BUSINESS

Jobless rate falls in March

Greenville's unemployment drops to 6.2 percent

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The number of unemployed in South Carolina fell another straight month in March, the Department of Employment Workforce said.

The state's unemployment rate dropped from 8.6 percent in February to 8.4 percent in March. The labor force here also declined to 2,175,091, from February to March, DEW said.

South Carolina was among 26 states and the District of Columbia that had unemployment rate decreases last month, the Labor Department said. Seven states had increases and 17 had no change, the department said.

Nationwide, the unemployment rate tipped from 7.7 percent to 7.6 percent.

CareerBuilder is forecasting stable hiring and improvement for the year's second quarter "as U.S. employers continue to size up a market that is producing moderate economic growth."

"The U.S. job market is in a better place today, but concerns over spending cuts, wavering global economies and other factors are weighing on employers' minds," said Matt Ferguson, CEO of CareerBuilder.

The rebound in the housing sector is having a positive influence on job creation for related industries that have been struggling, Ferguson said.

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In South Carolina, the largest over-the-year gains last month were in leisure and hospitality (11,300), government (5,700), trade, transportation, and utilities (4,400), and financial activities (4,200), DEW said. Increases in manufacturing (1,400) and construction (1,000) also propelled growth.

Every county in the state saw drops in their unemployment rates.

Marion County had the highest unemployment rate at 16.2 percent. Lexington County had the lowest rate at 6.0 percent, followed by Greenville and Charleston, where rates were 6.2 percent.

Across the Upstate, the unemployment rates fell to 6.7 percent in Pickens, 7.3 percent in Anderson, 7.6 percent in Laurens, 7.7 percent in Spartanburg, and 7.9 percent in Oconee.