
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

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Statement by DWD Secretary Newson on Bureau of Labor Statistics' Report Showing Improvement in State's Average Annual Unemployment Rate

MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson today issued the following statement on the latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report showing Wisconsin's average annual unemployment rate improved dramatically in 2011 when compared to other states:

"Wisconsin's annual average unemployment rate dropped a full percentage point to 7.5 percent from 8.5 percent in 2010, ranking us among the 10 states with the most dramatic decline in unemployment rates in 2011," Secretary Newson said. "In addition, Wisconsin's average annual unemployment rate ranking of 20th lowest represents a drop from 24th in 2010, and is the state's lowest ranking among the states and District of Columbia since 2000.

Today's report reaffirms that over the last year, when compared to other states, Wisconsin's employment rate has been heading in the right direction under Governor Walker's leadership."

Other notable findings in today's BLS report:

- Forty states and the District of Columbia experienced a smaller drop in annual average unemployment rate than Wisconsin during 2011. Rates in four additional states dropped by the same amount (1.0 percent) as Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin's annual average unemployment rate in 2011 was below that of other major manufacturing Midwest states including Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Ohio.
- Wisconsin's annual average unemployment rate of 7.5 percent ranked it 20th lowest in the nation in 2011, a drop from the state's 2010 ranking of 24th and the state's lowest ranking since 2000 (18th lowest).
- Maine and Wisconsin shared a 2011 annual average unemployment rate of 7.5 percent. Only 19 other states had lower annual average rates.

The BLS annual average unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/srgune.nr0.htm>