

JOB GROWTH IN MAHONING VALLEY BEATS JOB GROWTH FOR THE STATE



Employment and job growth in Mahoning Valley is doing exceptionally well, increasing at fast pace, even faster than the entire state of Ohio, which is something the area has not done in more than ten years. Within the past year, there was a 2.5 percent increase in the amount of jobs available in Mahoning Valley. The increase was abundant and only behind the metro areas of Steubenville, Lima, and Sandusky. The area had not seen job growth at all since 1999 which is why the increase in job growth came as such a pleasant and welcomed surprised. The job growth in the state of Ohio managed to grow by about 1.4 percent. In the meantime, growth in the Mahoning Valley actually beat out many of the populated metro areas, including Cincinnati, Toledo, Columbus, and Cleveland. It has now earned the name, "the comeback city." And, it has definitely been quite the comeback for the area. In 1999, approximately thirteen years ago, Mahoning Valley had approximately 253,700 jobs available and had recently expanded. However, within the past eleven years, the economy lost several jobs, especially in 2009, right as the recession was ending. In 2009, Mahoning Valley had a drop of nearly 13,500 jobs, which was about 5.8 percent. During that year, a lot of companies had to make cutbacks, which left plenty of employees left without work. Severstal ended up laying off 1,200 employees during that period of time. Towards the end of 2010, the amount of jobs available was around 222,000. This was prior to 5,600 jobs being added throughout 2011. The information was released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The turnaround for Mahoning Valley has been quite surprising, especially for a number of economists. In fact, an economist in Cleveland, George Zeller, has said, "The people are astonished, by and large." He also said, "But it's true. The question is why? It's related to the success of the manufacturing growth initiatives." And, what is even more astonishing is that the particular sector with the highest amount of growth is the same sector that managed to shed jobs consistently throughout the past eleven years. This sector is now the primary reason for the rejuvenation of the area. The United States Representative, Tim Ryan, has said, "We are benefiting from a manufacturing renaissance for sure." Ryan also said, "But, with the business incubator in Youngstown and the Tech Belt Energy Innovation Center in Warren, we are diversifying our economic base so we are not reliant on one industry like we were when steel collapsed." Because Mahoning Valley has done so well, in particular with its rapid amount of job growth, the area has managed to catch national attention from a number of other people who have hopes that this same occurrence could happen in other areas as well.

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