



Arkansas' Unemployment Rate Grows to 6.2 Percent January 27, 2009

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – Labor force data, produced by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and released today by the Department of Workforce Services, shows Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose five-tenths of a percentage point from 5.7 percent in November to 6.2 percent in December. At 7.2 percent, the United States' jobless rate increased four-tenths of a percentage point.

Arkansas' civilian labor force decreased 8,400 in December; with 5,900 more unemployed and 14,300 fewer employed Arkansans.

DWS Communications Director Kimberly Friedman said, "Arkansas' rising unemployment rate mirrors the trend seen across the country, as continuing layoffs and closures occur around the state. Even with the increase, Arkansas' December rate is one percentage point lower than the national rate."

http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/549_Press_Release.doc

Deep Job Cuts Continue as Recession Gains Strength Recession has now claimed 3.6 million jobs

- 598,000 jobs lost in January pushes three month total to 1.8 million.
- Unemployment climbs to 7.6%, the highest since 1992.
- Average hourly wages remain 3.9% ahead of last year.

Kelly Services, Marketing information, 2/06/09

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Research Report Assesses Impact of Recession on Older Workers

Looking into the questions about how older workers are faring in the current economy and how their fate relative to younger workers compares to the past, researchers at Boston College have note that while labor force participation among older workers has been rising since the early 1990s, the edge that older workers used to have relative to younger workers when it comes to layoffs seems to have disappeared, so the rise in the unemployment rate for older workers in recessions now looks similar to that for younger workers.

According to "[Recessions and Older Workers](#)", authored by Alicia H. Munnell, Dan Muldoon, and Steven A. Sass, as the current recession deepens, the employment rate of older workers could fall well below its level at the peak of the previous expansion. On the other hand, these rates could again rise sharply when the economy recovers.

Source: Center for Retirement Research at Boston College
[Issue Brief No. 9-2](#) (January 2009)

Labels: [participation rates](#), [recession](#), [research](#)

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Workforce Readiness Activities across the State



NAHRA NEWS...

NAHRA held their first annual seminar for the Harrison Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership Academy on January 21st. Volunteers with NAHRA presented a ½ day of Workforce Readiness topics to 25 area Junior High students. The topics included “Effective Speaking”, “Dress for Success”, “Job Expectations/Qualifications”, “Interview Skills and Pre-Employment Testing”, and “Necessary Paperwork”. Overall the day was a success. We asked the students to complete a survey and about 90% said that they learned something and enjoyed the day.

United States: Unemployment of Older (65 Plus) Workers Increases

Aging Workforce News, 1/15/09

According to unemployment statistics from December 2008, the current economic slowdown has substantially increased the unemployment rate for older Americans. In the fact sheet prepared for the Urban Institute, ["Senior Unemployment Rate Hits 31-Year High"](#), unlike most previous recessions, Richard W. Johnson points out that 5.1% of workers age 65 and older were unemployed, a higher share than at any time since March 1977.

In the current recession, the age-65-and-older unemployment rate has increased by 1.7 percentage points since November 2007, the last month before it began, while 13 months into the severe 1981–82 recession—the most recent downturn to have lasted as long as the current one—the number of unemployed older adults had not increased at all. However, Johnson points out that "the recession has not yet discouraged many older job seekers. Since November 2007, the share of adults not in the labor force has not declined at ages 55 to 64 or at ages 65 and older."

Are There Recession-Proof Careers or Industries?

Depending on the length and depth of a recession, there are some careers and industries that are considered to be recession-proof. But there are no guarantees that these organizations will not suffer layoffs or reductions in the workforce. Experts consider them somewhat recession-proof because their basic “customer base” is not being affected to the degree of other businesses. Therefore, people employed in these careers typically are not affected to the degree that other workers are. Here are a few examples of classic “recession-proof” industries and careers.

Education—Children and adults always need access to education at all levels. Therefore, teachers and professors tend to suffer little during typical recessions. Sometimes enrollment even increases as more people have the time to further their education since their employment commitments have declined.

Health Care—Regardless of the state of the economy, all people still need health care. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory techs and other medical employees are still needed in large numbers.

Government—While there may be cuts in local, regional, or national government employees, or, at least hiring “freezes”, all governments need a base of employees to keep operations moving. Even a deep, long recession will usually not cripple government’s ability to function since it must still deliver services.

