Louisiana's jobless rate rises to 12.9% in October

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Louisiana's jobless rate climbed to 12.9 percent in October, with the state apparently regaining its No. 1 national unemployment ranking, state Labor Department officials said Tuesday.

Louisiana ranked first in the nation in unemployment from February through June 1986.

The Louisiana rate is almost double the national rate of 6.6 percent for October, according to Labor statistics.

Baton Rouge area unemployment stood at 10.3 percent during October, up slightly from the 10.2 percent rate registered in September.

Labor Secretary Dudley Patin Jr. said 256,200 people were unemployed in October, compared to 1.73 million who were employed.

Patin said he expects the unemployment rate will drop in the coming months because workers will be hired for the holiday season.

Louisiana's October jobless rate is up slightly from September, when unemployment stood at 12.6 percent. A year ago, state unemployment stood at 11.3 percent, according to statistics released by Labor.

By comparison, the national rate was 6.8 percent in September and 6.8 percent a year ago.

Four parishes registered unemployment rates of more than 20 percent in October — Assumption, 23.9 percent; St. Mary, 23.6 percent; Catahoula, 20.3 percent; and Vermilion, 20.1 percent.

The lowest unemployment rate was 6.1 percent in Lincoln Parish.

The number of construction and transportation/utility-related jobs decreased between September and October, Patin said.

While the number of oil and gas industry-related jobs increased slightly in October from September totals, the number of jobs available in the field is still 22,200 jobs behind October 1985.

There was also a slight gain in manufacturing jobs between September and October.

Unemployment rates for the major labor market areas include: Alexandria, 10.3 percent in October, up from 9.7 percent in September; Baton Rouge, 10.3 percent up from 10.2 percent; Houma-Thibodaux, 18.8 percent, up from 18.5 percent; Lafayette, 15.4 percent, up from 14.9 percent; Lake Charles, 13.9 percent, down from 14.3 percent; Monroe, 10.1 percent, up from 9.4 percent; New Orleans, 10.9 percent, same as in September; and Shreveport, 11.6 percent, up from 11.3 percent.