Jobless rate increases in Lafayette

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BATON ROUGE — Unemployment in Lafayette jumped almost 2 percentage points in January, magnifying a nationwide trend of worsening job conditions during the month.

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Louisiana continues to lead the nation with the worst employment opportunities. The second worst state is West Virginia, which at 9.9 is almost 2 percentage points better than Louisiana. Third in the ranking of troubled states is Alaska with 9.0 and Mississippi with 8.9.

Practically every form of employment in Lafayette was down in January. The biggest drop was in government — 900 jobs — because of USL’s semester break. That portion of the job market is expected to show improvement with next month’s figures.

More significant is a 700-job drop in wholesale and retail trade, primarily because of layoffs due to the end of the holiday shopping period.

As usual, a drop in the price of oil affected more than just employees of the petroleum industry. Lafayette area transportation and public utilities employment dropped 300 in January due to a slowdown in offshore water transportation and bus service employment. Services employment was down by 200 workers because of seasonal decreases and the fluctuating price of oil.

Construction employment in Lafayette dropped 100 but is up 200 from last year’s January count.

East Carroll Parish had the worst employment problems in the state with 30.4 percent of its workers without jobs. Lincoln continued to lead in employment with only 6.6 percent unemployment.

The number of unemployed workers in Lafayette area parishes also increased.

St. Landry Parish has the worst rate of any in the Lafayette area

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with 18.6 percent of its workers without jobs. In December, the rate was 15.3.

Vermilion Parish has the second worst rate in the area with 16.6 unemployed, up from the 13.2 registered in December.

In Jefferson Davis Parish, the rate rose from 14.0 to 16.3. Acadia’s rose from 11.4 to 13.4.

Iberia Parish had the lowest rate in the area with 13.0 percent unemployed. The rate jumped from 10.2 percent in December.

A breakout of nonagricultural employment statewide shows that 56,600 workers were employed in mining, which includes oilfield workers, down from 56,700 in December.

In construction, employment dropped from 84,800 to 82,800; manufacturing dropped from 172,300 to 169,800; transportation and utilities from 108,800 to 107,900; wholesale and retail trade from 368,100 to 359,700; finance and real estate down from 81,800 to 81,500; services down from 328,100 to 326,900 and government 312,300, down from 316,400.