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Kansas Labor Market Continues to Improve

TOPEKA, Kan. – The January 2012 Labor Report shows continued improvement across the state including a decline in the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate and an over the year gain in nonfarm jobs.

According to January 2012 estimates, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.1 percent, down from 6.4 percent in December 2011. Kansas gained 12,200 nonfarm jobs over the year (a 0.9 percent increase) and 22,200 private sector jobs, indicating a decline in government jobs.

“The continued growth of private sector jobs is particularly encouraging. We hope this pace continues through 2012,” Karin Brownlee, Kansas Secretary of Labor, said.

Due to the decline of the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate to below 6.5 percent, the State Extended Benefits program will expire in Kansas on April 7, 2012. The end of this program is a result of our growing economy.

Eight of the 11 major industries in Kansas reported over-the-year job gains. The increase in construction jobs, 7.9 percent, is especially promising because this industry historically loses jobs in January.

“Kansas started off the year with healthy job growth and a declining unemployment rate. These are both welcome signs,” Tyler Tenbrink, Labor Economist, said. “If the trend continues, Kansas will be in a position to carry on a more sustained recovery.”

Initial unemployment benefit claims in January decreased both over the month and over the year. Continued benefit claims for the month decreased over the year, but increased since December. These claims include Regular, Extended Benefit and Emergency Unemployment Compensation claims.

While the number of jobs has increased since January 2011, nonfarm jobs decreased over the month due to seasonal changes. This decrease amounted to a 1.9 percent decline in nonfarm jobs since December 2011.

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Kansas was 6.4 percent, down from 7.5 percent one year ago and up from 6 percent in December. These numbers include seasonal changes influenced by weather, holidays and the closing of schools. Therefore, the seasonally adjusted unemployment numbers are a better indicator of the actual labor market.

The February 2012 Labor Report will be released March 30, 2012. For more information visit dol.ks.gov.

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