Parish jobless rate shows slight decline

Evangelion Parish's employment situation recorded a slight improvement, according to labor market statistics released by the Louisiana Department of Labor for February.

The unemployment rate for Evangeline Parish dropped to 19.5 percent for last month from a January high of 20.6 percent. During February, a total of 2,675 parish residents were reported unemployed out of a labor force of 13,775. A total of 100 workers were reported employed during February over the previous month.

Unemployment insurance benefit payments to Evangeline Parish residents during February were reported at $332,977. The state total, including figures for interstate payments, was $425,656,039.

The unemployment rate in Louisiana in February was 14.3 percent — still the nation's highest — but down from a record 14.9 percent in January. The revised February 1986 rate was 12.3. The comparable national rate for February was 7.2 percent, compared to 7.3 percent in January and 7.8 percent a year ago.

Secretary of Labor Gayle F. Tarby said that 1,663,400 were employed and 273,300 were unemployed in February. She also said that Louisiana's oil and gas industry employment, a key indicator, was down 500 jobs from January and dropped 17,500 jobs from February 1986.

Construction dropped 1,800 jobs from January and is down 10,600 jobs from February 1986. Transportation and public utilities employment was up 100 jobs, and is still down 6,500 from a year ago. Manufacturing employment dropped 1,600 jobs from January and is down 4,400 jobs from February 1986.

Assumption Parish reported the highest unemployment rate of 33.9 percent. Fifteen parishes reported unemployment rates of 20 percent or more, including

• Avoyelles West Carroll
• Catahoula
• Concordia
• East Carroll
• Iberia
• Jefferson Davis
• Madison
• Pointe Coupee
• Richland
• St. Landry
• St. Mary
• Vermilion

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23.3; and West Carroll, 32.1.

The lowest unemployment rate in the state was reported in Lincoln Parish with 6.8 percent.

The unemployment rate for the state is expected to decrease during the next month. Construction, trade and service in the non-manufacturing segment may move upward in the next few months. Manufacturing employment may go up in the next month or two, according to labor department officials.

Unemployment rates for the major labor market area were as follows: Alexandria, 11.7 percent in February, down from a record of 11.9 in January; Baton Rouge, 11.5, down from 12.1; Houma-Thibodaux, 20.7, down from a record 21.1; Lafayette, 15.9, down from a record 16.8; Lake Charles, 14.7, down from 15.3; Monroe, 12.0, down from a record of 12.4; New Orleans, 11.3, down from a record 11.8; Shreveport, 13.5, down from a record 14.0.