

## INDUSTRIAL JOBS IN ARKANSAS DECLINED 1.5% OVER PAST YEAR



According to the 2012 Arkansas Manufacturers Register, industrial employment in Arkansas fell 1.5 percent in the past 12 months. Manufacturers' News, Inc. (MNI) reported that Arkansas lost 3,243 manufacturing jobs from September 2010 and September 2011. This is an improvement, as they lost 9,000 jobs over the same time period of 2009-2010. "The recovery is gaining momentum in Arkansas and across the U.S.," says Tom Dubin, President of the Evanston, IL-based publishing company. Helping with this recovery, was the opening of Nordex USA wind turbine plant in Jonesboro, New Millennium Building Systems in Hope, Saint-Gobain ceramic proppants factory in Saline County, and Caterpillar's road grader facility in North Little Rock. There are plans to expand Nibco's valve plant in Blytheville and Unilever, and PLC announced that they are expanding their Jonesboro facility. According to Manufacturers' News, Arkansas now has 3,615 manufacturers that employ 1,999,915 employees. MNI reported that food products were the state's largest manufacturing area with 50,504 jobs, down 2 percent from the survey period. The second largest is 16,084 in industrial jobs, which was down 1.2% over the year. The third largest is 15,848 jobs in the industrial equipment and machinery, which is down 6.9%. The survey released the following statistics about jobs: "furniture/fixtures, down 14.8%; electronics, down 6.7%; lumber/wood, down 4.5%; printing/publishing, down 4.3%; paper products, down 3.1%; and stone/clay/glass down 2.7%. Gains were seen in oil and gas extraction, up 8.9%; rubber/plastics, up 4.6%; petroleum and coal products, up 2.7%; and primary metals, up 2.4%." There were some industrial locations that closed during the year, which includes a Graphic Packaging International facility in Jacksonville, two Conestoga Wood Specialties plants in Mountain View in Jacksonville, Petit Jean Poultry's location in Arkadelphia, Southern Steel and Wire's factory in Fort Smith, and Smurfit-Stone's plant in Jonesboro. Whirlpool also announced they plan to close the Fort Smith Plant, who currently has approximately 1,000 employees. The top city in the state of Arkansas for employment manufacturing is Fort Smith. The city is responsible for 14,129 jobs in the entire state, but that number has declined eight percent since last year. There are over 13,000 jobs in Little Rock, a number that has increased three percent from the previous year. The third best city is Springdale, with just under 12,000 jobs in the industrial sector, a number that is up 2.5 percent from one year ago. There are 7,000 manufacturing jobs in Rogers, a decline of just under two percent from last year. Pine Bluff boasts just under 6,700 jobs in the manufacturing industry, a decline of 6.7 percent from a year ago. The jobless rate across the country has dipped just a little bit since the month of October, but not enough to ease the fears of the unemployed or those running the country. Work is still being done to improve the job market as much as possible. Arkansas has suffered greatly during the recession, losing thousands of jobs each year in various industries.