

JOBLESS RATE DECLINES IN TRI-CITIES



In the Tri-Cities, the number of retail jobs available has continued to grow. There have been plenty of gains within this particular sector and is expected that there will be even more gains in the retail sector because a great deal of retailers are currently getting ready for the holiday season and are choosing to employ individuals for seasonal work. With the increase in retail positions, the Tri-Cities also managed to see a decline in the unemployment rate during the month of September and that is officially credited to local farming. Even with the good news, the unemployment rate in the Tri-Cities remained at 8 percent, which is more than what it was just one year ago. The information on the unemployment rate for the area was released by the Employment Security Department for the state. The Tri-Cities has an increase of growth in the agriculture department to thank for the major employment gains that took place during the month of September. An economist, Ajsa Suljic, says that the agriculture growth was quite astonishing and that because of the growth, there was an increase in employment within the area during the month of September, even though declines did occur for nonfarm employment. The unemployment rate for the Tri-Cities was higher than the unemployment rate for the state, which is currently at 7.7 percent. Franklin County's unemployment rate was at a total of 7.8 percent and Benton County had an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent. The number of jobs being created for farm labor continued to be a brighter spot for the Tri-Cities. There continued to be an increase of farm labor year by year. Within the three different counties, there were a total of around 19,580 individuals working within the agricultural industry. This was a total growth of around 1,640 employees from just one month ago. Both Benton and Franklin counties are currently enjoying the apple harvest and the potato harvest, which is expected to come to an end by November. Suljic believes that the good weather has led to a number of good crops which, in return, has helped to contribute to the number of jobs available. The number of individuals who were employed during the month of September in the Tri-Cities was 124,060. This was a drop of around 2 percent from the previous year. There are still thousands of people in the area who are unemployed and are actively seeking to find employment. It is expected that the retail industry will continue adding more jobs, especially for seasonal work, which may help lower unemployment rates a bit.