

Franklin County's unemployment rate stayed steady

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Franklin County's unemployment rate remained steady in December.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 6.6 percent last month, according to a new report from the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis.

The county tied three other counties for the 11th lowest rate in the state in December.

Unemployment has fallen from 7.9 percent a year ago at this time, though it still remains double what it was before the recession.

Franklin County lost about 300 jobs over the month.

Manufacturing and the mining, logging and construction sectors posted slight declines. Local government and the professional and business services sectors also saw small declines.

The leisure and hospitality sector didn't see the spike that it normally does in December largely because the mild winter delayed the opening at Whitetail Ski Resort, a major employer in leisure and hospitality.

Hiring at Whitetail will be reflected in January data.

The retail sector added about 100 jobs in December, due to expected seasonal hiring for the holiday shopping rush. Total employment in the retail sector was slightly higher than it was a year ago.

Fulton County saw a slight decline in unemployment. The county added about 100 manufacturing jobs over the month and about 300 manufacturing jobs over the year.

Pennsylvania recently changed its unemployment compensation law, which now requires that anyone who applies for benefits with an effective date of Jan. 1, 2012, or after must meet certain work search requirements.

For the long-term unemployed, federal extended benefits have been extended through March.

The state's Center for Workforce Information and Analysis expects about 200 people in Franklin County to exhaust unemployment benefits in January and February, and another 520 to exhaust benefits in March