HUD PD&R Regional Reports

Region 8: Rocky Mountain



- Sales market conditions—
 First quarter 2019: tight
 Fourth quarter 2018: tight
 First quarter 2018: tight
- Apartment market conditions—
 First quarter 2019: mixed (balanced to slightly tight)
 Fourth quarter 2018: balanced
 First quarter 2018: mixed (balanced to soft)



By James Conner | 1st Quarter 2019

Overview

The economy in the Rocky Mountain region continued growing in the first quarter of 2019, with nonfarm payrolls increasing 2.0 percent from a year earlier, somewhat faster than the 1.8-percent growth nationwide. The economy in the region has been expanding since 2011, and industries with strong growth in the current quarter include professional services, healthcare, and tourism. Nearly one-half of the jobs added in the region during the past year were in the professional and business services, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality sectors, which grew by a combined 57,600 jobs. Labor market conditions in the region remained generally tight, despite a slight uptick in the unemployment rate from 3.4 to 3.5 percent. The population in the region increased 1.3 percent during the 12 months ending July 1, 2018, unchanged from the rate of growth during the preceding 12 months and more than double the national growth rate of 0.6 percent. Home sales market conditions remained tight in the region, with most metropolitan areas posting year-over-year home price increases ranging from 5 to 10 percent. Apartment market conditions tightened somewhat in the first quarter of 2019 in a few metropolitan areas, particularly in the northern parts of the region; however, conditions remained balanced in many of the larger metropolitan areas in the region, despite a high volume of apartment completions. Homebuilding activity in the region was

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down in the current quarter, compared with a year earlier, based on the number of housing units permitted. The declines in construction were most pronounced in Colorado and Utah.

During the first quarter of 2019—

- Colorado, Utah, South Dakota, and Wyoming all had payroll growth rates above the national average, with increases of 49,800, 45,300, 9,000, and 5,400 jobs, or 1.9, 3.0, 2.1, and 2.0 percent, respectively, from a year earlier.
- More than one-half of the population gain in the region in 2018 resulted from net in-migration, which totaled more than 84,000 people. Colorado and Utah, combined, had net in-migration of more than 76,000 people in 2018.
- Home sales demand was strong, in part because of population and income growth, and most metropolitan areas in the region

- had less than a 3.2-month supply of homes for sale; as a result, home sales declined from a year earlier in most metropolitan areas.
- A few apartment markets in the region were slightly tight in the current quarter, including the Casper, Greeley, and Rapid City metropolitan areas, where rent growth ranged from 6 to 8 percent. Most other metropolitan areas in the region were balanced, however, with rent increases ranging from 1 to 6 percent.
- Single-family permitting in the region was down 18 percent from a year earlier, with all states in the region posting decreases. Multifamily permitting was down 36 percent, with small increases in Montana and Wyoming more than offset by sizable declines in Colorado, South Dakota, and Utah.

Economic Conditions

The economy in the Rocky Mountain region continued expanding in the first quarter of 2019, with nonfarm payrolls increasing by 116,200 jobs, or 2.0 percent, from a year earlier. This increase, however, was somewhat less than the gain of 127,800 jobs, or 2.3 percent, a year earlier, Job growth in the current quarter was broad-based, and except for a decrease of 400 jobs, or 0.1 percent, in financial activities, every nonfarm sector in the region posted payroll gains. The sectors with the greatest increases included professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, and education and health services, which grew by 26,900, 15,900, and 14,800 jobs, or 3.6, 2.4, and 1.9 percent, respectively. Within the professional and business services sector, the relatively wellpaying professional, scientific, and technical services subsector grew by approximately 19,000 jobs. Hourly earnings for private employees in the region were up 4.9 percent from a year earlier in the first guarter of 2019, the highest rate of growth during the current expansion. Population gains in the region have led to increased healthcare demand. In Colorado, two UCHealth hospitals are under construction, in Greeley and Highlands Ranch, at a combined cost of \$495 million, and will employ nearly 900 workers when complete in mid-2019. Favorable snow conditions allowed some resorts in the region to extend their ski season; Vail Resorts, Inc. reported that skier visits through April 2019 at its North

Payrolls in the first quarter of 2019 increased from a year ago in nearly all nonfarm sectors in the Rocky Mountain region.

