



401 SW Topeka Boulevard
Topeka, KS 66603-3182

Karin Brownlee, Secretary

phone: (785) 296-0901
fax: (785) 296-0179
communications@dol.ks.gov
www.dol.ks.gov

Sam Brownback, Governor

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Cassie Sparks, Public Information Officer
785-296-0901
Cassie.Sparks@dol.ks.gov

Kansas Labor Market Shows Continued Improvements

TOPEKA, Kan. – The March 2012 Labor Report showed slight monthly employment gains and continued improvement since 2011 including a 2.1 percent increase in private sector jobs since March 2011.

In the past year, Kansas gained 22,700 private sector jobs. It also added 20,100 nonfarm jobs, a 1.5 percent expansion since March 2011. Monthly gains, mostly due to seasonal changes, totaled 8,600 private jobs and 10,800 nonfarm jobs. Both of these numbers were a 0.8 percent increase since February.

“Job growth continues to be steady at a time when we would prefer it to be more robust. We sense a slight hesitancy to do additional hiring,” Karin Brownlee, Kansas Secretary of Labor, said.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.2 percent, a decline from 6.8 percent one year ago and a slight increase from 6.1 percent in February. The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Kansas was 6.6 percent, down from 7.1 percent one year ago and the same as February.

Eight of the 11 major industries in Kansas reported job gains during the past year. The professional and business services industry has gained 11,700 jobs since March 2011, an 8 percent increase.

There were also eight industries that showed job increases over the month. Leisure and hospitality showed the greatest gain with 3,200 jobs added, a 2.9 percent increase. These gains were mostly seen in food services and drinking establishments throughout the state.

“The March report is reflecting mixed signals in the labor market. Employment grew slightly over the month, thanks in part to hiring at restaurants and other food service establishments,” Tyler Tenbrink, Labor Economist, said. “However, results from a household survey show the labor force continued to decline for a third consecutive month and the unemployment rate ticked up 0.1 percent.”

Continued unemployment benefit claims decreased from February and when compared to this time last year. Initial unemployment benefit claims for March increased slightly over the month, but decreased compared to March 2011.

The April 2012 Labor Report will be released on May 18, 2012. For more information, visit www.dol.ks.gov. Follow KansasDOL on Twitter and Facebook.

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