

DECREASE IN ARKANSAS INDUSTRIAL JOBS



Manufacturing jobs have dropped one percent in the last year in the state of Arkansas says the 2013 Arkansas Manufacturers Register. The Register is released every year by Manufacturers' News, Inc. (MNI). MNI indicates that the state dropped 1,930 in manufacturing roles from September of 2011 to this past September, according to The Herald Online. They are one of the few states who have seen a drop in industrial employment. Since the year began, MNI has examined 36 states and 26 of them have seen an increase in manufacturing employment over the same timeframe. "Arkansas still struggles with decreased demand from the recession, particularly in those sectors influenced by the housing industry such as furniture and lumber," says Tom Dubin, President of the publishing company. "The good news is that Arkansas maintains low business costs, which has helped many existing businesses expand." Arkansas now has 3,537 manufacturer employers and 184,564 employees. The Manufacturers' News believes the state's problems lie with a drop in demand from the current economic situation, especially in housing industry. The small price of business expenses has helped many companies expand, however. Several have grown in the past twelve months such as ConAgra Foods in Russellville, Peco Foods in Newark and Batesville, Utility Trailer Manufacturing Co. in Paragould, Firestone Building Products in Prescott and Custom Aircraft Cabinets in Sherwood. MNI states that food products are still Arkansas's biggest manufacturing division for jobs with 49,019 workers, a 1.2 percent jump for the timeframe. Fabricated metals pull in at second with 17,183 workers, an 8.2 percent raise from a year ago. Next is industrial machinery and equipment with 16,112 workers, a 1.6 percent bump. Some divisions saw a decrease in jobs in the last twelve month. Printing/publishing fell 10.6 percent. Electronics dropped 10.6 percent as well. Lumber/wood dipped 8.2 percent. Stone/clay/glass went south at 5.3 percent. Furniture/fixtures lowered 4.2 percent. Paper products decreased 3.4 percent. Rubber/plastics dwindled 2.5 percent. Chemicals saw a rise by 4.8 percent. Petroleum products increased 4.5 percent while primary metals jumped 1.8 percent. Many companies were forced to shut down. Quad/Graphics' facility in Jonesboro, Yarnell's Ice Cream building in Searcy, Fortis Plastics in Fort Smith and Georgia Pacific's plant in Little Rock. The northwest part of the state holds the biggest portion of industrial jobs with 109,324, similar to last year's numbers. The Northeast is next with 37,624, a 1.6 percent increase. Southwest owns 31,115 positions, a 2 percent drop, and the southeast makes up 16,501 roles, a 7.6 percent plummet. Springdale is the best city in the state for manufacturing jobs, holding 13,412 positions, a 3.2 percent bump. Little Rock now makes up 13,222 of the jobs, a 1.1 percent drop. Fort Smith checks in at the third pole with 11,929 roles, a 12 percent fall. Rogers is fourth in the state while they were followed up by Pine Bluff.