	First Q	uarter	Year-Over-Year Change		
	2018 (Thousands)	2019 (Thousands)	Absolute (Thousands)	Percent	
Total Nonfarm Payrolls	5,763.6	5,879.8	116.2	2.0	
Goods-Producing Sectors	806.2	828.9	22.7	2.8	
Mining, Logging, & Construction	431.6	444.0	12.4	2.9	
Mining & Logging	88.4	92.5	4.1	4.6	
Construction	343.2	351.5	8.3	2.4	
Manufacturing	374.7	385.0	10.3	2.7	
Service-Providing Sectors	4,957.4	5,050.9	93.5	1.9	
Wholesale & Retail Trade	847.7	859.5	11.8	1.4	
Transportation & Utilities	216.7	225.0	8.3	3.8	
Information	133.7	135.1	1.4	1.0	
Financial Activities	344.9	344.5	-0.4	-0.1	
Professional & Business Services	743.2	770.1	26.9	3.6	
Education & Health Services	785.5	800.3	14.8	1.9	
Leisure & Hospitality	659.3	675.2	15.9	2.4	
Other Services	214.8	220.0	5.2	2.4	
Government	1,011.5	1,021.3	9.8	1.0	

Note: Numbers may not add to totals due to rounding. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics





American resorts, including those in Colorado and Utah, were up 6.8 percent from a year earlier. The transportation and utilities, the mining, logging, and construction, and the manufacturing sectors in the region also posted high rates of job growth, increasing by 8,300, 12,400, and 10,300 jobs, or 3.8, 2.9, and 2.7 percent, respectively. Rising energy demand led to increased exploration, and 133 drilling rigs were active in the region in the first quarter of 2019, up 11 percent from a year earlier (Baker Hughes, a GE Company). The regional unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in the first quarter of 2019, up slightly from 3.4 percent a year earlier, due entirely to an increase in Colorado, where labor force growth of 79,400, or 2.6 percent, outpaced resident employment growth of 64,000, or 2.2 percent. The state unemployment rates ranged from 3.0 percent in North Dakota to 4.5 percent in Montana, and except for Montana, all states in the Rocky Mountain region had unemployment rates below the 4.1-percent national average.

During the first quarter of 2019—

- Colorado had the greatest job gain in the region, with nonfarm payrolls increasing by 49,800 jobs, or 1.9 percent, from a year earlier. The professional and business services and the leisure and hospitality sectors, which increased by 17,300 and 8,000 jobs, or 4.2 and 2.4 percent, respectively, led the gains. Professional, scientific, and technical services subsector payrolls in the Denver and Boulder metropolitan areas were up by 6,800 and 2,500 jobs, or 5.0 and 9.1 percent, respectively.
- Utah had the highest rate of job growth in the region, and the second highest rate in the nation, with nonfarm payrolls increasing by 45,300 jobs, or 3.0 percent. Nearly one-half of the jobs added were in the leisure and hospitality, the wholesale and retail trade, or the education and health services sectors, which increased by 9,400, 7,400, and 5,800 jobs, or 6.5, 3.4, and 2.8 percent, respectively.
- In South Dakota and Wyoming, nonfarm payrolls were up by 9,000 and 5,400 jobs, or 2.1 and 2.0 percent, respectively. In South Dakota, the professional and business services and the manufacturing sectors increased by 2,200 and 2,100 jobs, or 7.0 and 4.8 percent, respectively, but the financial activities sector declined by 300 jobs, or 1.0 percent. In Wyoming, the wholesale and retail trade and the professional and business

The unemployment rate in the region edged up in the first guarter of 2019, due to an increase in Colorado, but remained below the national average unemployment rate.



1Q = first quarter. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

- services sectors were up by 1,200 and 1,100 jobs, or 3.3 and 6.3 percent, respectively, but the leisure and hospitality and the education and health services sectors were down by 700 and 400 jobs, or 2.1 and 1.4 percent, respectively.
- In Montana and North Dakota, job growth was below the regional average, with nonfarm payrolls increasing by 4,100 and 2,500 jobs, or 0.9 and 0.6 percent, respectively. In Montana, the professional and business services and the financial activities sectors increased by 1,300 and 1,100 jobs, or 3.2 and 4.5 percent, respectively, but the information sector and construction subsector decreased by 400 and 600 jobs, or 6.2 and 2.4 percent, respectively. In North Dakota, the mining and logging subsector and education and health services sector increased by 2,100 and 900 jobs, or 10.9 and 1.4 percent, respectively, but the wholesale and retail trade and the leisure and hospitality sectors decreased by 1,300 and 1,100 jobs, or 1.8 and 2.8 percent, respectively.

