

Healthcare and Public Safety Expenditures Boost Construction in April

By: Jann Swanson | Mbn, May 4 2020, 10:48 AM

Construction spending posted a gain in April, rising 0.9 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1.36 trillion from a revised estimate of \$1.35 trillion in February. **This was a 4.7 percent rate of growth compared to March 2019 when the rate was \$1.30 trillion.**

On an unadjusted basis, total spending increased from \$95.91 billion in February to \$105.19 billion in March and was about \$6 billion higher year-over-year. On a year-to-date (YTD) basis spending increased 6.7 percent, rising from \$278.46 billion in the first three months of 2019 to \$297.02 billion this year.

Total private sector spending rose 0.7 percent for the month, to \$1.02 trillion and was 3.7 percent higher on an annual basis. Spending on an unadjusted basis rose from \$73.94 billion to \$81.29 billion and the YTD total of \$229.57 billion is up 5.7 percent from the same period last year.

Spending on residential construction remained strong, rising from an annual rate of \$537.7 billion in February to \$550.27 billion in March, a gain of 2.3 percent from February and 8.8 percent compared to the previous March. **Single-family construction accounted for \$301.07 billion, 2.0 percent less than in February, but 12.1 percent higher year-over-year.** Multifamily spending was up 2.0 percent to \$60.20 billion, a decline of 4.4 percent compared to the previous March.

For the month, total residential spending increased from \$37.76 billion to \$44.32 billion and was up 10.2 percent on a YTD basis to \$120.04 billion. Single-family spending on an unadjusted basis was about \$3 billion higher than in February at \$23.73 billion and multifamily spending rose slightly more than \$2 billion to \$4.96 billion. For the first three months of the year single-family expenditures gained 12.9 percent to \$64.92 billion while multifamily dipped from \$14.84 billion to \$14.14 billion.

While public construction spending consumes only about one-third of the dollars of its private counterpart, it posted the largest gains in spending, up 1.6 percent for the month and 7.9 percent on an annual basis to \$348.0 billion. Among the **strongest components for the month were expenditures for healthcare (up 8.1 percent), and public safety (5.5 percent).** Public safety was even stronger on a year-over-year basis, gaining 47 percent.

Residential spending, while only up 0.7 percent from February to \$7.63 billion, jumped 24.6 percent from its March 2019 level. Public sector spending on residential construction YTD is \$1.65 billion, a 29 percent increase from a year earlier.

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