

July 15, 2010



## California Small Business Bankruptcy Numbers Still High, Smaller Markets See Surge in Filings

ATLANTA, July 15 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Equifax Inc. (NYSE: EFX) today announced significant findings from a comprehensive study on bankruptcy trends among the nation's more than 24 million small businesses. While California and several Western metro areas continue to report the highest number of small business bankruptcies, other geographic regions experienced unexpected increases in the percentage of filings. In many cases, growth in the bankruptcy rate for these areas outpaced that of major markets such as Los Angeles and Phoenix.

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"This trend is striking as it reveals that small businesses in all regions continue to experience the impact of today's economic conditions," said Dr. Reza Barazesh, senior vice president, Equifax Commercial Information Solutions. "With market changes pressuring small businesses nationwide, it is critical that smaller firms take advantage of products such as Equifax's Business Credit Reports™ and Business Credit Monitoring™ to help them strengthen their credit performance and track the financial health of companies with which they do business."

This latest Equifax study analyzed national bankruptcy trends by metropolitan statistical area (MSA) over time, with a focus on the Q1 2009 to Q1 2010 timeframe. Results showed that 11 of the top 15 MSA's with the highest number of small business bankruptcies in Q1 2010 saw a year-over-year increase from Q1 2009. Among the areas that dropped off the Q1 2009 list of top 15 MSA's for small business bankruptcy were Oakland/Fremont/Hayward, Seattle/Bellevue/ Everett and Washington/Arlington/Alexandria/D.C. The table below shows that California remains the most impacted state, with the Los Angeles, Riverside/San Bernardino and Sacramento MSA's leading the nation in small business bankruptcy filings.

MSA	# of Bankruptcies Q1 2009	# of Bankruptcies Q1 2010	% of Increase
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA	899	1035	15.13%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	663	736	11.01%
Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville,			

CA	462	522	12.99%
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	365	399	9.32%
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	345	387	12.17%
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	276	386	39.86%
Denver-Aurora, CO	304	382	25.66%
Santa Ana-Anaheim-Irvine, CA	359	370	3.06%
California - Rest of State	233	335	43.78%
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	234	327	39.74%
Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX	348	323	-7.18%
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL	395	314	-20.51%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	336	304	-9.52%
Oregon - Rest of State	235	299	27.23%
New York-White Plains-Wayne, NY-NJ	335	272	-18.80%

While the total number of bankruptcies among the top 15 MSA's rose 10.4% from 5,789 in Q1 2009 to 6,391 in Q1 2010, there was surprising bankruptcy rate increases in smaller markets such as Springfield, MA; Manchester-Nashua, NH and Green Bay, WI. Although the number of filings for these MSA's appears low when compared to the top 15 list, the percent of increase in filings for these areas exceeds that of even California's most troubled markets. The chart below provides a closer look at this trend.

MSA	# of Bankruptcies Q1 2009	# of Bankruptcies Q1 2010	% of Increase
Springfield, MA	1	17	1600%
Gulfport-Biloxi, MS	2	12	500%
Manchester-Nashua, NH	22	130	490.91%
Hawaii-Rest of State	12	41	241.67%
Fort Wayne, IN	11	30	172.73%
Green Bay, WI	7	19	171.43%

Lafayette, LA	3	8	166.67%
Wilmington, NC	7	18	157.14%
Anchorage, AK	17	39	129.41%
Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL	8	17	112.50%
Vallejo-Fairfield, CA	45	93	106.67%
Corpus Christi, TX	14	28	100%
Jackson, MS	11	22	100%
Charleston, WV	4	8	100%
Greensboro-Highpoint, NC	13	25	92.31%

As part of the study, Equifax also analyzed the 15 metro areas with the fewest small business bankruptcy filings in the first quarter of 2010. Based on our findings, all of the following MSA's had 12 bankruptcies or less during Q1 2010:

- Hagerstown-Martinsburg, MD-WV
- Gainesville, FL
- Charleston, WV
- Lafayette, LA
- Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL
- Baton Rouge, LA
- Ann Arbor, MI
- South Bend-Mishawaka, IN-MI
- Amarillo, TX
- Lubbock, TX
- Columbus, GA-AL
- Binghamton, NY
- Fort Smith, AR-OK
- Alaska - Rest of State
- Lynchburg, VA

For this study, Equifax applied analytics to identify the total number of small businesses and define the MSA's within the sample population. Equifax classifies a small business as a commercial entity of less than 100 employees. As part of the study, Equifax analyzed Chapter 7, 11 and 13 filings. Chapter 7 is a liquidation proceeding in which a debtor receives a discharge of all debts, while Chapters 11 and Chapter 13 are reorganization bankruptcies that allow individuals and companies to pay off debt over a set period of years. Visit [www.equifaxsmallbusiness.com](http://www.equifaxsmallbusiness.com) for more information about Equifax Small Business Solutions.

## **About Equifax ([www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com))**

Equifax empowers businesses and consumers with information they can trust. A global leader in information solutions, we leverage one of the largest sources of consumer and commercial data, along with advanced analytics and proprietary technology, to create customized insights that enrich both the performance of businesses and the lives of consumers.

With a strong heritage of innovation and leadership, Equifax continuously delivers innovative solutions with the highest integrity and reliability. Businesses – large and small – rely on us for consumer and business credit intelligence, portfolio management, fraud detection, decisioning technology, marketing tools, and much more. We empower individual consumers to manage their personal credit information, protect their identity, and maximize their financial well-being.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Equifax Inc. operates in the U.S. and 14 other countries throughout North America, Latin America and Europe. Equifax is a member of Standard & Poor's (S&P) 500® Index. Our common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol EFX.

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