

Long term unemployed Missourians are left in the cold

July 8, 2010

Inaction by the U.S. Senate is especially bad news for 47,700 Missourians who lost their jobs months ago, and still have not been able to find work. Because of the Senate's refusal to extend unemployment insurance benefits, these Missourians' will lose their benefits by the end of this week. By the end of the month that number will grow to 71,400 Missourians.

The loss of that income will create problems as these former workers have to find ways to pay rent and utilities and meet other basic needs. It will also affect local economies across the state. Unemployment benefits are usually spent as soon as they are received, and boost our fragile barely-recovering economy.

The unemployment rate in Missouri is virtually unchanged from a year ago. At 9.3 percent (seasonally adjusted) in May 2010, Missouri ranks 32nd, with a higher unemployment rate than most surrounding states. Only Tennessee and Kentucky at 10.4 percent, and Illinois at 10.8 percent, have higher rates.¹

Who is unemployed in Missouri?

According to the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (June 2010)², women are slightly less likely to be unemployed than men. Women comprise 47 percent of the unemployed and men 53 percent. Seventy-two percent of those unemployed are white, and 20 percent are African American.

Twenty-four percent of unemployed Missourians are between the ages of 25 and 34. Twenty-three percent are between the ages of 35 and 44, and 26 percent are between the ages of 45-64. Missourians ages 55-64 make up 15 percent of the unemployed. More Missouri seniors are unemployed than Missouri youth. Twice as many Missourians over the age of 65 are unemployed compared to those aged 22 and younger.

Looking for a job?

The counties with unemployment rates lower than 6 percent are Nodaway, Adair, Gentry, Holt, Pulaski and Schuyler. With the exception of Pulaski, these counties are all in northern Missouri. Those with unemployment rates higher than 10 percent are Clark, Hickory, Laclede, Morgan, Shannon, Montgomery Franklin, and Pemiscot.³

Looking to change your occupation?

Occupations with the highest number of unemployed workers include: office and administrative support; construction and mining; manufacturing; transportation and material management; food preparation and serving related jobs; and management.

Those with the fewest unemployed workers include farming, fishing and forestry; legal work; and life, physical and social sciences.⁴

¹ Downloaded at <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>, July 8, 2010

² Downloaded at <http://www.labor.mo.gov/DES/uidemographics.asp>, July 8, 2010

³ Downloaded at http://www.labor.mo.gov/DES/tool/ui_ben_stats.asp, July 8, 2010

⁴ Ibid at 2.