

## HANFORD JOBLESS RATE INCREASES



In the Tri-City area, job growth did occur, which happened to be positive news for the residents living in the area. What made things a bit better as well is that there was actually enough job growth to overshadow the job losses in the Hanford area, which occurred last month. Prior to the job losses in Hanford, non-farm jobs had increased by about 2,500 jobs, which was a pleasant surprise since the number of jobs created was more during the month of May in 2012 than it was in the same month during the previous year. However, shortly after the jobs were created, nearly 2,000 jobs in Hanford were lost. While there was positive news, there was also a bit of negative news as well. Even though there was an increase in the number of non-farm jobs, as well as farm employment too, the unemployment numbers for the Tri-Cities actually increased within the span of one month. Back in April of 2012, the unemployment rate was at 8.6 percent but for the month of May, the unemployment rate was at a total of 9 percent. The statistical information on the unemployment rate for the Tri-Cities was provided by the Employment Security Department for the state. During May, there were over 12,000 individuals who had become unemployed and were now searching for employment. During the previous year, there were more than 2,000 fewer individuals searching for employment as they were not laid off. For May, Benton County had an unemployment rate of 8.7 percent and Franklin County had an unemployment rate of 9.8 percent. One labor economist, Ajsa Suljic, says that the job market did increase by at least a thousand employees when compared to the previous year. However, although some jobs were created, there were still a large number of workers who were unable to find employment, even though they were actively seeking employment. During May, one sector did particularly well with the amount of jobs created. This sector was the trade, transportation and utilities sector, having added nearly 2,000 jobs within the span of a year. Suljic believes that because this sector is doing fairly well, the economy is starting to gain some stability and will hopefully continue to do so. Many people are starting to head to the WorkSource Columbia Basin as a way of finding jobs. In general, these offices are helping people to find the work that they have actively been seeking for quite some time now. In the meantime, there were several other counties with varying unemployment rates. Columbia County seemed to have the highest unemployment rate, a total of 10.4 percent while Walla Walla County had the lowest out of the counties, with an unemployment rate of 7.4 percent.

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