February Drop in Unemployment Rate May Shorten Unemployment Benefits

Local News

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Olympia, WA - Washington gained an estimated 4,200 jobs in February, adding to the state’s gradual climb up the employment ladder, according to the state’s Employment Security Department.The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dipped to an estimated 8.2 percent in February, down from a revised rate of 8.4 percent in January. It was the lowest unemployment rate since January 2009, when it was 7.7 percent.As a result of the improved unemployment rate, the maximum weeks of unemployment benefits in Washington will likely be reduced from 99 down to 73 in mid- to late April. Both of the federal benefits-extension programs are triggered by states’ unemployment rates. Employment Security will announce the timing and more details of the change after receiving official notice from the federal Department of Labor.

Industry sectors that had the most job growth in February were leisure & hospitality, which added 2,500 jobs; construction, up 1,900 jobs; retail trade, up 1,700; transportation, warehousing & utilities, up 1,500; and professional & business services, which added 1,100 jobs.Industries with the most job losses included government, down 1,400; manufacturing, down 900; other services, down 800; financial activities, down 700; and information, down 500.Since the low point in the recession, the state has regained about 90,900 jobs.An estimated 288,000 people (seasonally adjusted) in Washington were unemployed and looking for work in February, and about 197,000 claimed unemployment benefits. As of March 17, 76,103 workers in Washington had run out of all unemployment benefits.Employment Security is a partner in the statewide WorkSource system, which offers a variety of employment and training services for job seekers, including free help with interviewing skills, résumés and job referrals. WorkSource also can help employers recruit and screen for qualified workers, apply for employment tax breaks and qualify for subsidized employee training.Locations of local WorkSource offices are listed online at www.go2worksource.com and in the blue pages of local telephone books.**Full report at** https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employment ... monthly-employment-report**Labor-market info website** – www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata **State and local trends -** https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employment ... eports/numbers-and-trends **Employment Security website –** www.esd.wa.gov **WorkSource website -** www.go2worksource.com