

Valley economic index reveals sluggish growth

Published on 03/25/2015 - 10:33 am

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The Central Valley was in slow growth mode for February, with many still feeling the pain of the West Coast dock disputes last month, according to a new economic index report.

The San Joaquin Valley Business Conditions Index stood at 52.9 in February, down from a record high of 59.9 in November and 54 in January.

A score above the growth neutral threshold of 50 indicates economic growth, according to the monthly survey produced by research associate Ernie Goss with the Craig School of Business at Fresno State.

About 27.3 percent of firms surveyed reported negative impacts on sales from the dock disputes, while 54.6 percent reported negative impacts on company purchases of inputs and raw materials from the dock dispute.

Dispute the slow growth mode, Goss said things are looking up for the spring and summer months.

"Much like the national economy, the San Joaquin Valley economy is expanding at a solid pace. Based on our surveys over the past several months, that growth should remain positive for the next 3 to 6 months," he said.

The employment index reached 51.1 in February, down from 52.3 in January. It slumped below growth neutral in October.

Goss also included a forecast of March that has housing price growth moving lower and the value of the dollar moving higher, meaning reduced U.S. exports.

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