

Despite Rising Unemployment, Rates Improve in Ashe, Avery, Mitchell

Written by Adam Hicks
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Even though the unemployment rate rose in 82 of North Carolina's 100 counties during the month of May, the situation has improved in three counties here in the High Country.

According to the newly released county-by-county unemployment numbers that were put out by the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, unemployment rates have dropped in Ashe, Avery, and Mitchell counties.

Ashe's rate fell 0.2 percentage points to 12.4, Avery's rate fell almost 1 percent to 9.4, and Mitchell County's rate fell 0.3 percent to 12.9.

Other area counties didn't fair so well in May as Alleghany County's rate rose 0.2 percent to 12.4, Watauga's rose 0.4 percent to 7.9, and Wilkes County's rate rose 0.6 percent to 13.

Nearby Caldwell and Catawba County continue to face among the state's highest unemployment rates as the two counties have 15.6 percent and 15.5 percent unemployment rates respectively. According to the NC ESC, the Hickory, Lenoir, Morganton Metro Area has the highest average unemployment rate of all metro areas with 15.4 percent.

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Watauga County continues to pace the High Country with the fifth-lowest unemployment rate in the state at 7.9 percent.