

## JOBLESS RATE IN CALHOUN INCREASES



The jobless rate in Calhoun County has increased and was at 7.7 percent during the month of December in 2011. During the month of November in 2011, the unemployment rate was at 6.9 percent. This statistical information was released on Thursday in a state report. While the jobless rate did increase within the span of a month, the rate is still 1.7 percent lower than it was during the month of December in 2010. This information was provided by the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. The national employment rate for the month of December in 2011 was 8.5 percent. The unemployment rate in Michigan alone was 9.3 percent, still higher than the national average. It is believed that the rise in the number of jobless individuals in the area was due to seasonal jobs being cut, which included jobs in a number of sectors. Some of these sectors included construction, professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality. Some temporary layoffs also took place during the month of December. The report shows that Calhoun County lost nearly 1,700 jobs during December and that throughout 2011; the county had a decrease of 3,500 individuals in the workforce, with a total number of 2,100 jobs lost. Throughout the year, it was just Jackson and Barry counties that actually had some employment gains. Jackson County added 600 new jobs and Barry County added nearly 175 additional jobs. Each of the other regional counties dealt with job losses instead of gains. Cass County and St. Joseph County both had a job loss of about 50 jobs while Calhoun County dealt with a 2,100 job loss. The amount of nonfarm payroll employment during the month of December in Battle Creek Metro Statistical Area had dropped to 54,800, which was actually a decrease of about 1,100. A number of sectors had cut seasonal jobs during the month of December, including retail and trade, professional and business services, mining, and even private education. The leisure and hospitality sector also lost nearly 100 jobs which shows that cuts were being made all around. During 2011, however, Calhoun County saw a rise in the number of employment for the manufacturing sector. Employment had risen by 300 throughout the year. Calhoun County did see a large job, as nearly 1,500 individuals left the labor market during December of 2011 and there was a job in all 12 markets during the year. Four of the regional counties currently have lower jobless rates than the national average. Those counties include Calhoun, Barry, Allegan, and Kalamazoo. The national jobless rate average in December of 2011 was at 8.5 percent and all four of these counties were lower than this average.

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