Hiring on rise, survey shows

US businesses added 163,000 jobs in month of July

By Christopher S. Rugaber
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A private survey shows U.S. businesses kept hiring at a modest pace in July, suggesting the job market could be improving after three sluggish months.

Payroll provider ADP said Wednesday that businesses added 163,000 jobs last month. That's slightly below a revised total of 172,000 jobs it reported for June.

The report only covers hiring in the private sector and excludes government job growth. The Labor Department will offer a more complete picture of July hiring on Friday.

The ADP survey offered some hope that hiring is picking up. But it has often deviated sharply from the government report. In June, the Labor Department said employers added 80,000 jobs, less than half the figure reported by ADP.

The government's report is expected to show employers added 100,000 jobs in July, according to survey of economists by FactSet. The unemployment rate is expected to stay at 8.2 percent.

The hiring picture for July is a bit cloudier than usual. Weekly applications for unemployment benefits, generally considered a reliable gauge, have been distorted by seasonal adjustment issues. The government has had trouble accounting for temporary summer shutdowns in the auto industry, which are used to retool plants for new models.

The adjustments have been difficult this year because some automakers skipped the shutdowns to keep up with stronger sales, resulting in fewer temporary layoffs.