn, half of Mexico’s refineries lack the proper equipment to process domestically produced heavy crude and have increasingly imported lighter oil as a blend.

This planned swap will allow the U.S. and Mexico to optimize their refineries while providing environmental benefits. The increased U.S. shale oil would allow Mexican facilities to reduce the sulfur content of their currently high-sulfur gasoline, according to the EIA.

—Sarah Greer