

Perry County's Job Climate Improves

The numbers are in and Perry County is not at the bottom any longer. The State of Alabama Department of Labor has released its employment numbers for the month of November and Perry County is not last.

The State of Alabama manufacturing rate grew to 271,000 jobs. Professional and business services rates grew to 259,700 jobs. Those numbers represent an unemployment rate for the State of Alabama at a record low of 2.8%. Shelby County recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 1.8% and Wilcox County recorded the highest at 6.3%. The data for other surrounding counties are as follows:

Bibb County 2.4%, Marengo County 3.0%, Hale County 3.1%, Sumter County 4.0%, Perry County 4.1%, Dallas County 4.4%, Greene County 4.7%, Lowndes County 4.7%, Clark County 4.8% and Wilcox County 6.3%.

Perry County has enjoyed an improved local job market. The State reported the unemployment rate for Perry County at 4.1% which is just above the National average for November of 3.5%. The major reason for the improvement in the local job market according to State Officials is the local industries, TekPac Industries and Alabama Catfish Inc. and Perry County Officials holding larger manufacturing companies to their agreement to hire their people. The two largest private industries in Perry County are growing to meet the demands of their respective industries as well and they are hiring local.

TekPak has now grown to two shifts while employing 165 people with 90% of the employees being Perry County residents. The average wage for their employees is 12.00 per hour and when including benefits that wage increase to 15.60. TekPak is an international company shipping its products to Canada and Australia. According to records, TekPak has a 6.4 million dollar economic impact on the area.

Harvest Select Catfish located in Uniontown is on pace for a record year. They too are shipping international as well. The plant has expanded to two shifts to keep up with the demand. The 170 employees enjoy an average wage of 11.00 per hour and with benefits 14.60 per hour. The addition of the trucking company employees, its average wage goes to 15.75 per hour. Both companies are still hiring more individuals to meet the demands of their growing businesses.

Commissioner Albert Turner, Jr. credits the lower unemployment numbers to an improved business climate in Perry County, a six year economic boom nationally and a commitment to improve infrastructure by the County. In addition, making sure if a major company use our numbers to get assistance from the State, we hold them to those employment numbers. The Commissioner said, "the two major industries are spending more time thinking about making Perry County and their employees better than thinking about relocation. They feel like their citizenship is valued by the County and both have invested in our community and their companies greatly. The economy over the last six years has been on a record pace in growth. The combination of community involvement and the economy represent a positive economic climate that has Perry County on track for more improvements in its jobless rate."

Below is a picture of TekPak and a map of the State of Alabama unemployment numbers.