

Oconee ranks in bottom three SC counties for unemployment

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SENECA — Oconee County recorded one of the lowest unemployment rates in South Carolina, according to a September jobs report.

The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce's September jobs report showed Oconee County's unemployment rate at 3.4 percent, an improvement from the month prior of 5.1 percent. The rating is tied for the third lowest in the state, just behind Saluda and Lexington counties. About 1,187 people were unemployed at the end of September in Oconee County, down from 1,823. The numbers are still behind last year's report for the same month, when the jobless rate was 1.9 percent and there were 671 people unemployed.

South Carolina's September rate came in at 5.1 percent, down from August's revised estimate of 6.4 percent. Nationally, the unemployment rate declined from 8.4 percent in August to 7.9 percent in September.

There are roughly 121,485 unemployed South Carolina residents, according to DEW. That number is 64,035 more people than there were a year ago.

"What our agency is hearing from the business community is the urgent need for workers. While we know a lot of businesses suffered layoffs during the pandemic, industries have ramped back up and several are experiencing a boom," DEW executive director Dan Ellzey said in a release. "People who are looking for employment are finding work. And now is the time to secure one

of these in-demand jobs because South Carolina needs people in the workforce. If individuals have stopped looking for work because they believe businesses are closed or not hiring, let me assure you that is not the case."

Ellzey encouraged anyone without a job to visit jobs.scworks.org to search through "tens of thousands of jobs" currently open.

"Research has shown that individuals who stayed employed — even if the job was in a different field or industry — were able to transition more successfully as the economy rebounded than people who had employment gaps," he said. "While we celebrate those who found stable employment last month, there is still work to be done."

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