

Dayton Business Journal - March 21, 2008

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# DAYTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## Ohio jobless rate falls again

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is taking with a grain of salt a drop in the state's unemployment rate to its lowest level in nearly two years.

The department reported Friday the state's jobless rate eased to 5.3 percent in February, down from 5.5 percent in January and in February 2007. The state's jobless rate has hovered at or above 5.5 percent for a year and last dipped as low as 5.3 percent in March 2006.

Helen Jones-Kelley, the department's director, said that while the state's jobless rate ticked down, the economic forces at work - shrinking pools of the employed and unemployed - don't paint a strong picture.

"Ohio's labor market indicators showed mixed results in February," Jones-Kelley said in a release. "News that the unemployment rate declined slightly must be tempered by the fact that total employment decreased in both goods-producing and service-providing industries."

While the total of unemployed Ohioans decreased 4 percent to 316,000 in February, nonfarm payroll levels dropped more than 11,000 workers from January to 5.42 million. That included a loss of 9,700 workers in service-providing businesses and 2,300 workers in construction because of weather conditions.

The nation's unemployment rate also eased last month, falling to 4.8 percent from 4.9 percent in January, though it was up from 4.5 percent a year ago.

The state plans to release metro-area unemployment statistics Tuesday.

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