

Economic Outlook – July, 2009

For the July installment of our regional economic outlook, the main story to watch for the nation, state, and our region continues to be the unemployment rate. Terry Ludeman, Thrive's economist consultant shares these observations.

“Local unemployment rates and labor force estimates for May 2009 continued to be alarming. For the eight-county Madison Region, the unemployment rate was estimated at 7.9 percent for May 2009 compared to 3.8 percent for May of 2008. There were an estimated 45,026 workers unemployed in May 2009 in the region compared to 21,256 in May 2008.

For the first five months of 2009, the number of workers unemployed has averaged 44,549 monthly compared to 22,849 for the first five months of 2008.

Counties in the eight-county Madison region that are most severely affected by the recession are:

Rock County, where unemployment has averaged 10,867 monthly for the first five months of 2009 compared to 4,567 for the first five months of 2008;

Jefferson County, where unemployment has averaged 3,983 monthly for the first five months of 2009 compared to 1,954 for the first five months of 2008; and

Dodge County, where unemployment has averaged 4,554 monthly for the first five months of 2009 compared to 2,253 for the first five months of 2008.

Construction has been the hardest hit industry in relative job loss statewide, with manufacturing a close second. Statewide, employment in construction is down 13.3 percent from one year ago, while manufacturing employment is down 12.5 percent. These are vital industries throughout the Madison region and the manufacturing industry is particularly significant in Rock, Jefferson, and Dodge counties.”

There are certainly some good stories in the news too, with some businesses launching new endeavors and communities tackling important infrastructure needs with federal recovery and reinvestment funds. But as the numbers above show, thousands of workers and families in the region are struggling as the Madison Region fights to find its way through the recession.