

# Area adds 1,100 jobs

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**MANKATO** — The Mankato area had more than 1,100 additional jobs in January than 12 months earlier, a growth rate that more than tripled the statewide and national averages.

The St. Cloud area matched the job growth rate for the Mankato-North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area at 2.2 percent, with Duluth (0.6 percent), Rochester (0.4 percent) and Minneapolis-St.

Paul (.03 percent) seeing much lower employment growth, according to statistics released Wednesday by the state Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Greater Mankato Growth President and CEO Jonathan Zierdt said the employment statistics for the Mankato area continue an encouraging string of reports.

“January is the fifth consecutive month of year over year job gains for our region and the most significant yet, with an increase of 1,141 jobs or 2.2 percent,” Zierdt said Statewide, employers added a net 16,500 jobs from January of 2010 to January of this year.

Education and health services accounted for more than

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10,000 of the new jobs, followed by professional and business services (7,000) and manufacturing (4,900).

That growth more than offset large reductions in jobs in construction (-4,300), government (-1,700) and leisure and utilities (-1,700), according to the DEED report.

The job growth rate statewide was .6 percent, just below the .7 percent national rate.

January unemployment rates for individual cities and counties in Minnesota won't be available until next week, but the statewide unemployment rate fell to 6.7 percent — down from 6.9 percent in December. That's the lowest jobless rate for Minnesota since December of 2008 and it's substantially better than the 9 percent national unemployment rate for January.