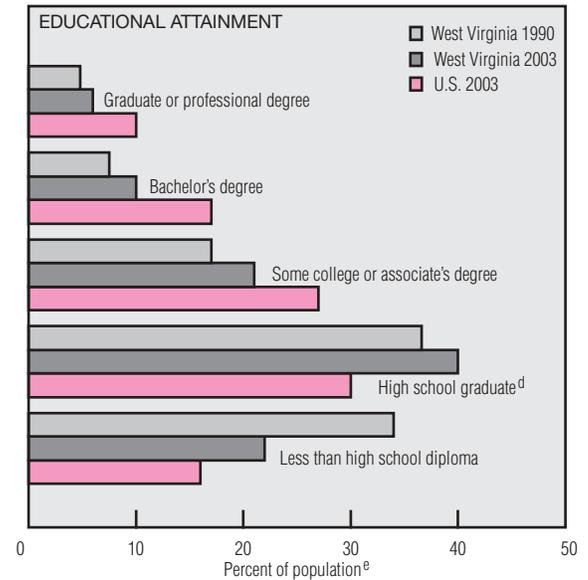
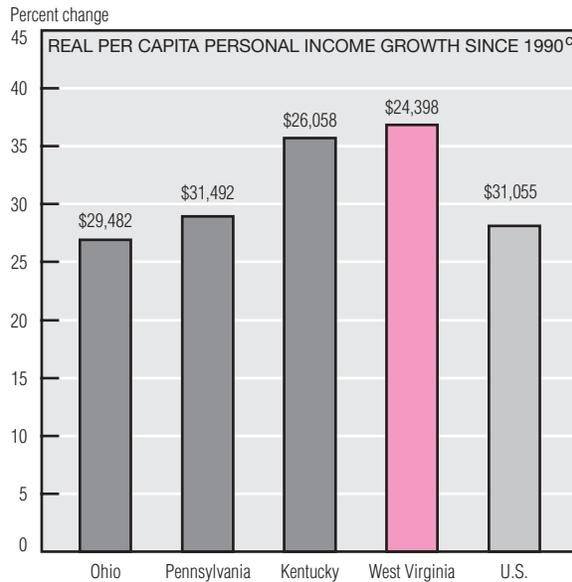
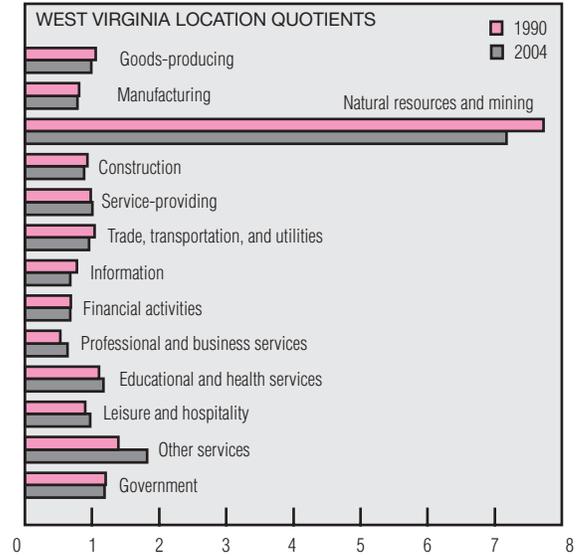
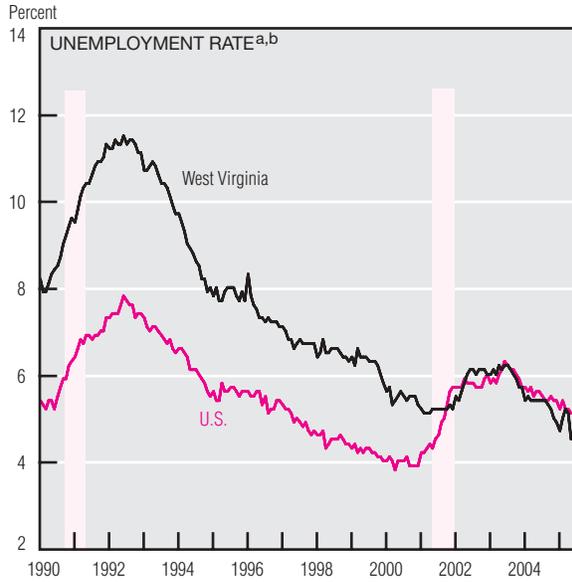


West Virginia Employment and Income



a. Shaded bars indicate recessions.
 b. Seasonally adjusted.
 c. The number above each bar is the real per capita income for 2004:IVQ, expressed in chained 2000 dollars.
 d. High school graduates include people with a G.E.D. or similar equivalent.
 e. Aged 25 and older.
 SOURCES: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Throughout the 1990s, West Virginia's unemployment rate was significantly higher than the nation's. Since the last recession ended, however, it has tracked the U.S. average closely. In fact, for the past two years, the state's unemployment rate has been lower than or equal to the national average; in May, 4.5% of West Virginia's labor force was out of work, compared to 5.1% for the U.S.

Although the state's unemployment rate has converged with the nation's over the past 15 years, its

industrial composition has not necessarily done so. The upper right chart uses the location quotient, the simple ratio of a given industry's employment share in the state to that industry's employment share in the nation. A location quotient of one indicates that the state and the nation had the same share of employment in the specified industry. For West Virginia, most industries' location quotient did not change significantly.

Over the last 15 years, West Virginia's per capita personal income growth

has risen more (in percentage terms) than any other Fourth District state but its per capita personal income level remains below its District counterparts and the U.S. The state's rapid growth in per capita personal income may be partly explained by its rising education level: Since 1990, the number of high school dropouts has been reduced by 12%. But the percentage of its population without a high school diploma remains above the nation's.