Population

The population in the Rocky Mountain region grew from 2017 to 2018 by about 159,500, or 1.3 percent, unchanged from the rate of growth a year earlier (U.S. Census Bureau population estimates as of July 1). Net in-migration to the six states in the region totaled approximately 84,800 people, up from 76,500 people a year earlier, and accounted for more than 50 percent of the

population gain. Net in-migration strengthened in Colorado, North Dakota, and Wyoming, but slowed in Montana, South Dakota, and Utah. Net natural change (resident births minus resident deaths) totaled approximately 74,400 people, down from 76,700 people a year earlier. Net natural change slowed in every state in the region, primarily due to declines in births. Nationally, the

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The rate of population growth in the Rocky Mountain region continued to surpass the average growth rate nationwide.

	Population Estimate			Percentage Change		
	2016	2017	2018	2016 to 2017	2017 to 2018	
United States	323,071,342	325,147,121	327,167,434	0.6	0.6	
Rocky Mountain Region	11,825,930	11,979,506	12,139,023	1.3	1.3	
Colorado	5,540,921	5,615,902	5,695,564	1.4	1.4	
Montana	1,040,863	1,053,090	1,062,305	1.2	0.9	
North Dakota	754,353	755,176	760,077	0.1	0.6	
South Dakota	862,890	873,286	882,235	1.2	1.0	
Utah	3,042,613	3,103,118	3,161,105	2.0	1.9	
Wyoming	584,290	578,934	577,737	-0.9	-0.2	

Note: The population estimates are as of July 1.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

population increased 0.6 percent from 2017 to 2018, unchanged from the rate a year earlier. Since 2010, the population in the Rocky Mountain region has increased an average of 1.4 percent a year, or double the average rate of increase nationwide of 0.7 percent a year.

During the 12 months ending July 1, 2018-

- Colorado had the greatest population gain in the region, with an increase of about 79,650, or 1.4 percent, compared with a gain of less than 75,000 in the preceding 12 months. Net in-migration increased from 46,100 to 51,500 people, which more than offset a moderate decline in net natural change from about 28,700 to 27,900 people. Colorado accounted for more than 45 percent of the total population gain in the region.
- Utah's population increased by nearly 58,000, or 1.9 percent, the third highest rate in the nation; however, this gain was less than the increase of 60,500, or 2.0 percent, during the preceding 12 months. Although growth remained strong, net in-migration declined from 27,350 to 25,000 people, and net natural change declined slightly, from 33,150 to 32,950 people. Nevertheless, Utah continued to have the highest birth rate in the nation.

- In Montana and South Dakota, the population increased by about 9,200 and 8,950, or 0.9 and 1.0 percent, respectively. In both states, population growth slowed from 1.2 percent in the previous 12 months. In Montana, net in-migration decreased from about 9,650 to 6,875 people, and net natural change decreased from 2,550 to 2,325 people. In South Dakota, net in-migration decreased from about 5,675 to 4,300 people, and net natural change decreased slightly, from 4,725 to 4,650 people.
- In North Dakota, the population increased by about 4,900, or 0.6 percent. Although this increase was below the regional and national growth rates, it was an improvement from the 0.1-percent growth in the previous 12 months. Net natural change declined from about 5,125 to 4,650 people, but the net out-migration of nearly 4,350 people in the previous year reversed, and the state had net in-migration of about 225 people.
- In Wyoming, the population declined by about 1,200, or 0.2 percent, but this decrease was an improvement from the preceding 12 months when the population decreased by 5,350, or 0.9 percent. Net out-migration slowed from about 7,925 to 3,100 people, but net natural change also slowed, from about 2,525 to less than 1,900 people.

