



Area unemployment rate lowest for September since 2000

 **Vicki Ikeogu**, vikeogu@stcloudtimes.com 1:11 p.m. CDT October 20, 2015



(Photo: Times graphic)

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Unemployment rates in Central Minnesota continue to experience modest month-over-month improvements, and some counties are seeing the lowest September rates since 2000, according to data released Tuesday.

The average unemployment rate for the seven-county area of Benton, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright is 3.4 percent, down 0.3 of a percentage point from August. Benton, Mille Lacs and Morrison counties experienced the greatest improvement, each down 0.4 of a percentage point from August.

However, Mille Lacs County continues its trend of experiencing high unemployment, with a September unemployment rate of 4.2 percent.

Stearns and Wright counties continue to have the area's lowest unemployment rates. Both had 3 percent rates in September.

Year-over-year unemployment numbers also show moderate improvement for the area. All but Todd County, experienced a decline in September compared with one year ago. Mille Lacs County reported the largest decline, down 0.6 percentage points from the previous year.

Historically, all counties have witnessed significant improvement in unemployment numbers. Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright counties, the last time September unemployment has been below its current numbers was in 2000. Mille Lacs and Morrison counties reported lower September unemployment numbers in 2001. Benton County has not seen September unemployment rates this low since 2005.

Even though unemployment rates for the region have experienced a decline, most remain above the Minnesota rate of 3.2 percent, according to data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

The average U.S. rate is 4.9 percent.

Local unemployment

On a mobile device? View the data at <http://on.sctimes.com/1QPooNA>

	SEPT. '15	AUG. '15	SEPT. '14
St. Cloud MSA*	3.1	3.4	3.4
Benton County	3.4	3.8	3.8

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SOURCE: 2014 National Study by H&R Block

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Mille Lacs County	4.2	4.6	4.8
Morrison County	3.8	4.2	4.2
Sherburne County	3.3	3.5	3.6
Stearns County	3	3.3	3.3
Todd County	3.2	3.4	3.2
Wright County	3	3.2	3.3
*-Metropolitan Statistical Area			

Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

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Column misses point about emails

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