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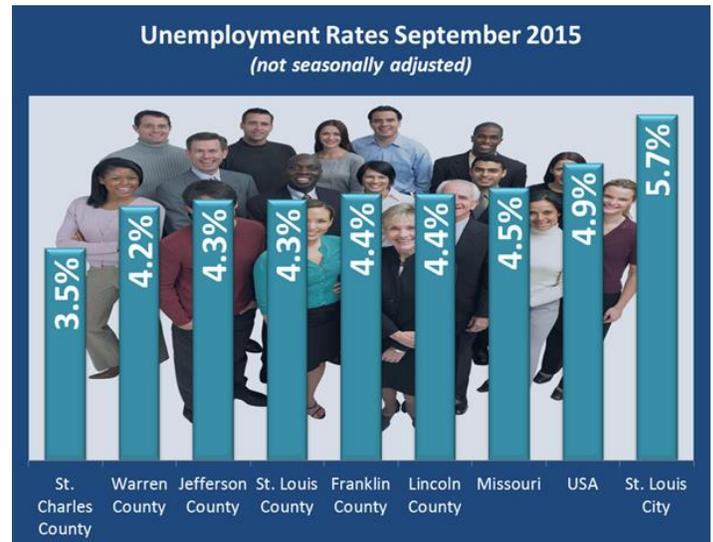
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**RETURN TO PRE-RECESSION LEVELS:  
UNEMPLOYMENT FALLS TO 3.5% FOR SEPT. 2015 IN ST. CHARLES COUNTY**

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** - Unemployment in St. Charles County has fallen to 3.5 percent in September 2015 from 3.9 percent in August 2015, according to the latest, not-seasonally-adjusted figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. Local officials are hailing this as the lowest rate in the St. Louis region and a return to pre-recession levels.

Local unemployment peaked at 9.1 percent in July 2009 and had its highest annual rate in 2009 of 8.6 percent. It has been steadily declining since then and now has officially entered what many economists label “full employment.”



“Our community hasn’t enjoyed unemployment rates this low since 2007, before the recession set in,” said St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann. He called this great news for residents as well as a job well done by business owners and community leaders who have been working hard to keep moving the local economy forward.

“We are now entering a new phase in the job market,” Ehlmann said, “where companies are now looking at new ways to stay competitive with wages and benefits as they work harder to attract and retain skilled labor.”

One example Ehlmann cited is the average annual wage total in St. Charles County which is certified every July 1st by the Missouri Department of Economic Development for use with their job creation tax credit programs. “For 2015, the State has certified the average annual wage in St. Charles County is \$41,501,” he said. “That’s a 4.84 percent increase over the 2014 total. Annual average wage totals have been rising in St. Charles County since 2011, even as unemployment rates have been falling.”

Ehlmann praised many of the growing companies in the community “for creating new jobs and helping to expand the local economy,” such as the General Motors Wentzville Assembly Plant, Nike IHM, Glazer’s, LMI Aerospace, and many others. “Our community is fortunate to have a diverse and strong business community that includes major sectors such as

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advanced manufacturing, financial services, and healthcare, to name just a few,” he said.

For more information about local unemployment and services for workforce and business development, contact the St. Charles County Department of Workforce Development at 636-255-6060.

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