The AeA's Clare Emerson on the State of the High Tech Industry

Contributed by Roman Kikta
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Since the bursting of the technology bubble, people throughout Texas and around country have wondered when – if ever –the high-tech industry would rebound. Today we are witnessing the rebounding of the tech industry. This is the second year in a row that tech industry employment has added jobs. The facts just released in an AeA Report Shows that Texas's Tech Industry added 10,300 Jobs in 2006. Not only do these jobs make critical contributions to the Texas and U.S. economies, but they also pay extremely well. The average tech industry wage is 86 percent more than the average U.S. private sector wage. The facts just published in the newly released AeA Cyberstates show that 48 states indicate that the average high-tech wage is at least 50 percent more than the average private sector wage, and in 10 states this differential is over 90 percent.
As an investor in technology companies I am continuously tracking the state of technology both domestically and globally. An important question for our future: what is the state of the technology in America today? This is especially relevant for those of us who live in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex since we are a major world class tech-hub. The facts are that the U.S. information technology industry faces some serious challenges and many of them start and stop in Washington, D.C.
My Business Class guest is Clare Emerson, the executive director of the AeA’s (American Electronics Association) Texas Council. The AeA represents most of the leading technology companies in the U.S. and she is deeply involved with the health of the industry. Clare provides insightful perspectives discussing key issues facing companies of all sizes from competitive challenges from abroad to problems recruiting highly qualified and educated individuals to work for them and whether those individuals are foreign or domestic. Today, U.S. engineers have an unemployment rate below two-percent, which is considered full-employment. With thousands of jobs in high tech companies being left unfilled indicates that something must be done to increase the number of high skilled workers available for our companies. Clare calls for immigration reform with market driven issuance of H-1B Visas and for reforms in education calling on American kids to refocus on “STEM” curriculum: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Given that our lives and business are wrapped up in technology, this is a must see interview.
AeA’s Cyberstates 2007 Key Facts
U.S. Tech Industry Adds Jobs in 2006

U.S. high-tech employment totaled 5.8 million in 2006.
Tech employment was up in 2006 by nearly 147,000 or by 3 percent.
This is on top of the growth of 87,000 tech jobs added in 2005.
High-tech manufacturing employment rose by 0.4 percent, gaining 5,100 jobs between 2005 and 2006.
The semiconductor industry grew significantly in 2006, gaining 10,900 jobs.
At the sectoral level, 5 of the 9 tech manufacturing sectors gained jobs in 2006, 4 of the sectors lost.
The communications services sector continued to shed jobs in 2006, losing 13,300 compared to a loss of 37,200 in 2005.
The software services industry added 88,500 jobs, up for the third year in a row.
The engineering and tech services industry added 66,300 jobs in 2006, putting it at an all time high.
The unemployment rate for electrical engineers was 1.9 percent in 2006 and 2.5 percent for computer and math occupations.
The tech industry paid an annual average wage of $75,500 in 2005, 86 percent more than the average private sector wage of $40,500.