

Construction employment up amid worker shortage

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Carpenter Antonio Martinez Jr. measures lumber for cutting, with his dad, Antonio Martinez Sr., background left, at a new Lennar home under construction at Quail Lake on Thursday, May 23, 2014.

JOHN WALKER — THE FRESNO BEE [Buy Photo](#)

Construction employment is up in the Fresno metropolitan area and other cities nationwide, but contractors are having trouble finding qualified workers, according to the [Associated General Contractors of America](#).

In Fresno, construction jobs increased 8% to 14,800 last month compared to 13,700 in September 2013, the contractors group said.

Hanford's 800 jobs and Madera's 1,300 jobs in construction, mining and logging remained unchanged last month.

The Visalia and Porterville area saw a 1% loss in jobs to 4,300 in September compared to 4,400 a year ago at the same time.

"It is good news that construction employment gains have spread," said chief economist Ken Simonson. "But there is a growing risk that contractors in many of these regions will have trouble finding qualified workers to complete the

rising volume of projects.”

Why? Schools are turning away from career and technical skills training, the contractors group said.

And many construction workers moved into other industries during the downturn, Fresno homebuilder John Bonadelle of Bonadelle Neighborhoods said during the 2014 Real Estate Symposium on Oct. 17 at Fresno State’s Gazarian Real Estate Center.

“The lack of skilled labor is slowing down homebuilding,” Bonadelle said.

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