

Unemployment up slightly in area SE Neb counties

**(KLZA)-- Nebraska's unemployment rate held steady last month at 3% and the state is tied with South Dakota for the nation's lowest rate.**

**The state Department of Labor says Nebraska's rate hasn't changed since October and is the same as the rate from September to December 2019.**

**Locally, the unemployment rates were slightly higher in December for most area counties.**

**The unemployment rate in Richardson County was 2.5 percent, up 4-tenths. Johnson County had the highest unemployment figure in Southeast Nebraska at 3.1 percent, up 2-tenths.**

**In Pawnee County the jobless rate was up 3-tenths of a percent to two percent.**

**The unemployment figure dipped a tenth in Nemaha County, Nebraska to 2.1 percent while Otoe county was steady at 2.4 percent.**

**The Gage County unemployment figure was up half a percentage point for the month to 2.9 percent.**

**Labor Commissioner John Albin says Nebraska employment has recovered significantly since April, which was the peak for employment losses due to the pandemic. Albin says the state has added more than 71,000 nonfarm jobs since April, for a total of roughly 1 million in December.**

**The low unemployment rate is likely due to a combination of factors, including major industries in Nebraska that weren't hit as hard by the pandemic and unemployed people who aren't counted because they've stopped looking for jobs.**