

Mankato area lost 500 jobs in May

By Robb Murray

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MANKATO — While other areas of the state showed some improvement on the jobs front, the Mankato area took a slight dive, dropping 500 jobs in the month of May.

Statewide, Minnesota employers added 1,200 jobs in May, according to figures released today by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, although the state's unemployment rate rose 0.1 percent in May to a seasonally adjusted 6.6 percent, compared with a U.S.

rate of 9.1 percent.

Good news was also released about the April numbers, which have been revised to show the state lost only 2,600 instead of the 5,200 that DEED originally reported.

As for southern Minnesota, the lag seems to be localized to the south central part of the state.

Numbers show the Rochester area, for instance, gained about 1,300 jobs, or an increase of about 1.3 percent.

Greater Mankato Growth President and CEO Jonathan Zierdt said the dip shouldn't be cause for alarm.

"The decrease between April and May is nominal at .2 percent, and while yearover- year job numbers from May 2010 to May 2011 do indicate a decrease of .9 percent, one month's marginal performance does not provide reason for undue concern," Zierdt said.

"Even more important, when we look behind the numbers, we find that yearover- year job numbers in

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goods-producing businesses went up by 1.4 percent, and conversely jobs in serviceproviding organizations went down 1.4 percent — the bulk of those in government — with a year- overyear drop of 3.6 percent."

DEED Commissioner Mark Phillips said the private sector has shown steady signs of improvement, and has added about 7,300 jobs in the past two months.

"Initial claims for unemployment benefits continue to drop, and the Help Wanted OnLine count of advertised job vacancies in Minnesota jumped 14,000 in May, the third- biggest increase among all states."

Statewide, construction was the biggest producer, adding about 2,200 jobs in May. Professional and business services added 1,900 jobs, the finance sector added 500, and trade, transportation and utilities added 500.

Job loss leaders included government, which is down 4,200 jobs, and manufacturing, which is down 100 jobs. The leisure, hospitality and mining and logging saw no change in their May numbers.

Around the state, Metropolitan Statistical Areas that have seen growth include Rochester, Duluth- Superior and Minneapolis- St. Paul MSA.

Mankato and St. Cloud were the only areas to lose jobs.

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