

No guarantee of finding work out of state

By Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

Escape isn't easy.

As California buckled under layoffs and hiring freezes last year, tens of thousands of residents saw lower unemployment rates in other states and decided to move.

Many couldn't find jobs near their new homes either. The unemployment rate in 2010 among former Californians who had left the state during the previous 12 months was 19 percent, according to a Bee analysis of new U.S. census data. By comparison, the unemployment rate in the state they left behind was 12 percent.

Those figures partly reflect the dismal job markets in other places. Moving from California to Nevada, which has the nation's highest unemployment rate, isn't the safest bet, but 30,000 people tried it anyway last year.

Texas looked safer. It has added roughly 150,000 jobs since the start of the recession, and 50,000 Californians moved there last year, a higher number than moved to any other state.

But 15 percent of those former Californians couldn't find jobs when they got to Texas, according to The Bee analysis.

The statewide unemployment rate in Texas is 8.1 percent – about half a percentage point better than the national average, but still high by historical standards. The contradiction in Texas – more jobs but relatively higher unemployment – is largely due to movers, particularly from California. More than 160,000 Californians have moved to Texas

since the start of the recession.

“We have produced lots of jobs but, despite that, our unemployment rate is about as high as everywhere else,” said Daniel Hamermesh, professor of economics at the University of Texas at Austin. “The reason is simple: We attract migrants.”

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