

By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader All but two of Oklahoma's 77 counties showed a decrease in unemployment for September 2010, and two area counties were among the top three in the lowest rates in the state for that month. Beaver County had the state's lowest rate at 3.0 percent, while Cimarron County's came in at 3.5 percent, according to the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission. These numbers were far below the state average of 6.9 percent. B

In Kansas, the Kansas Department of Labor reports the state's average for September 2010 at 6.6 percent, and four local counties fell below that line. Seward County itself came in with 4.7 percent unemployment, while Stevens County reported 3.7 percent, Meade County at 3.9 percent and Haskell County at 3.5 percent.

The KDOL reported gains of 1,100 non-farm jobs over the year. This is the third consecutive month of over the year gains for total non-farm employment in the Sunflower State.

The KDOL also reported that the state gained 13,400 jobs from August to September alone in non-farm employment. Six of Kansas's 11 major industries reported over-the-year job gains for the sixth consecutive month. Other industries with over-the-year increases were government, trade, transportation and utilities, other services, mining and logging and manufacturing.

Four of the major industries reported over-the-month job gains in September. The gains were highest in the following areas:

- o Government gained 21,000 jobs over the month, an 8.6 percent increase. The majority of job gains in this area are seasonal due to employees returning to unified school districts for the new school year; and
- o Other services gained 1,500 jobs over the month, a 2.9 percent increase. The majority of job gains in this area were in membership association and organization; and
- o Education and health services gained 1,300 jobs over the month, a 0.7 percent increase. Job gains were highest in educational services.

On the subject of government jobs, Kansas Governor-elect Sam Brownback said on his Oct. 30 stop in Liberal that Kansas was the third highest in the nation in terms of adding state employees last year.

The KDOL said 23,583 initial claims for unemployment benefits were filed in September, up from 17,642 in August and down from 23,739 in September 2009. There were 194,587 continued claims in September, down from 235,654 in August and from 275,987 in September 2009.

Current Kansas Governor Mark Parkinson was pleased with the news of Kansas's unemployment rates.

“We have come a long way since last summer when Kansas was at the height of the economic recession,” he said. “We’re now seeing encouraging signs of job creation each month, and our unemployment rate still remains one of the lowest in the country. While our road to recovery may be slow, it is steady, and that is how we’ll continue to get Kansans back to work over the coming months.”

Kansas Secretary of Labor Jim Garner agreed with Parkinson’s assessment.

“The Kansas seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to remain steady, with little or no change since last December,” he said. “When compared to the national rates, Kansas has had a much lower unemployment rate. While this continues to be positive news, it will take more time to lower the unemployment rate to pre-recession numbers. Looking forward, it is typical for Kansas to see a seasonal increase in retail and transportation jobs leading up to the holiday season. We will continue to keep an eye on these indicators in the coming months.”

Oklahoma’s seasonally adjusted non-farm employment dropped 1,500 jobs month in September 2010. In September, over-the-month losses were reported in manufacturing (down 600 jobs); trade, transportation and utilities (a loss of 1,100 jobs); educational and health services (down 1,000 jobs); and government (a cut of 1,700 jobs).

Professional and business services, which added 1,200 jobs posted the largest and only sizeable job gain for the month.

Six of Oklahoma’s 10 statewide supersectors recorded over-the-year gains in September, led by professional and business services, which added 11,400 jobs.

Oklahoma government posted the state’s largest over-the-year decrease for September with an 8,600 job loss.