California had strong job-growth recovery, but still trailed Texas

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California has had one of the nation's strongest job growth rates since the Great Recession ended, according to a new national study, but still trailed arch-rival Texas.

Thanks to its oil boom, North Dakota topped all states in employment expansion during the recovery, researchers for the Pew Charitable Trusts calculated, at 28.86 percent, followed by Utah at 16.7 percent and Texas at 15.12 percent.

California, which has added 1.87 million jobs since its employment hit bottom in February, 2010, came in fifth at 13.18 percent, just below Colorado's 13.45 percent.

Pew calculated the gains by determining each state's lowest level of employment during the recession, usually in 2009 or 2010, and comparing it to employment in March of this year.

Overall, the nation's employment has increased by 8 percent during the recovery, but with wide state-to-state variations. As North Dakota and some other states roared out of recession, 10 states saw job growth of 5 percent or less. Maine and West Virginia had the lowest growth, less than 3 percent.

Despite its relatively robust job growth during recovery, California still has one of the nation's highest unemployment rates – 6.5 percent in March – because it was hit especially hard by the global financial meltdown and housing industry implosion.

Having lost more than a million jobs, its unemployment topped 12 percent at one point, at or near the highest level of any state. Thus, it faced a steeper climb to recovery, made even steeper by its continued population growth that increased the number of potential workers.