

# Welcome 2017!

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC



Some would say that when it comes to our economy, we're not out of the woods yet. But what's also true is that it's often hard to see the forest for the trees. So this month, let's climb to the top of one of those trees to get a better view of where we've come and a fresh view on where we're going.

First, the perspective. Due to annual benchmarking, we won't have this month's employment data until March. But when it comes to year-over-year trends, I think we can draw some pretty strong conclusions. Significantly, January's unemployment rate has consistently been less than the previous January's rate, each and every year since the end of the recession.

The most current data we have on deadline for this issue is for October 2016, when Marion County's jobless rate was 6.0 percent, 7,989 people were out of work and 124,250 were employed giving us a labor force of 132,239.

But I hate using such dated data – even if it's the best we have. What we should focus on is how January 2017 will measure up to previous years.

Do you remember what it was like five years ago? The jobless rate in January 2012 was 11.3 percent, there were 14,575 people out of work and only 114,203 employed and the labor force – fueled predominantly by the number of unemployed – was an anemic 128,778.

It's a fairly safe bet that the number of unemployed this January will be at or below what we saw in October 2016 – after all, it has dropped an average of 11.3 percent from January to January. But even if we just use those October numbers, the number of people out of work has dropped 45 percent since January 2015.

Unemployment: cut almost in half. Number of folks with jobs: up by more than 10,000. And the labor force has expanded by nearly 3,500. That's like the hitting the trifecta of economic indicators.

And honest, that's due to the efforts of Marion County's businesses – new ones like the FedEx Distribution Hub, investing in this community – and existing business that continue to grow jobs here, such as

It is also due to partners like the Chamber & Economic Partnership, College of Central Florida, Marion Technical College, Mid-Florida Regional Manufacturers Association, Marion County Public Schools and Public Education Foundation, city and county governments, CareerSource CLM and many others, working together on behalf of this community.



Here's how we factor into the equation: CareerSource CLM helps employers recruit, hire and train the talent you need. Not only is there no charge for our services, but eligible employers may also take advantage of incentives that can offset the financial burden of hiring and training a new employee.

## These include:

- Paid adult internship and work experience trainee programs which pay individuals to work up to 30 hours a week for 12 weeks at your company – wages, worker's compensation, taxes and other related payroll costs are paid by CareerSource CLM.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) reimburse from 50 to 75 percent of a new hire's wages while being training by an employer in a target industry (Healthcare, Transportation/ Logistics, Manufacturing and IT).
- Custom Business Training (CBT) covers up to 50 percent of out-of-pocket costs to ensure current employees have the skills important to the success of your for-profit business.

An exclusive hiring event, customized to meet your specific, immediate needs, is another way we partner with businesses. These events can take place at our Career Center in Ocala, at your workplace or an alternate site. Additionally, job fairs provide a fast, efficient and effective way for multiple employers to meet hundreds of career seekers in one place, on one day.

Does this work? You tell me. From July to September, 412 employers partnered with us in Marion County alone, and posted 2,162 positions. We also provided services to 8,188 career seekers, including 418 veterans, resulting in 1,261 job placements.

Now that you know where we've been, why not make a resolution to find out how CareerSource CLM and our Talent Center affiliate can help you get this New Year off to a bright start. Make the most of 2017 by calling one of our business development managers, Cathy Galica at 352-732-1700, ext. 2205 or Geraldine Phillips at the Talent Center at 352-840-5756.

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