Sales Market Conditions

Sales housing market conditions in the Rocky Mountain region were tight in the first quarter of 2019. Although the number of active listings increased slightly in most of the larger metropolitan areas in the region, the inventory of homes for sale remained low. Year-over-year home price gains were strong, ranging from 5 to 10 percent in many metropolitan areas in the region, but home sales declined in most metropolitan areas due to the limited

for-sale inventory. In the Denver metropolitan area, the average home price during the 12 months ending March 2019 was up 7 percent from the previous 12 months, to approximately \$463,300, but sales were down 2 percent, to about 67,350 homes sold (Colorado Association of Realtors®). The active listings in March 2019 represented a 1.6-month supply of homes for sale at the current sales rate, up slightly from a 1.5-month supply a year



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Strong sales demand led to significant home price increases throughout much of the region, but a lack of for-sale inventory led to declining sales in most metropolitan areas.

	40.84	Number of Homes Sold			Price			
	12 Months [—] Ending	2018	2019	Percent Change	Average or Median	2018 (\$)	2019 (\$)	Percent Change
Cheyenne	March	3,000	3,025	1	AVG	251,300	258,400	3
Colorado Springs (N&E)ª	March	18,900	17,750	-6	AVG	306,300	334,900	9
Denver (N&E) ^b	March	68,500	67,350	-2	AVG	434,200	463,300	7
Fargo	March	4,975	5,000	1	AVG	241,600	235,500	-3
Fort Collins	March	9,125	8,800	-4	AVG	389,700	408,700	5
Missoula	March	2,700	2,625	-3	AVG	284,200	301,500	6
Ogden (N&E) ^c	March	10,350	9,675	-7	AVG	276,000	304,000	10
Salt Lake City (N&E) ^c	March	18,300	17,500	-4	AVG	341,300	366,100	7
Sioux Falls (N&E)d	March	4,800	4,600	-4	AVG	220,100	231,300	5

AVG = average. N&E = new and existing.

Notes: All figures are rounded. Salt Lake City metropolitan area data includes Salt Lake County only.

Sources: (a) Pikes Peak Association of Realtors®; (b) Colorado Association of Realtors®; (c) Utah Association of Realtors®; (d) Realtor® Association of the Sioux Empire, Inc.; all other metropolitan areas-Metrostudy, A Hanley Wood Company, with adjustments by the analyst

earlier. In the Colorado Springs metropolitan area, sales in the 12 months ending March 2019 were down 6 percent from a year earlier, to about 17,750 homes sold, and the average price was up 9 percent, to \$334,900 (Pikes Peak Association of Realtors®). The for-sale inventory remained very low, with a 1.1-month supply of homes for sale in March 2019, up from a 1.0-month supply a year earlier. In the Salt Lake City and Ogden metropolitan areas, home prices in the 12 months ending March 2019 were up 7 and 10 percent from a year earlier, to \$366,100 and \$304,000, respectively, but sales were down 4 and 7 percent, to about 17,500 and 9,675 homes sold, respectively (Utah Association of Realtors®). The for-sale supply in March 2019 rose slightly from a year earlier but remained low in both metropolitan areas; the active listings increased from a 1.7- to a 1.9-month supply in Salt Lake City, and from a 1.6- to a 2.0-month supply in Ogden.

In the northern states in the region, home sales conditions were somewhat less tight. In the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, the average price was up 5 percent in the 12 months ending March 2019, to \$231,300, and sales were down 4 percent, to about 4,600 homes sold (Realtor® Association of the Sioux Empire, Inc.). The active listings represented a 3.1-month supply for sale in March 2019, down from a 3.8-month supply a year earlier. In the Fargo metropolitan area, home prices in the 12 months ending March 2019 were down 3 percent from a year earlier, to \$235,500, but sales were up 1 percent, to about 5,000 homes sold (Metrostudy, A Hanley Wood Company, with adjustments by the analyst). At the state level, price gains and sales declines were also relatively less pronounced in the northern parts of the region. In Montana and Wyoming, home prices in the 12 months ending March 2019 were up 4 and 1 percent from a year earlier, to about

\$287,100 and \$285,300, respectively, whereas prices in Colorado and Utah were up 7 and 6 percent, to \$420,500 and \$347,200, respectively (CoreLogic, Inc.). Sales in Colorado and Utah were down 1 and 3 percent, to about 144,100 and 79,600 homes sold, respectively, whereas in Montana, sales were down less than 1 percent, to 23,200 homes sold, and in Wyoming, sales were up more than 9 percent from a year earlier, to 11,300 homes sold.

