California's economy showing signs of recovery

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

The evidence keeps accumulating: California's economic recovery is gathering momentum. It's just nowhere near a boom yet.

Unemployment in California fell two-tenths of a point last month to 11.1 percent, the lowest level in nearly three years, the Employment Development Department reported Friday. Payrolls expanded for the sixth straight month, and economists pronounced themselves satisfied that the state is finally on the right track.

"We have sort of a nice string going," said Howard Roth, chief economist at the state Department of Finance. "This makes me more confident that it's not going to go away. … I think it's the real thing."

The growth in payroll jobs, which is considered the most reliable barometer of the job market, was a fairly weak 10,700 in December. That was offset somewhat by news that November's job growth was revised upward sharply.

Overall, Roth said, the results show the economy is mending but not operating at full throttle. "It's got to get a lot faster than this," he said. "But it looks like it has a good foundation."

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