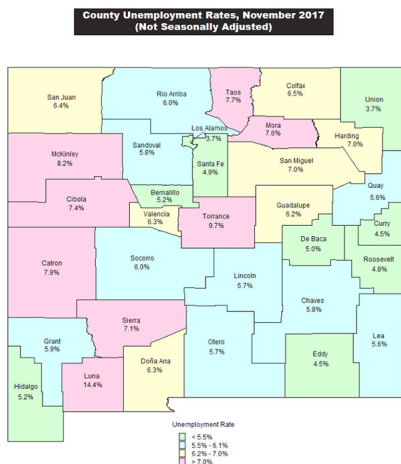


McKinley, Cibola unemployment rates drop

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 12 January 2018 07:40



McKinley in Top 5 in NM unemployment, still

New Mexico's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.1 percent in November 2017, unchanged from October but down from 6.7 percent in November 2016.

The unemployment rate in McKinley County the past November was 8.2 percent. The unemployment rate in October was 8.5 percent. In Cibola County, which is about a 55-minute drive from McKinley, the unemployment rate was 7.4 percent in November. Cibola's October unemployment rate was 7.6 percent.

"This is holiday hiring picking up a little," Tracy Shaleen, an economist with the New Mexico Department of Work Force Solutions, said. "This same scenario is relevant in Cibola County."

Referencing state data, Shaleen said New Mexico added 9,600 total nonagricultural jobs between November 2016 and November 2017, representing an over-the-year increase of 1.1 percent. Nine industries added jobs, three posted losses, and one reported no change from its November 2016 estimate.

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Employment in construction was up 3,000 jobs, or 6.7 percent, which represented the largest numeric and percentage gain of all industries. The leisure and hospitality industry added 2,600 jobs, representing a gain of 2.7 percent, Shaleen said.

There are 33 counties in New Mexico. The county with the highest unemployment rate in November was Luna, in the southwest corner of the state, with 14.4 percent. The lowest unemployment rates in New Mexico were Los Alamos and Union counties at 3.7 percent.

Bill Lee, executive director at the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, has echoed Shaleen's unemployment decrease remarks in McKinley County in past interviews with the *Gallup Sun*.

Shaleen noted that there is a one-month gap between state unemployment reports due to the amount of time required to complete them. He said there will be a two-month end-of-the-year lag after the December 2017 update comes out in the coming weeks.

The national unemployment rate was 4.1 percent, also unchanged from October, but down from 4.6 percent a year ago, according to Work Force statistics.

McKinley County is consistently ranked in the top portion when it comes to unemployment. Officials have said that just roughly 7 percent of land around McKinley is taxable, which plays a role in landing big companies that have the potential to bring in lots of jobs.