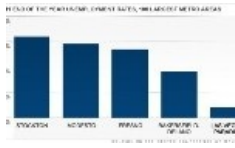


## MISSISSIPPI JOB SITUATION NOT IMPROVING



Roy Nickson is a 56-year-old unemployed resident of Vicksburg who has spent a ton of time at a local job service office. He has spent so much time there that those who work at the office know him by name. Even though he has done all he can to search for a new job, he does not think he will land a new one anytime soon. "It's hard and it's slow right now," said Nickson, according to [Bloomberg Businessweek](#). Nickson said that this is the first time in 30 years that he has been without a job. He worked for 10 years as a cook and 25 years in the painting and construction industries. The unemployment rate for the state of Mississippi hit 10.6 percent in the month of October, as it drifts upwards as 2011 comes to a close. That rate is tied with the state of Michigan for the third highest in the country behind Nevada at number one and California at number two. The state is adding jobs, but those jobs are not enough to keep up with the growing number of people seeking jobs. In October, there were some 2,400 people looking for jobs in Warren County according to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. The county had an 11.3 percent unemployment rate in the month of October, which was in the middle of the state's 82 counties. At the Vicksburg employment office, close to 150 people lined up to acquire jobs at the Tyson Foods plant in Warren County. Word had spread that the plant was going to hire 24 people to handle cases of chicken for \$8.60 per hour. Some of the job seekers at the office did acquire jobs with Tyson Foods according to office manager Terry Hodges. "We're definitely seeing improvement and job growth is picking up," Kim Fraser, an economist with BBVA Compass bank of Birmingham, Ala., said. "The job situation has been improving. As slow as it's going, it is going somewhere." A major disadvantage for the state of Mississippi is the fact that it relies heavily on the country when it comes to manufacturing and government jobs. This year, in Mississippi, those two sectors shed jobs. "Those skills don't necessarily transfer to other positions," said Fraser. A couple of manufacturing plants in Vicksburg closed their doors or dropped the majority of their employees during the recession. Job experts are telling job seekers that if they wish to return to factory work they have to expand their search to outside of Warren County to Jackson and Natchez counties. Natchez County is 70 miles from Warren County. Within 25 miles of Vicksburg, there were 36 job openings, and Bowhead Information and Technical Services offered 11 of those jobs. Those 11 jobs involved specialized computer positions. Those 36 jobs are more than likely not the only jobs available in the area, as not all available jobs are posted to the state's list of available jobs.