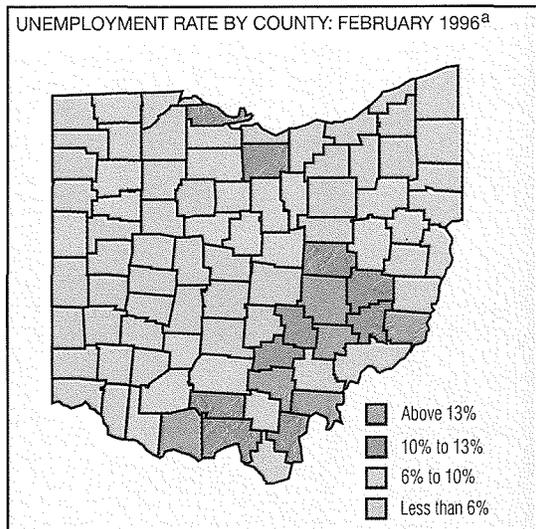
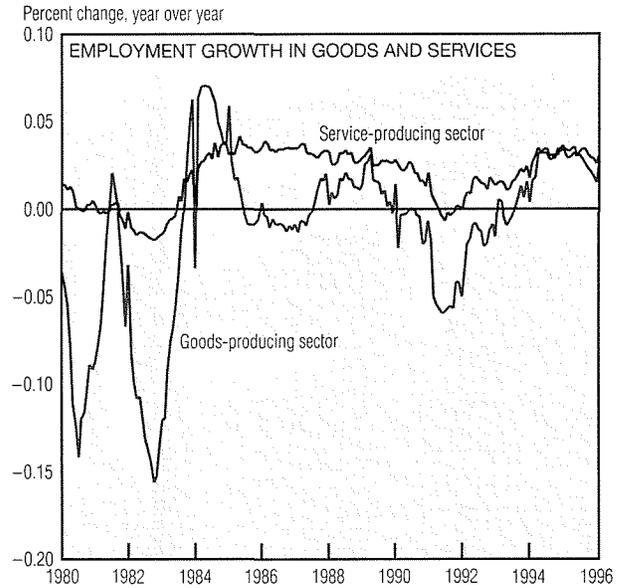
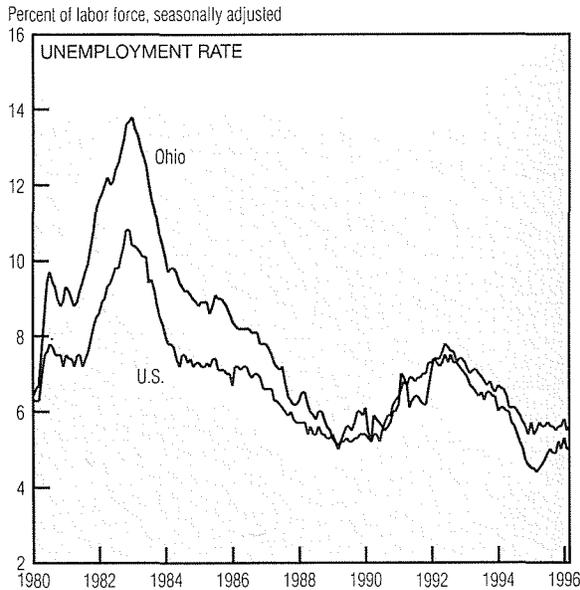


The Ohio Economy



Unemployment Rate by Metropolitan Area^a
(Percent of labor force)

	February 1996	February 1995
Akron	5.3	4.9
Canton–Massillon	6.2	5.4
Cincinnati	4.6	4.5
Cleveland–Lorain–Elyria	5.3	5.3
Columbus	3.5	3.3
Dayton–Springfield	4.6	4.2
Hamilton–Middletown	4.8	4.4
Lima	6.5	5.5
Mansfield	6.5	6.1
Steubenville–Weirton	6.8	7.2
Toledo	5.3	5.1
Youngstown–Warren	6.7	6.5

a. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Ohio Bureau of Employment Services.

Ohio started 1995 with one of its lowest unemployment rates in recent years—4.5%. While that rate was not sustained, the state stayed consistently below the U.S. average throughout 1995 and into 1996. This represents a major turnaround from last decade's Rust Belt period, when Ohio had one of the highest jobless rates in the nation.

The source of this improvement is the increased stability of goods-producing employment at all points

in the latest business cycle. Jobs in this sector (approximately 80% of which are in manufacturing in Ohio) fell much less in the 1990 recession than in the early 1980s' downturns. Employment in goods production also grew more slowly, but at a steadier pace, in the current recovery, and in 1995 expanded at nearly the same rate as service jobs. The latter is noteworthy because nationally, service-producing employment continued to grow in 1995, while goods employment actually shrank.

Even though the state as a whole has posted exceptionally low jobless rates in recent years, February data show that some pockets of high unemployment remain. The weakest areas are the counties near the Ohio River and the Pennsylvania border. By contrast, many rural counties (particularly in western Ohio) and the six largest metropolitan areas were well below February's national jobless rate of 6% (not seasonally adjusted).