

High Country Unemployment Dips Slightly

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Unemployment rates decreased slightly in the counties of the High Country in July, but state officials say that the state is still struggling with joblessness. Rates decreased in 86 of North Carolina's 100 counties in July, according to statistics released Friday by the state's Employment Security Commission.

The rates increased in six counties and remained the same in 8. "Unemployment rates dropped in the majority of the state's 100 counties in July," said ESC Chairman Lynn R. Holes. "However, over half of our counties had unemployment rates over 10 percent. Local communities continue to be challenged by the current economic conditions." Watauga's rate dropped two-tenths of a percent to 7.4%, while Avery and Ashe figures showed drops of one-tenth of a percent. Ashe unemployment dropped to just under 11%, coming at 10.9%, while Avery's dropped to 8%.