



St. Johns County reports unemployment rate well below state rate

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Despite a slight increase compared to the previous month, St. Johns County reported the second-lowest unemployment rate in the state in July.

The county rate of 3.8 percent was up 0.1 of a percentage point from June, according to information released Friday by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Only Monroe County at 3.3 percent had a lower rate than St. Johns.

July's rate was slightly better than a year ago when the county had a 4.1 percent rate.

Not only is the recent rate better than July 2015, but St. Johns County has also seen an increase in the total number of people employed (111,441 now compared to 108,597 last year) and the available labor pool.

The county recently received a boost in jobs when a Lowe's home improvement store opened a week ago on U.S. 1 South. The store is expected to provide about 180 jobs.

St. Johns County's rate was significantly lower than the overall state rate. Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.7 percent in July, unchanged from the June rate but down 0.5 of a percentage point from 5.2 percent a year ago. Individual county rates are not seasonally adjusted.

The national unemployment rate was 4.9 percent in July.

The number of jobs in Florida was 8,359,300 in July, up 250,200 jobs compared to a year ago.

The industry gaining the most jobs was professional and business services (up 53,400 jobs, 4.4 percent). Other industries gaining jobs included education and health services (up 48,800 jobs, 4.1 percent); leisure and hospitality (up 41,100 jobs, 3.6 percent); trade, transportation, and utilities (up 30,700 jobs, 1.8 percent); construction (up 26,400 jobs, 6.1 percent); government (up 18,200 jobs, 1.7 percent); financial activities (up 18,000 jobs, 3.4 percent); manufacturing (up 11,600 jobs, 3.4 percent); and other services (up 4,400 jobs, 1.3 percent).

For counties surrounding St. Johns, Clay seemed to fare best with an unemployment rate of 4.6 percent in July. Other county rates were Duval (5.3 percent), Flagler (5.7 percent) and Putnam (6.4 percent).