

Area jobs end year above 2009

By Tim Krohn

tkrohn@mankatofreepress.com

The private sector gained some jobs compared to a year ago, but the government sector shed some jobs in Blue Earth and Nicollet counties.

According to new data from the state, there were 51,985 total on-farm jobs in December 2010.

That's up 1 percent from a year earlier.

Job numbers for the last four months of the year were all higher than the previous year's numbers.

There was a 1.2 percent drop in government sector jobs in December compared to a year earlier. There were 9,007 government jobs at the end of the year, compared to 9,116 at the end of 2009.

Total private non-farm jobs in the two counties rose 1.5 percent from a year earlier, with goods-producing jobs gaining 1.9 percent and service jobs gaining just under 1 percent.

The average number of hours worked by employees dipped some at the end of the year. Employees worked an average of 33.1 hours per week in December 2010 com-

pared to 33.4 hours a year earlier.

Average wages were up from \$23.05 in December 2009 to \$25.12 at the end of 2010.

The numbers were released Thursday by the state Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Greater Mankato Growth President and CEO Jonathan Zierdt said that when it comes to judging the economic strength of a region relative to jobs, one of the best sources is Current Employment Statistics data. They measure the number of paid employees in a par-

ticular region, excluding self-employment and farm jobs.

He said in a statement that the CES job numbers for Greater Mankato are encouraging on two fronts: "First, the job numbers continue to follow the stable trend line seen in pre-recession years. Second, for the past four months, job numbers have increased year over year."

Year over year job increases in the last four months of 2010 were 537 (1.04 percent) in December, 514 (.99 percent) in November, 773 (1.50 percent) in October and 618 (1.22 percent) in September.

Job Numbers

Total non-farm jobs for the Mankato-North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is all of Blue Earth and Nicollet counties.

	2009	2010
Jan.	53,135	51,106
Feb.	53,216	51,049
March	52,832	51,152
April	52,970	51,152
May	52,740	51,372
June	52,110	51,952
July	50,864	50,370
Aug.	50,367	50,303
Sept.	50,642	51,260
Oct.	51,466	52,219
Nov.	51,718	52,232
Dec.	51,448	51,985

Source: DEED

J. Mulmanger