The rate of seriously delinquent mortgages (loans that were 90 or more days delinquent or in foreclosure) and real estate owned (REO) properties decreased in the Rocky Mountain region. In February 2019, the share of mortgages in the region that were seriously delinquent or had transitioned into REO status was 0.7 percent, down from 0.8 percent a year earlier (CoreLogic, Inc.). The rates declined in all states in the region except North Dakota, where the rate remained flat, and the rates ranged from 0.6 percent in Colorado to 1.1 percent in Wyoming. In addition, all states in the region had rates below the national average of 1.6 percent.

Despite the tight sales market conditions, permitting of single-family homes declined from a year ago in nearly all areas in the region.

During the first quarter of 2019 (preliminary data) —

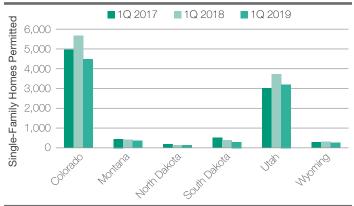
- Approximately 8,675 single-family homes were permitted in the Rocky Mountain region, down 18 percent from a year earlier, and all states in the region posted decreases.
- In Colorado, single-family homebuilding was down 21 percent from a year ago, to about 4,475 homes permitted. The greatest declines were in the Denver, Colorado Springs, and Greeley metropolitan areas, where permitting fell 22, 26, and 23 percent, to about 2,275, 800, and 510 homes, respectively, but all metropolitan areas in the state posted decreases.



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- In Utah, single-family construction was down 14 percent, to 3,200 homes permitted. All metropolitan areas in the state had declines, with the greatest decrease occurring in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area, where permitting was down 30 percent, to 930 homes.
- In Montana and South Dakota, single-family permitting declined 15 and 25 percent, to 350 and 280 homes, respectively. In the Billings metropolitan area, permitting decreased from about 80 to 50 homes, and in the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, permitting fell from about 190 to 140 homes.
- In Wyoming and North Dakota, single-family permitting declined 8 and 20 percent, to about 270 and 100 homes, respectively. In the Bismarck metropolitan area, permitting increased slightly, from about 30 to 40 homes, and in the Cheyenne metropolitan area, permitting increased from about 80 to 100 homes; however, these were the only two metropolitan areas in the region that reported increases in single-family homebuilding.

Single-family permitting in the first quarter of 2019 decreased from a year ago in all states in the Rocky Mountain region.



1Q = first quarter

Note: Based on preliminary data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey

Apartment Market Conditions

Apartment market conditions ranged from balanced to slightly tight in most metropolitan areas in the Rocky Mountain region in the first quarter of 2019. By comparison, the markets in the region were mostly balanced a year earlier. Strong population growth in much of the region, along with rising home prices, which made homeownership less attainable for many households, supported demand for rental housing. In the Denver metropolitan area, conditions were balanced, with a 6.1-percent apartment vacancy rate, up from 5.8 percent a year earlier (Apartment Insights). Apartment rents were up nearly 5 percent from a year earlier

in the first quarter of 2019, to \$1,443. In the Colorado Springs metropolitan area, the apartment market was also balanced, with a 5.8-percent vacancy rate, up from 5.4 percent a year earlier, and rents increased 5 percent, to \$1,071. Apartment completions in the state of Colorado during the 12 months ending March 2019 totaled about 15,800 units, more than double the number completed in the previous 12 months (McGraw-Hill Construction Pipeline database). Absorption of the new units was sufficiently strong that market conditions eased only slightly.

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Despite many completions in the past 12 months, apartment market conditions ranged from balanced to slightly tight in most major metropolitan areas in the region.

	Market .	Vacancy Rate			Average Monthly Rent		
	Condition	1Q 2018 (%)	1Q 2019 (%)	Percentage Point Change	1Q 2018 (\$)	1Q 2019 (\$)	Percent Change
Casper	Slightly Tight	9.6	4.8	-4.8	811	860	6
Colorado Springs ^a	Balanced	5.4	5.8	0.4	1,022	1,071	5
Denver ^a	Balanced	5.8	6.1	0.3	1,379	1,443	5
Fargo ^b	Soft	9.8	8.8	-1.0	NA	NA	NA
Greeley ^a	Slightly Tight	3.1	4.3	1.2	1,078	1,160	8
Missoula	Balanced	6.4	6.3	-0.1	946	987	4
Provo	Balanced	4.2	4.5	0.3	1,116	1,123	1
Rapid City	Slightly Tight	4.5	3.6	-0.9	909	974	7
Salt Lake City ^c	Balanced	5.0	5.7	0.7	1,007	1,063	6

1Q = first quarter. NA = data not available.

