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UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DOWN SLIGHTLY IN MARCH

Ohio's unemployment rate fell from 5.9% to 5.7% from February to March, the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services said Friday. Ohio's rate in March was the same as the national rate.

"While there was a small gain in overall employment in March, the decrease the rate was largely due to fewer people seeking jobs," ODJFS Director Tom Hayes said. "Employment gains were mainly in the leisure and hospitality industry, and manufacturing employment held steady."

The department said the number of unemployed Ohio workers was 333,000, down from 350,000 the previous month.

Policy Matters Ohio said the state's job market is showing some stability, but said it is still weaker than it was when the recession started in 2001. The group said Ohio had 210,000 fewer jobs last month than it did when downturn began.

On a county-by-county basis, unemployment rates ranged from 3.3% in Holmes County to 18.6% in Morgan County.

Seven other counties - Delaware, Butler, Hancock, Union, Logan, Warren and Wayne - had rates at or below 4.5%. Eight counties other than Morgan - Meigs, Vinton, Adams, Monroe, Perry, Pike, Ottawa and Huron - had rates above 10%.

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