

## Unemployment 'Mixed Bag' for Area

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Not seasonally adjusted Unemployment rates decreased in 86 of North Carolina's counties in December, increased in 11 and remained the same in three, with the state rate dropping to 6.6%. Decreases in the unemployment rate were seen in most counties in our area with the Watauga rate dropping another tenth of a percent to 5.6%, down 2.8% from December 2012, Avery's 7.5 % down 0.6 from November and down 4.7% from the end of 2012. But Ashe saw a two-tenths of a percent increase in unemployment between November and December, that rate landing at 8.3%, but that was a marked improvement over the December 2012 rate of 11.7%. Caldwell's rate was flat at 7.5% November to December, while Wilkes dropped .4% to land at 7.4% and down 3.5% from 2012. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 12.6 percent while Orange County had the lowest at 4.1percent. Statewide, New Regular Initial Claims, totaling 25,588 for the month ending December 2013, increasing 4,385 from November.