

St. Johns County posts lowest unemployment in state

By The News Service of Florida
March 23, 2018

Florida's unemployment rate continues to hold at 3.9 percent, according to numbers posted Friday by the state Department of Economic Opportunity.

With the rate unchanged since December, the February numbers indicate 398,000 Floridians were out of work from a workforce of 10.17 million. The new totals reflect an increase of 1,000 people in the jobless ranks from a state workforce that grew by 24,000 from January.

The numbers also show modest job growth in the fields of construction, up 1.4 percent, and manufacturing, up 0.8 percent. Leisure and hospitality jobs went down 0.5 percent month to month.

In a news release, Gov. Rick Scott highlighted Florida's annual job growth rate of 2.2 percent, which exceeds the national rate of 1.8 percent. Scott went to Ocala to announce the monthly figures during a groundbreaking ceremony for a development project that is slated to include construction of a hotel, an apartment complex and restaurants.

The state's jobless mark also continues to outpace the national rate, which held at 4.1 percent the first two months of 2018. A year ago, the state's unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, while the national mark was 4.7 percent. Monroe County, still recovering from Hurricane Irma in September, posted a 3.3 percent unemployment rate for February, down from 3.7 percent in January.

St. Johns County had the state's lowest unemployment rate in February, at 3 percent. Okaloosa County went from 3.5 percent in January to 3.2 percent in February. Seminole, Orange, Union and Wakulla counties were also at 3.3 percent. Citrus and Sumter counties were tied for the highest rate, at 5.5 percent.