Local jobless rate up

Staff, wire report

Lafayette set a new record it would just as soon have done without last month. Its jobless rate rose to 14.6 percent.

The local June unemployment figure was the third-highest for a major Louisiana municipality, up from 13.9 percent in May.

The Hub City bowed only to similarly oil-dependent Houma-Thibodaux, whose June rate came in at 18.1 percent, and Lake Charles, at 15.4 percent.

Louisiana as a whole retained the nation's highest jobless ranking, rising from 13.2 percent in May to 13.6 percent in June.

All eight of the state's major metropolitan areas showed higher unemployment figures this past month, according to statistics released by the Department of Labor Friday.

Only two of Louisiana's 64 parishes — Vernon and Lincoln — recorded single-digit rates. Eleven parishes topped the 20 percent mark.

Previous state highs of 13.4 percent were registered in February and April.

June's record high is attributable mostly to government job losses, a Labor Department spokesman said.

There were 9,600 more government employees out of work statewide in June, and 5,100 fewer jobs in government this past month than in June 1985.

That meant fewer people able to get laid off this year because "government has shrunk," commented spokesman Tom Bourg.

The pinch was felt, nonetheless.

Unemployment in Shreveport, which also suffered a loss in government jobs, rose from 11.9 percent in May to 12.2 in June.

Louisiana had 1.2 million people working in June, and 271,200 unemployed.

The three-month vacation period for school teachers is also partly responsible, Bourg said.

June unemployment rates for other major metropolitan areas included:

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