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## Local unemployment rate shows minor improvement

CHICAGO—In December, the unemployment rate essentially was unchanged in five areas, dropped in three metro areas, and increased in four compared to last year, according to preliminary data released today by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). The not seasonally adjusted data compares December 2011 to December 2010. The largest declines were in: Peoria (-0.6 point to 8.1 percent), Rockford (-0.4 point to 12.5 percent), nd Kankakee-Bradley (-0.3 point to 11.4 percent). The Chicago-Joliet-Naperville metro rate was up +0.7 point to 9.3 percent.

Over the year, payroll jobs increased in seven of 12 metro areas, fell in four and were unchanged in two. The largest increases were in Peoria (+4.8 percent, +8,600), Kankakee-Bradley (+4.6 percent, +2,000 jobs), and Lake County (+0.9 percent, +3,400). Employment also was up in the Chicago-Joliet-Naperville area (+0.4 percent, +12,800 jobs). Sectors increasing in the most metro areas were Manufacturing (nine of 12) and Leisure and Hospitality (seven of 12).

“Today’s data tells us a familiar story. Overall, the Illinois economy is moving forward despite the uneven nature of the national recovery,” IDES Director Jay Rowell said. “Overall job growth continues to improve despite monthly fluctuations in the unemployment rate and the number of jobs created, which has become the

## Name the new nursing home

Hoopeston Regional Health Center is reaching out to the community to find a new name for the new nursing home. Ideas may be submitted to Tanya McVicker, [Tanya.mcvicker@hoopestoncmh.org](mailto:Tanya.mcvicker@hoopestoncmh.org) or (217) 283-5531, ext. 255, until the end of February. The winner will receive public recognition for his/her suggestion.

hallmark of this economic cycle.”

Not seasonally adjusted data compares the current month to the same month of the previous year. The December 2011 not seasonally adjusted Illinois unemployment rate was 9.3 percent and 12.1 percent at its peak in this economic cycle in January 2010. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 8.3 percent in December and 10.6 percent in January 2010 at its peak. The unemployment rate identifies those who are out of work and looking for work and is not tied to collecting unemployment insurance benefits. Illinois added +43,300 new jobs in 2010 and +52,600 in 2011.

	Dec 11	Dec 10
<b>Champaign-Urbana MSA</b>		
Champaign County	7.8 %	7.8 %
Ford County	9.3 %	9.3 %
Piatt County	8.1 %	7.3 %
<b>Danville MSA</b>		
Vermilion County	10.3 %	10.4 %
<b>Cities</b>		
Champaign City	7.6 %	7.4 %
Urbana City	8.2 %	8.1 %
Danville City	11.1 %	10.5 %
<b>Counties</b>		
Iroquois County	9.2%	8.9%
Clark Count	11.5%	10.7%
Coles County	8.3%	8.2%
DeWitt County	8.1%	8.3%
Douglas County	8.2%	8.2%
McLean County	7.0%	6.8%
Sangamon County	7.5%	7.0%
Shelby County	9.4%	9.5%

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# Cultra’s Clips: Republicans looking forward to State of the State message; Illinois drops 12 places in Tax Climate Index

ONARGA—Senate Republicans are looking forward to Gov. Pat Quinn’s annual “State of the State” address on February 1, which State Sen. Shane Cultra (R-Onarga) hopes will provide insight into the Governor’s priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

Budget forecasts recently released by the Quinn administration and Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka underscore the importance of addressing Illinois’ multi-billion dollar deficit and burgeoning bill backlog. But while the state’s

budget woes remains a top priority for lawmakers, media reports indicate the Governor will likely turn his attention to other important - and contentious - issues like public pensions, taxes, and the Medicaid system.

Illinois’ obligations to state workers and retirees, and its taxpayer-financed health care programs are gobbling up state revenues at an unsustainable rate. Those commitments increase each year, and without serious changes threaten to overwhelm available revenues. Senate Republicans are interested in learning more about Gov. Quinn’s plans to tackle Illinois’ Medicaid and pen-

sion system obligations.

The Caucus also hopes the Governor explains how he intends to meet his pledge to roll back the 67 percent tax increase as scheduled, and what spending cuts he will support in order to avoid the \$800 million FY 2015 deficit that his budget office is projecting. In order to address that deficit, members are eager for more details about the Governor’s plan to hold education and health care spending level through Fiscal Year 2015.

Senate Republicans stressed they are willing to work with Quinn and Democrat leaders to right Illinois’ budget wrongs. Last March the Caucus introduced a “Reality Check” budget proposal outlining difficult, yet achievable, ways to reduce state spending, return the state to solvency, and roll back the 2011 tax hike.

Pressure to eliminate the tax hike increased this week


with the release of the Tax Foundation’s 2012 State Business Tax Climate Index. The national organization revealed Illinois saw the biggest downward shift of any state, falling 12 places, from 16th in 2011 to 28th in 2012.

Though the state’s income tax hike undoubtedly contributed to the drop, Illinois is a high-tax state in other areas. According to the Tax Foundation, the state ranks fifth worst in business taxes, seventh worst in unemployment insurance taxes and sixth worst in property taxes. Though some neighboring states were ranked more poorly in these areas, when comparing rates in all categories to those of our neighbors, Illinois takes the cake.

The Tax Foundation highlighted the important role taxes play when it comes to a state’s ability to attract and retain employers. The report noted that, “States do not institute tax policy in a vacuum. Every change to a state’s tax system makes its business tax climate more or less competitive compared to other states, and makes the state more or less attractive to business.” The Tax Foundation emphasized that when higher taxes cut into profits the cost is passed on to consumers—through higher prices, employees—in lower wages and fewer jobs, or shareholders—in lower dividends or share value. Additionally, the Tax Foundation noted that while a state’s tax burden is not businesses’ only consideration, it is a compelling one. The report pointed to the recent business tax credits that were approved by Illinois lawmakers in late 2011. The credits were negotiated after Illinois companies, including Sears and Chicago Mercantile Exchange, threatened to leave citing the burdensome cost of the state’s new corporate tax increase.

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**Police News**



**Dawn M. Rogers**, 22, of Hoopeston, was arrested at 10:43 p.m. Friday in the 700 block of South Fifth Street. Wanted on a warrant for obstruction, she was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville.

A representative of **Frontier** Communications reported at 3 p.m. Saturday that someone damaged the central office building at 310 E. Penn.


**Lunch Menus**



**Hoopeston Area grade schools**  
MONDAY: Chicken strips, green beans, applesauce, Goldfish, milk  
TUESDAY: Cheese pizza, salad, peaches, milk  
WEDNESDAY: Pancake & sausage nuggets, mandarin orange, grape juice, milk  
THURSDAY: Beefy fiestada, salad, chips & salsa, pineapple, milk  
FRIDAY: Ham & cheese sandwich, chips, apples, apple/cherry juice, milk

**Hoopeston Area Middle/High schools**  
MONDAY: Chicken nuggets or ham & cheese, green beans, applesauce, cookie, milk  
TUESDAY: Hotdog or cheeseburger, fries, apple crisp, milk  
WEDNESDAY: Fettuccini Alfredo or pork BBQ/bun, salad, Max Stick, pears, milk  
THURSDAY: Country fried steak or Hot Pocket, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, pineapple, hot roll, milk  
FRIDAY: Sausage pizza or fish sandwich, salad, mixed fruit, milk

**Weather**



Breezy today. High 50. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 37 Tomorrow, breezy, chance of rain late. High 57, low 41.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

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