Unemployment down to 12.2 percent in Abbeville

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The latest figures on statewide unemployment have just been chalked up with a somewhat encouraging assessment for the Abbeville area—although not cause for popping open champagne.

Still in the double-digit range, unemployment in July took a toll on 12.2 percent of the labor force in Abbeville, said the Louisiana Department of Labor in a report issued recently.

That figure was down, however, by 0.5 percent since the month of June, when census takers estimated that 12.7 percent of all able and willing workers in Abbeville were still without jobs, the department said.

The labor force in the Abbeville area was estimated to consist of 26,025 workers, taking into account the population of a region extending well beyond the corporate limits.

The July unemployment rate translated into an estimate of 3,175 people in the Abbeville area who looked for jobs but could not find them.

While the percentage of unemployment in the Vermilion Parish seat was higher in July than an average statewide rate of 11.6 percent, it was substantially lower than the rates of joblessness in many other cities throughout the region, the department said.

In Jennings, unemployment hit a mark of 15.8 percent, up from 14.6 percent in June, and in Opelousas, as much as 18.3 percent of the workforce went without jobs, down from 18.6 percent in June, the department said.

The highest rate of unemployment was recorded in Bunkie, where 21 percent of the labor force remained jobless, down from 21.3 percent in June, the department said.

The lowest rate of unemployment occurred in Ruston, a mere 4.7 percent, constant since the month of June, the department said.

The report did not include figures for Lafayette.

Much of the unemployment was blamed on waves of students flooding the job market during the summer months.

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In Acadiana, New Iberia fared best with an unemployment rate of 11.1 percent, down from 11.5 percent in June, the department said.