Butte-Silver Bow County

The continued worldwide energy/commodity boom appeared at first to insulate the Butte economy from the current recession. The 4.5 percent growth in 2008 was the highest among Montana’s major urban areas. The figures for late-2008 indicated a distinct softening, and the preliminary data for 2009 show an overall decline. The final numbers are not yet in, but there appears to have been declines in mining, transportation (mostly trucking), real estate, construction, and retail trade. Our forecast assumes that the Montana Resources mine remains open and operating at about current levels, but that employee bonuses reflect changes in the price of copper. The trade center components of Butte’s economic base (retail trade and services) continue to grow, reflecting the city’s development as a regional trade and service center.