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Unemployment decreased in April, jobs shed

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Workforce West Virginia released data May 18 that showed all but 10 West Virginia counties either saw declining unemployment rates in April or had rates that remained level.

Monongalia, Hardy, Randolph, Pocahontas, Lincoln, Boone, Raleigh, Wyoming, Logan and Mingo counties all experienced higher levels of unemployment in April compared to March. Marion, Taylor and Jefferson County remained stable, but the remaining 42 counties in West Virginia experienced unemployment decline.

Statewide, unemployment went from 7.3 percent in March to 7 percent in April. In April 2011, unemployment levels were 7.9 percent. Seasonally adjusted, the state's unemployment rate was 6.7 percent in April, down one-tenth of a percentage point from where it was in March at 6.8 percent. The seasonally adjusted rate one year ago was 7.8 percent.

According to Workforce West Virginia, total non-farm payroll employment declined 1,800, with losses of 1,300 in the goods producing sector and 500 in the service-providing sector. Within the goods-producing sector, employment declines included the largest loss of 1,000 jobs in mining and logging, 200 in manufacturing, and 100 in construction.

Within the service-providing sector, employment declines included 800 jobs in professional and business services, 700 jobs in government, 200 jobs in financial activities, and 100 jobs in other services. Employment gains included 800 jobs in educational and health services, 300 jobs in trade, transportation, and utilities, and 200 jobs in leisure and hospitality.

"The diversity of the state's job market has changed during the recession," an analysis from the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy states. "Different employment sectors have had different reactions to the recession. Some, like manufacturing, have seen significant losses. Others, like mining, have actually seen increases. Today, employment sectors like mining, education, and government make up a larger share of total employment in the state than they did before the recession."

Since April 2011, total nonfarm payroll employment has risen 6,200, with gains of 4,800 in the service-providing sector and 1,400 in the goods-producing sector. Employment gains included 4,000 in educational and health services, 2,200 in construction, 1,700 in leisure and hospitality, 1,000 in professional and business services, and 900 in government. Employment declines included 2,100 in trade, transportation, and utilities, 600 in manufacturing, 500 in financial activities, 200 in mining and logging, and 200 in other services.

Total employment in West Virginia has climbed from 734,700 in April 2011 to 744,300 this April. The most recent number also marks a climb from 735,300 in March.

There were a number of dramatic changes at the county-level. In Boone County, unemployment went from 7 percent in April 2011 and 8.5 percent in March to 12.1 percent last month.

Jefferson and Monongalia counties both had unemployment levels below five percent. Webster, Boone and Pocahontas counties had more than 11 percent unemployment.



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