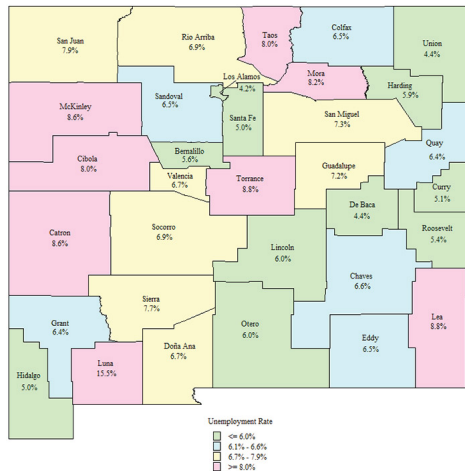


McKinley, Cibola unemployment rates edge downward tate: Seasonal jobs in vogue

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 23 December 2016 05:39



New Mexico's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.7 percent in November 2016, unchanged from 6.7 percent in October, but up from 6.6 percent last year, according to statistics released this week by the New Mexico Department of Work Force Solutions.

In McKinley County, the unemployment rate for November was 8.6 percent and in neighboring Cibola County the November 2016 unemployment rate was 8.0 percent. McKinley's unemployment rate in October 2016 was 8.9 percent and the Cibola jobless rate was 8.3 percent in October. Both county percentages represent seasonal drops, officials said.

"Definitely seasonal," Tracy Shaleen, an economist with Work force, said. "That's what it is."

The unemployment statistics are a month behind due to the amount of time required to collect the data. "This is seasonal employment kicking in and going through a yearly cycle in McKinley County," Shaleen said. "This is typical of a county that size."

Bill Lee, the executive director at the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce and an incoming McKinley County Commissioner, said this time of year is definitely when retailers, like those at Gallup's Rio West Mall, hire seasonal help.

McKinley, Cibola unemployment rates edge downward ate: Seasonal jobs in vogue

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 23 December 2016 05:39

“I think it’s definitely a seasonal thing, especially in a county like McKinley,” Lee said. “We have a mall. That’s something some small municipalities (county seats) don’t have. So the seasonal employment factor must be strongly considered in our case.”

The national unemployment rate was 4.6 percent in November 2016, down from 4.9 percent in October and down from 5.0 percent in November 2015.

There are 33 counties in New Mexico. Luna County in southwestern New Mexico has the state’s highest unemployment rate at 15.5 percent. Loa Alamos County, which is north of Santa Fe, has New Mexico’s lowest unemployment rate at 4.2 percent. Los Alamos also has New Mexico’s highest median income.

With respect to McKinley County, Shaleen added, “Broadly-speaking, the unemployment rate normally dips in the spring, rises over the summer, tails off to the end of the year and then rises again in January. Industries such as agriculture, construction, education and health services, leisure and hospitality, and retail trade typically exhibit distinct seasonal trends.”

Donna Browning, an unemployed retail worker, said she lost her job in Gallup about a year ago. “I have been working my current temporary job for three months,” Browning said. “I don’t know what I’m going to do when they tell me my time is up.”

By Bernie Dotson

Sun Correspondent