Note: Fargo apartment vacancy rates as of March 1.

Sources: Market condition - Economic and Market Analysis Division; vacancy rate and average monthly rent - (a) Apartment Insights; (b) Appraisal Services, Inc.; (c) Reis, Inc.; all other areas-Axiometrics, Inc.



In Utah, approximately 2,350 apartments were completed in the 12 months ending March 2019, down from 2,950 units in the previous 12 months. Apartment conditions in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area were balanced in the first quarter of 2019, with a 5.7-percent vacancy rate, up from 5.0 percent a year earlier, and the average rent increased less than 6 percent, to \$1,063 (Reis, Inc.). Conditions were also balanced in the Provo metropolitan area, where vacancies rose from 4.2 to 4.5 percent, and rents increased less than 1 percent, to \$1,123 (Axiometrics, Inc.).

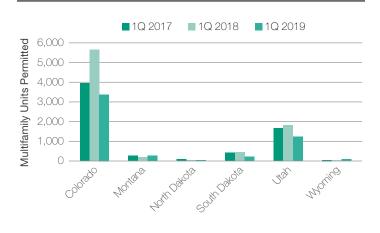
Vacancies decreased in many markets in the northern states in the region. In Rapid City, conditions became slightly tight, with vacancies declining from 4.5 to 3.6 percent and rents increasing 7 percent from a year earlier, to \$974 (Axiometrics, Inc.). Conditions were also slightly tight in the Casper metropolitan area, as vacancies declined from 9.6 to 4.8 percent and the average rent increased 6 percent, to \$860. In Missoula, apartment vacancies edged down, from 6.4 to 6.3 percent, but the market remained balanced, with rents increasing 4 percent, to \$987. In the Fargo metropolitan area, market conditions remained soft, despite a decrease in the apartment vacancy rate from 9.8 to 8.8 percent (Appraisal Services, Inc.).

Although rental demand in the Rocky Mountain region remained strong, permitting of multifamily units decreased from a year ago.

During the first quarter of 2019 (preliminary data) —

- Approximately 5,175 multifamily units were permitted in the region, down 36 percent from the 8,100 units permitted in the first quarter of 2018. Significant declines occurred in Colorado and Utah, which were slightly offset by increases in Montana and Wyoming.
- Multifamily permitting in Colorado was down 40 percent from a year earlier, to about 3,375 units. Most of the decline was in the Denver metropolitan area, where permitting decreased from nearly 4,050 units to less than 2,000 units, but building activity also fell sharply in the Boulder metropolitan area, decreasing from 590 to 340 units permitted, and in the Greeley metropolitan area, decreasing from 440 to 110 units permitted.
- In Utah, multifamily permitting was down one-third from a year earlier, to about 1,225 units. Most of the decrease occurred in

Permitting of multifamily units was down in the region in the first quarter of 2019, led by sizable declines in Colorado and Utah.



1Q = first quarter.

Note: Based on preliminary data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey

the Salt Lake City metropolitan area, where permitting declined from about 1,250 to 690 units. In the Provo metropolitan area, however, permitting was unchanged from a year earlier, at 190 units, and in the Ogden metropolitan area, multifamily permitting increased from about 130 to 280 units.

- Multifamily construction also fell in South Dakota, decreasing 50 percent, to about 210 units permitted. In the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, permitting declined from about 240 to 140 units, and in the Rapid City metropolitan area, permitting declined from 170 to 50 units. In North Dakota, multifamily construction was unchanged from a year earlier, with fewer than 20 multifamily units permitted statewide.
- In Montana, permitting increased from about 180 to 260 units, which included an increase from about 45 to 85 units permitted in the Missoula metropolitan area. Construction was also up in Wyoming, with multifamily permitting increasing from 20 to 80 units, helped by a slight increase in the Cheyenne metropolitan area, where permitting increased from 10 to 40 units.