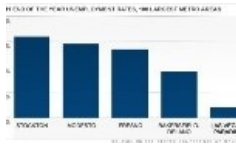


JOBLESS RATE IN THE COUNTY DECREASES



The unemployment rate in Jackson County has continued to decrease during the month of December and has officially dropped to 11 percent from 11.3 percent during the month of November. Compared to the same exact time the year before, the unemployment rate was at 12.9 percent which proves that within one year, the unemployment rate dropped by 1.9 percent. The regional economist for Oregon's Employment Department, Guy Tauer, has said, "Over the past year, the number of unemployed in Jackson County is down 1,400 and total employment has increased by 940." He also says, "Certainly we are going in the right direction." It shows that progress is being made, especially since the economy is still in a recovery period after dealing with such a terribly devastating recession. The figures, which were compiled and composed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, followed both state trends along with national trends to figure out these rates. Jackson County is still in its double digits when it comes to the percentage of unemployed individuals in the area but even so, the percentage continues to decline a little bit each month which shows that even though progress is slow, it is being made. The jobless rate in Jackson County has not been below 10 percent since October of 2008 when it was at 9.4 percent. This was during the middle of the recession, which began in 2007 and ended in 2009 but still left a damper on the economy as most states in the United States are now in a recovery period. In November of 2008, the jobless rate was at 10.1 percent and has been in the double digits ever since. As it is now continuing to decline, many are hopeful that it will eventually reach single digits again. Tauer says, "If we keep trending in the direction we've been going, a 10 percent adjusted rate is within the realm of possibility." He also said, "I'm not going to go out on a limb for what the future holds, but if the trends continue, we certainly could see rates of 10 percent or less in 2012. That's if we don't have other major headwinds, such as the world entering a much slower phase of growth and Oregon doesn't slip into second dip in overall job growth trend. A lot of things will have to go right." In December of 2011, the number of nonfarm jobs was at 76,300 which showed a gain of just about 60 jobs since the same month in 2010. While there were a few gains, some sectors in the area did deal with losses. Wholesale, retail, professional and business services, and health care all saw some declines, with less positions being made available to those who are seeking employment. Tauer says, "The economy is not growing fast enough to cause employers to hire."

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