



Florida hits record unemployment rate; St. Johns County at 2.2%

By Stuart Korfhage
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St. Johns County's unemployment rate was unchanged in December and remained one of the lowest in the state.

December numbers were released Friday by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). The report showed that Monroe County and Miami-Dade County had the state's lowest unemployment rate (1.8% each), followed by St. Johns County (2.2%), and Okaloosa County and Lafayette County (2.3% each).

It's the second straight month this county had a rate of 2.2%. It's a drop from a year ago when the county had an unemployment rate of 2.7% in December 2018.

Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3% in December 2019, down 0.1 of a percentage point from the November 2019 rate, and down 0.3 of a percentage point from a year ago. Individual county rates are not seasonally adjusted.

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Florida's seasonally adjusted total nonagricultural employment was 9,104,000 in December 2019, an increase of 16,000 jobs (0.2%) over the month. The state gained 212,000 jobs over the year, an increase of 2.4%.

"My administration continues to pursue bold priorities for Florida, and our efforts to diversify the economy are yielding results," Gov. Ron DeSantis said in a release. "I remain laser focused on ensuring Florida is offering a world-class pool of talent to businesses and investing in our students

and educators. We continue to prioritize the protection of our natural resources and water quality while also continuously searching for ways to support new and innovative industries which are helping to produce historically low unemployment in our state.”

Nationally, the number of jobs rose 1.4% over the year. With the exception of September 2017, Florida’s over-the-year job growth rate has exceeded the nation’s rate since April 2012.

Hendry County had the highest unemployment rate (4.6%) in Florida in December 2019, followed by Hardee County (4.1%), and Citrus County and Sumter County (4% each).

For counties that border St. Johns, Clay County had the lowest rate in December at 2.5%, followed by Duval (2.7%), Flagler (3.2%) and Putnam (3.6%).