



St. Johns County recorded lowest unemployment rate in state for September

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St. Johns County's unemployment rate fell to its lowest level in more than a decade in September and recorded the lowest rate in the state at 2.7 percent.

The numbers were released Friday morning by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in September 2017, down 0.2 of a percentage point from August 2017 and down 1.1 percentage points from a year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.2 percent in September.

Florida's seasonally adjusted total nonagricultural employment was 8,519,100 in September 2017, a decrease of 127,400 jobs over the month. The state gained 62,400 jobs over the year.

Individual county rates are not seasonally adjusted.

Okaloosa County tied St. Johns with the lowest rate in Florida, followed by Franklin, Wakulla and Walton counties (2.9 percent each). Five other counties had unemployment rates of 3.0 percent.

Hendry County had the highest unemployment rate (8.6 percent) in Florida in September, followed by Hardee County (6.0 percent) and Glades County (5.3 percent).

As for surrounding counties, Clay had the lowest rate at 3.2 percent, followed by Duval (3.6 percent), Flagler (3.9 percent) and Putnam (4.5 percent).

The unemployment rate for St. Johns County was the lowest since a rate of 2.6 percent was recorded for October 2006. The highest rate in the last two decades was 9.3 percent in January 2010.

In the last 12 months, St. Johns has seen a sharp drop in unemployment. The county had an unemployment rate of 3.9 percent in September 2016. Since then, the county has seen its labor force increase by about 2,500 to 120,836. The number of jobs increased by almost 4,000 to 117,542.

According a DEO release, the industry gaining the most jobs in the state was education and health services (15,000 jobs, 1.2 percent). Other industries gaining jobs over the year included trade, transportation, and utilities (13,900 jobs, 0.8 percent); construction (12,700 jobs, 2.6 percent); financial activities (11,200 jobs, 2.0 percent); manufacturing (10,400 jobs, 2.9 percent).