

## PAINTING A BIGGER PICTURE FOR THE JOBLESS



Daviess County, Kentucky is moving in the right direction as far as employment goes. More people are employed and there are fewer people out of work. The county is not completely back to normal yet, however, and according to Ron Crouch, the county "has a ways to go to recover." Crouch is the director of research and statistics in the Office of Employment and Training for the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. Daviess County released the following statistics in an employment report for the months of January to September: "In January, the labor force for Daviess County was at 49,302. That number increased to 49,421 in February, hit 49,476 in March, increased to 49,984 in April, 49,936 in May, 50,114 in June; 50,036 in July, 49,282 in August and 49,556 in September. Employment numbers show a similar pattern -- slight ups and downs from 44,270 in January to 45,901 in June, 45,511 in July, 45,557 in August and 45,525 in September. " "This appears to show the employment rate is pretty steady in the last few months," Crouch said. In the first quarter, labor force numbers went up to 254 showing employment up to 1,255, and it keeps going up. The unemployment rate has gone down to 8.1 percent from 10.2 percent, with the amount of people without a job down by 1,001. According to OET, only one county in Kentucky, Muhlenberg, is still in double digits. According to the office's preliminary labor force estimates, two other counties, Daviess and Ohio, posted decreases in unemployment rates compared to one year ago. Muhlenberg County's unemployment rate is up slightly, showing at 10.8 percent. It was at 10.5 percent one year ago. Ohio County's unemployment rate in September was 7.9 percent. In September 2010, the unemployment rate was 8.5. The unemployment rate in McLean County is 9.8 percent, up from 9.5 percent in August and 9.5 percent in September 2010. Hancock County is showing a higher unemployment rate at 9.3 percent this September, compared to 9.2 percent last year. Last month, the unemployment rate showed at 7.8 percent. From September of 2010 to September of 2011, jobless rates declined across the state's 72 counties. During this same timeframe, 43 Kentucky counties showed higher unemployment rates, and five counties' rates didn't change at all. "The first thing I look at in the unemployment rate is the comparison from a year ago," said Tonya Logsdon, associate director for workforce development at the Green River Area Development District. "GRADD's rate (8.3 percent) is down from a year ago, but it's up from August's (8 percent)." "I think we'll see a gradual decline for a while with some ups and downs," Logsdon said. "One recent projection for 2012 is encouraging," she said. Fifty-eight percent of the Kentucky manufacturers surveyed for the 2011 Annual Manufacturing Wage and Benefits Survey stated they planned to hire between one and 19 people in 2012. While that is only up 1 percent from last year's survey, it shows that "even manufacturers are more optimistic," Logsdon said.

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