Law Enforcement and Security—Not only does crime continue during recessions, sometimes the incidence of criminal behavior increases. A percentage of the people losing jobs, homes, care and sources of income sometimes turn to crime to “balance their budget”.

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Mark your calendar for the 2009 Workforce Readiness Core Leadership area Conference Calls and Webcast.

- 1/22 – Webcast*
2/18 – Conference Call
5/27 – Conference Call
9/30 – Conference Call
11/12 – Webcast
12/9 – Conference Call

Please go to:

<http://moss07.shrm.org/Communities/VolunteerResources/WebcastArchivesforVolunteerLeaders/Pages/default.aspx>

Actual Unemployment Rate Is 13.9 Percent, Merrill Lynch Says

Counting the ranks of ‘underemployed’ as a result of cutbacks on hours, the unofficial rate hit the highest level in at least 15 years, according to economist David Rosenberg.

February 10, 2009

<http://workforce.com/section/00/article/26/16/33.php>

2009 SHRM Chapter Workforce Readiness Goals

- Partner with the State Council WR Director to develop and implement goals for your chapter.
- Actively participate in at least 2 interactive state level WR Sessions.
- Serve as the key contact for all WR activities for the chapter; lead/implement one WR initiative/event at the local level. Track this initiative from beginning and report progress to state director during the year.
- Participate in a least one webcast and two SHRM conference call.

WCASHRM NEWS...

In November 2008, Neal Harrington, Workforce Readiness Chair with WCASHRM spoke at the SkillsUSA Leadership Conference. His session title was “How to keep your Dream Job.” There were about 60 people in attendance.

The chapter continues to have volunteers that go to the Hot Springs High School and conduct mock interview with the seniors.

The chapter is also participating once again in their Sr. Exhibitions.

Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate Awarded to Date: 7848

Gold: 1974 Silver: 4275 Bronze: 1600

The following is a list of employers who are using the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate Program as part of their hiring process:

Actronix, Inc.
 Alberto Culver
 AMC, Inc.
 American Railcar, Inc.
 Austin Powder Co.
 Defiance Metal Products
 Domtar Industries, Inc.
 Eaton Hydraulics LLC
 Evergreen Packaging
 FutureFuel Chemical Company
 Hino Manufacturing
 Hope Water & Light
 Klipsch Audio Technologies
 LM Glassfiber, Inc.
 Nice-Pak Products, Inc.
 Polymarin Composites, USA Ltd.
 Post Food LLC
 Rineco
 Spectra Technologies
 Stant Manufacturing
 Welspun Pipes

For more information go to:

<http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/crc.htm>



WAHRA NEWS...

We welcome Katherine Williams to her new role of Workforce Readiness Chair.

The WAHRA chapter has the following coming up. In May they are partnering with the Fort Smith Public School and are going to have a mini conference...they will touch on topics such as *Consequences--background checks/credit checks, Requirements of Applicants—dress code, interview questions*

Later in the year they will be collaborating with the Partners in Education Program to do some job shadowing.

They will be partnering with the chamber to do the Arkansas Scholar Program presentations to the 8th graders.

The school also mentioned that they would be having the seniors take either the Work keys or the ACT/SAT to assist companies know where the kids are. Hopefully this will motivate companies to get set up with work keys.

From the Editor...

Hope everyone is finding something in this newsletter that is beneficial to them. Is anyone doing any kind of Hispanic outreach in Arkansas? What about working with the prisons in the state? Please send me your thoughts and/or ideas regarding these two potential Workforce Readiness groups.

Thank you...

Cathleen

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How to Recession-Proof Yourself

You should make every attempt to make yourself a recession-proof commodity.

Here are some ideas to accomplish this goal.

- Be pro-active and keep all options open—The sad reality of a prolonged recession is that many productive and high-performing employees may still be downsized because of reduced company income. Train all of your senses on potential job opportunities.
- Market yourself at your current company—This is not time to be shy. Promote your accomplishments, creativity, dedication, and motivation to excel at your job—and for your employer. When a deep recession hits home, companies sometimes lose perspective and see only the “numbers”—decreasing income, high salaries, large benefit costs, etc. You must try to establish yourself as one of the top employees, someone who’s too valuable to be downsized.
- Volunteer to take on extra duties—While reducing staff may save money on paper, job duties and responsibilities must still be upheld. Instead of waiting for your supervisor to deliver the bad news that your job description has become more complex, volunteer to take on extra duties. Often, this action immediately enhances the perception that you are a valuable resource that should not be cut.

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