

## Still hiring? Some Professions Weathering Recession Better

BY Courtenay Edelhart, Californian staff writer

There's a bright spot on the financial horizon for those weary of constant bad employment news.

Some sectors are faring the recession better than others, according to federal data on unemployment by occupation.

Legal, computer, administrative and finance jobs are among sectors with a brighter outlook than the nation overall, the U.S. Census Bureau reported recently.

That's no surprise to Monique Rogers, corporate administrator and marketing director for Bakersfield managed service provider ARRC Technology.

"I was just talking to someone the other day who likened us to health care," she said. "Whether you're making money or not, if you're in business you've probably got computers, and you're going to need someone to service them."

That's not to say the company isn't feeling the recession, Rogers added.

"We're feeling it on the hardware side," she said. "It's almost like a car. People who normally would trade in their old model are holding off on buying a new one, but even then, you still have repairs."

The Bakersfield office of ProSoft Technology, which provides wireless networking and other communications products and services, says it has benefitted from a global push toward greater automation, in some cases fueled by government regulation.

"It's not all growth, necessarily, but there is at least stabilization," said executive assistant Bridget Blackburn.

The legal and human resources professions both seem to be getting a boost from the fact jobs are scarce and companies are downsizing, local industry leaders said.

"In this economy, one thing an employer can't afford to do wrong is employee relations and labor compliance," said Holly Culhane, president of P.A.S. Associates, a human resources consulting firm in Bakersfield.

"How do you take care of layoffs? How do you deal with increased claims by employees of wage discrimination and things like that? A lot of companies are outsourcing that to us," Culhane said.

When jobs and money are scarce, people also are more likely to turn to the courts for resolution of issues they might otherwise have let slide, said attorney Jay Rosenlieb of the Bakersfield office of the Klein, DeNatale, Goldner law firm.

"If there was a contract dispute or a problem on the job, parties would say, 'Let's work it out or move on,' but in a tough economy there's less leeway to work things out, so positions harden," Rosenlieb said.

San Joaquin Valley College said before the recession, companies used to call the school looking for graduates to fill positions.

"Then it changed to where we had to call them looking to place our students because we weren't hearing from them," said campus director Nick Gomez. "But just recently, we've seen it flip back again.

"Companies are calling us, and we've had a high degree of success finding jobs for our graduates."

Even in fields with relatively low unemployment rates, however, the overall economy is holding down wages and giving employers their pick of the best and brightest, said Lora Owen, market manager for staffing company Robert Half International's Visalia office.

"People need to think of their job search more as a marathon run than a sprint," she said. "You have to be very persistent and dedicated to your search."

***This article written by Courtenay Edelhart first appeared in The Bakersfield Californian on October 12, 2009. Holly Culhane is president of P.A.S. Associates, a Bakersfield human resources consulting firm. She can be contacted through her webpage at [www.PASassociates.com](http://www.PASassociates.com) or by phone at 631-2165.***

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