

Area job numbers were up in August

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MANKATO — The number of jobs in the region rebounded in August, in part because of state employees returning to work after the government shutdown.

Still, the region's job gains were stronger than elsewhere in the state.

Total nonfarm jobs in the region rose 3.7 percent over a year earlier with 51,662 jobs compared to 49,809 in August 2010.

The numbers are for the Mankato-North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes all of Blue Earth and Nicollet counties.

The increase in jobs was considerably higher than elsewhere. Minnesota saw a 1.7 percent year-over-year increase, while Rochester was up 2.7 percent, Duluth up 2.3 percent, the Twin Cities up 1.5 percent and St. Cloud's job numbers the same as last year.

Local job numbers were up by about the same amount in all areas — goods producing, service-producing, private sector providing and government.

Private sector nonfarm jobs account for 85 percent of employment while government accounts for 15 percent.

Average earnings in the region slipped from July and from a year earlier. Workers earned an average of \$22.66 per hour in August, down 30 cents from July and down more than \$1 an hour

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from last year in August.

The average number of hours worked by employees jumped to its highest point in nearly a year. People put in an average of 34 hours per week, the highest since last October, but still down from 35.6 in August of last year.

Minnesota's unemployment rate held steady at 7.2 percent in August, the same as in July, when the state's three-week government shutdown and seasonal school closings drove the official rate up.

(Unemployment rates for cities and counties will be released later.) The state gained a net new 28,400 jobs in August, largely due to the recall of 22,600 government workers.

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