

JOB LOSSES IN TRI-CITIES



The Tri-Cities have been seeing job losses for the past six months in a row. It is believed that the seasonal slowdowns have actually contributed to these job losses. In the meantime, a labor economist, Ajsa Suljic, believes that the final analysis for these cities will show that there have, in fact, been many gains for nonfarm jobs during the year. Between the months of November and December, the Tri-Cities managed to lose a total of 3,690 jobs. This information was released by the Employment Security Department of the state on Tuesday afternoon. During the month of December, both Benton and Franklin counties had over 115,000 employed workers in the area. This was more than 6,000 less workers from the month of December during the previous year, in 2010. The total number of employed workers in the area has declined by 5 percent within the span of a year. However, the Tri-Cities did not actually lose any of the nonfarm jobs. The final analysis, which will include exact numbers, will not be released for a few more months but Suljic believes that when it is released, it will show that there has actually been a gain of 1.9 percent for the entire year. She also says that while some jobs have been eliminated, the gains in other industries and sectors have helped to offset those jobs. The unemployment rate in the Tri-Cities has managed to climb all the way up to 9.7 percent. In November, the percentage was at 8.1. This was definitely a huge and unwelcomed climb. In Benton County alone, the unemployment rate inclined from 7.9 percent in November to 9.2 percent during December. In Franklin County, the unemployment rate went from 8.6 percent in November to an extremely high 10.8 percent during December. These unemployment rates are even higher than the statewide unemployment rates, which have fallen to 8.5 percent during the month of December. Just about 12,470 residents of the Tri-Cities were currently out of work and seeking employment. The total number increased by nearly 2,000 from the prior month. More than 8,000 workers in the area were collecting unemployment benefits and more than 1,000 of these workers had exhausted their benefits, unable to receive any other benefits. Many job seekers arrived at the WorkSource Columbia Basin as a means of searching for jobs and the necessary employment that they need. They are not allowing anything to get in their way of applying for the jobs that they need. WorkSource Columbia Basin will even be holding a job fair on March 15th for those who are seeing employment. It is designed with veterans in mind but is available to all of the people who are seeking employment.

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