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Joblessness in region declined in April

June 3, 2010 12:35 am

BY BILL FREEHLING

Unemployment rates fell in the Fredericksburg area in April from the month before, according to data released yesterday by the Virginia Employment Commission.

The jobless rate for the George Washington Regional Commission planning region was 6.2 percent in April, down from 7.1 percent in March. The GWRC comprises the city and Caroline, King George, Stafford and Spotsylvania counties.

The 6.2 percent regional rate was the lowest since November. The GWRC had the third-lowest rate in the state among other planning regions, trailing only Northern Virginia and Charlottesville.

Still, the regional jobless rate was up from 5.8 percent in April 2009. The 6.2 percent rate was the highest in April since 1992, and it was nearly double the region's 10-year annual average of 3.3 percent.

The jobless rate improved in each area locality from the month before. The city's 9.1 percent rate followed three consecutive months of double-digit unemployment.

The 5.4 percent rate in Stafford and Fauquier counties tied for seventh-best in the state. Arlington County topped the list with a 4 per-cent rate.

Martinsville, at 21.7 percent, had the state's highest jobless rate in April. Williamsburg finished next-to-last at 15 percent.

None of the numbers are adjusted for seasonal labor conditions.

Virginia's jobless rate was 6.7 percent in April, down from 7.6 percent the month before. The state tied with Vermont for the ninth-lowest rate in the U.S. Virginia's 10-year annual average rate is 3.8 percent.

The unadjusted U.S. rate for April was 9.5 percent, down from 10.2 percent the month before.

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LOCALITY

April '10

March '10

April '09

Fredericksburg

9.1%

10.4%

8.6%

Stafford

5.4%

6.3%

5.0%

Spotsylvania

5.6%

6.3%

5.3%

Caroline

8.9%

10.1%

7.8%

King George

7.9%

9.1%

7.2%

Westmoreland

7.7%

9.5%

7.1%

Orange

7.4%

8.8%

7.4%

Fauquier

5.4%

6.3%

5.1%

Culpeper

7.7%

9.2%

7.8%

Louisa

7.2%

9.0%

7.1%