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ICYMI: "Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics: Camden area maintains strong job growth"

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BLS: Camden area maintains strong job growth

Jim Walsh

Courier-Post

The tri-county area, which led the nation in job growth on an over-the-year basis in February, continued its strong performance in March, a federal agency says.

The number of jobs in the Camden area grew by 3.2 percent from March 2016, putting the region in third place nationwide, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

That followed a 3.7 percent over-the-year advance in February 2017, according to the BLS.

The region's jobless rate was 4.2 percent in March, compared to 5.4 percent a year earlier.

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Elected officials have pointed to policies intended to spur redevelopment, particularly a tax-break program meant to attract employers to Camden City. The state Economic Development Authority has approved incentives worth more than \$1 billion for city projects under that policy.

Camden County Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli Jr. noted "a building boom (is) bringing in billions of dollars in new investment to our region."

"Just a short time ago, the county's unemployment rate was more than 10 percent and the city had a staggering unemployment rate of almost 20 percent," Cappelli said Sunday. "Now we are seeing a boost in spending from private companies and most importantly the confidence for small businesses to locate in the Camden City and put down roots."

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According to the BLS, South Jersey added 16,500 jobs from March 2016 to March 2017. It added 4,500 jobs from February to March of this year.

The BLS said about 55,000 tri-county residents were jobless in March, down by 8,000 from a year earlier.

The larger metropolitan area had a 4.6 percent unemployment rate in March, compared to 5.3 percent a year earlier.

The overall area saw year-to-year job growth of 2 percent in March. That included a 3 percent gain for the city of Philadelphia.

According to the BLS, metropolitan divisions with the largest over-the-year job gains in March were in the Dallas area, at 4.1 percent, and the Fort Lauderdale region, with a 3.4 percent jump.

The Camden and Dallas divisions had tied for the top spot in February. The local region shared third place in March with a division in the Seattle area.

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