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(Neb)-Neb Unemployment Hits Record 8.3% In April With Record Monthly Jump

By: John Axtell Posted at: 05/22/2020 02:14 PM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska's unemployment rate jumped 4.2-points in April to 8.3%. Even with tens of thousands of unemployment claims because of the coronavirus outbreak, Nebraska still had the 3rd lowest jobless rate in the country.

The 4.3-point jump in one month is a record for the state, where data goes back to 1976. The 8.3% for the month is also a record, easily topping the previous mark set in January and February of 1983.

Governor Pete Ricketts says the April numbers show the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the hardworking people of Nebraska, but also shows the state has been able to protect its healthcare system while also protecting the livelihoods of significantly more families than other states.

Ricketts says the focus of the state in the coming weeks and months will "continue to be on helping people safely get back to work so we can get Nebraska growing."

Nonfarm employment in Nebraska was 942,576 in April, a loss of 76,866 jobs from March and 81,77 from a year ago. It's the lowest for the state since March 2011 and the first time it's been below a million jobs since February 2017.

The leisure and hospitality industry lost nearly 30,000 jobs or a third of its total while transportation and utilities lost almost 14,000 or 7%. Mining and construction was the only industry adding jobs in April, picking up 1,698 or a little over 3%

More than 120,000 individuals filed initial unemployment claims between March 8 and May 16. Occupations with the highest counts of claims include food serves, hair stylists and cosmetologists, and retail salespeople.

Omaha's unemployment rate in April jumped 5.7-points to an even 10%, 7-points higher than a year ago, while Lincoln's increase of 5.6-points pushed its rate to 9.3% compared to 2.7% last April.

The jobless rate in Grand Island came in at 11% for increases of 6.4 and 8-points - both much higher than those for the Scottsbluff micropolitan area, where April's 7.2% was just 2.4-point above March and 3.5-points higher than a year ago.