

KANSAS' JOB MARKET "IN A MESS"



Lois Porter, a representative for continuing education online through Kansas State University noted last week, at a Wichita job fair, that she was getting a steady amount of traffic at her booth. "When the economy is bad, sometimes people go back to school, especially online." Laid-off aircraft workers in Wichita is approaching the thousands in 2009 alone. And dozens of other Wichita companies will be having lay-offs in the coming months as well. The unemployment rate in Wichita for November of '08 was 5.1 percent, according to the Kansas Department of Labor. Just one year earlier it was at around 4 percent. That difference of 1 percent is no small difference either. State unemployment in the entire state of Kansas was up almost a percent as well, reaching 4.8% in November, up from 4% one year earlier. Though these numbers are not ideal, they are better than they were in February 2004, when they Kansas' unemployment skyrocketed to 5.8 percent as the economy was emerging from a recession. Economists, though, are not optimistic, and they expect to see a sizable increase in unemployment during 2009. Linda Sorrel, policy and planning director for the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas said "Until consumer confidence returns and people start buying, we're in a mess." To keep track of job trends across the nation, check out [Employment Crossing](#).

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