Retail Trade Industry Profile in WDB 5 – CMJTS

There were 1,524 retail trade establishments providing 23,062 jobs in WDB 5, Central Minnesota Jobs and Training in 2019, according to data from DEED’s Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages program. That is about 13.3 percent of total employment in the region, accounting for more than one in every 7.5 jobs. The largest numbers of retail trade jobs are in general merchandise stores, food and beverage stores, and gas stations with employment well above 3,500 jobs. (see Table 1).

While layoff activity in the region had been initially limited to the huge numbers of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims filed by workers in the leisure and hospitality industry, a recent source of claims seem to be coming in retail trade. Much like leisure and hospitality which also offers relatively low wages, with the additional $600 UI benefit, most of these workers would actually earn more money collecting UI rather than working.

The relative concentration of employment in the retail trade industry varies from just 6.8% in Renville County to 17.5% in Isanti County. For perspective the statewide concentration is 10.4%. With more than 7,000 jobs at 400 stores, Wright County easily has the largest numbers of jobs and establishments in the retail trade industry, while Renville County has the fewest, with less than 400 jobs in retail trade.
Workers in the retail trade industry are much younger than in all other industries combined. In the second quarter of 2019, more than 45 percent of the retail trade workforce in the WDB 5 region were under 35 years of age, compared to just 35.4% across all industries. However, a larger share of retail trade workers were also in the oldest age group in the region, with 8.8% being 65 years and over, compared to 6.3% in all industries (see Figure 1).

In contrast, retail trade workers in WDB 5 were slightly less racially diverse than the total of all industries combined. Ninety-five percent of all workers in retail trade were white, compared to 93.5% across all industries. The largest number of minority workers in retail trade in the region were of Hispanic or Latino origin (see Figure 2 – please note that the numbers add up to more than 100% because Hispanic or Latino is an ethnicity rather than a race).

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