

NORTHWEST METRO AREA SEES A RISE IN JOBLESS RATE



In the Northwest metro area, the jobless rate was at 5.6 percent for the month of December, which was higher than the 5.5 percent rate during the month of November, but still lower than the 6.1 percent jobless rate for the same month during the previous year, in 2011. Each of the eight metro areas that are in or around the Arkansas area saw an increase in the jobless rate during the month of December from the previous month of November. However, each of these areas had lower jobless rates from the month of December in 2010. The lowest jobless rate in the metro area was in Northwest Arkansas, at 5.6 percent. However, the highest rate was at 9.4 percent in the Pine Bluff area. The information, provided by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, which provides information and statistical data on the jobless rates is currently subject to change after adjustments may or may not be made. A resource for unemployed professionals, Open Doors, has reported the job market in the area has, in fact, been stalling since November. Vicky Carroll, who is the leader of the organization, has said, "We had about 30 folks find employment in the retail vendor community in the past few months, but it's been really slow through December." Carroll also said that for some, searching for employment is much like a fulltime job because it is taking a lot of time and effort of the unemployed individuals. She also says that it is easier for applicants who make an effort to network themselves and possibly volunteer as a means of gaining experience and securing employment in the future. Carroll is a bookkeeper and spent ten years at a local Walmart. She says that unemployed people come from all colors, shapes, ages, and sizes and believes that unemployment surely does not discriminate. She has even said, "I have younger professionals downsized from banks and corporate jobs to an 83-year-old gentlemen who needs to find work to supplement his retirement income. While the economy is a little better, there are still plenty of folks looking for work." The Open Doors organization meets on each Wednesday of the month and takes place during the morning, at 9 a.m. on the John Brown University campus. It makes sense for those who are unemployed to take advantage of the organization as a means of networking and searching for available employment. In the meantime, then number of unemployed individuals in the area, for the month of December, was at 12,864, which was more than the amount of unemployed individuals from the previous month. In December, the workforce dropped a number of employees and decreased to 227, 779 from 228,331 from the prior month.

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