



## Florida isn't reporting number of COVID-19 deaths in counties

LOCAL, 1B

# Ocala StarBanner

SUNDAY-MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5-6, 2021 | OCALA.COM

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**BONUS PAGES INSIDE!**



**Extra puzzles!**  
Find extra puzzle content inside today's paper.



**Labor Day employment**  
How has COVID-19 hit employment sectors across the nation?

**Happy Labor Day!**  
The first United States Labor Day was celebrated on Sept. 5, 1882, in New York City.

In honor of Labor Day, this newspaper serves as a combined edition for both today and Monday.

You will be able to find Monday's comics and puzzles in tomorrow's e-edition, and Monday's crossword and Sudoku also will be in Tuesday's newspaper

### THE EMPLOYMENT DILEMMA



Party Time Rentals employee John Smithies hangs drapes Tuesday. Party Time owner David Lovell said he has been using a temp service to make sure he has enough workers. PHOTOS BY DOUG ENGLE/OCALA STAR BANNER

## Restoring full power still weeks away in Louisiana

### Northeastern US begins cleaning up after Ida

**Rebecca Santana, Melinda Deslatte and Kevin McGill**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW ORLEANS – Full restoration of electricity to some of the hardest-hit areas of Louisiana battered by Hurricane Ida could take until the end of the month, the head of Entergy Louisiana warned Saturday.

Ida damaged or destroyed more than 22,000 power poles, more than hurricanes Katrina, Zeta and Delta combined, an impact Entergy President and CEO Phillip May called “staggering.” More than 5,200 transformers failed and nearly 26,000 spans of wire – the stretch of transmission wires between poles – were down.

“The level of devastation makes it quite difficult or near impossible to get in and fully assess some places,” said May of five southeastern Louisiana parishes facing the longest delays. The company is estimating full power restoration by Sept. 29 or even longer for some customers, although May said that was a “no later than” date with the hope of earlier restoration.

As of Saturday morning, 97% of damage assessment was complete and power restored to about 282,000 customers from the peak of 902,000 who lost power after Ida. Power has been restored to about a quarter of New Orleans residents, including all of the city's hospitals, and the city's 27 substations are ready to serve customers, said Deanna Rodriguez, Entergy New Orleans president and CEO.

Six days after Hurricane Ida made landfall, hard-hit parts of Louisiana were still struggling to restore any sense of normalcy. Even across New Orleans, a continued lack of power for most residents made a sultry stretch of summer hard to bear and added to woes in the aftermath of Ida. Louisiana authorities searched Friday for a man they said shot another man to death after they both waited in a long line to fill up at a gas station in suburban New Orleans.

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell said the city would offer transportation starting Saturday to any resident looking to leave the city and get to a public shelter. It already began moving some residents out of senior homes.

At the Renaissance Place senior home Friday, dozens of residents lined up to get on minibuses equipped with wheelchair lifts after city officials said they determined conditions at the facility were not safe and evacuated it.

But Cantrell also encouraged resi-

# Thousands of jobs need to be filled here

## Opportunities abound for work in Marion County

**Joe Callahan**  
Ocala Star-Banner  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Data shows that Marion County has a significant employee shortage in most every occupation, with 12,425 positions that need to be filled within the next three years in just the Top 10, which includes jobs such as fast food workers, cashiers and retail sales.

The occupation report, which was generated by CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion officials, reveals that the unemployment rate of 18.8% for waiters and waitresses is nearly three times higher than Marion County's overall rate of 6.3%.

In the Top 10 occupations, employers currently have 1,548 online ads placed, with retail sales topping the list with 501

See **JOBS**, Page 5A



**Nick Maglio, of Marion Fence, installs a vinyl fence Tuesday afternoon. Local businesses are struggling to find employees, with the top jobs available being cashiers, retail salespeople and fast food workers.**

### Employment Guide inside

Employers loosen experience, education requirements. **7A**

## Labor Day quiz: Is there an end to worker shortage?

**Paul Davidson**  
USA TODAY

This Labor Day, the nation faces an overriding question.

Where is the labor?

And when is it coming back?

The most severe worker shortages on record largely were expected to ease this month with the reopening of schools and expiration of enhanced unemployment benefits on Monday.

Those milestones theoretically would allow millions of parents caring for their remote-learning kids to return to work and prod millions of unemployed people to more fervently hunt for jobs and accept offers.

It's proving not so simple.

School reopenings and the bene-

See **SHORTAGE**, Page 6A

**USA TODAY**

Americans in Afghanistan: Rescue group says hundreds more left behind. **3A**

**Who has the edge?**

Pressure is on No. 7 Irish as they face FSU at Doak Campbell Stadium. **1C**

**Weather**

High 90° | Low 72°  
P. sunny. Forecast, **8B**

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# Jobs

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online help wanted ads.

If you are sitting at home right now, for whatever reason, the time is now to enter the workforce. With so many job openings, workers can get into jobs that, in the past, they did not qualify.

“Really, now is not a time to be sitting out of the workforce when those positions are available,” said Dale French, executive vice president for Career-Source CLM. Getting a good job now also means getting training that, down the road, could help if the economy slumps and jobs are lost.

Now is the time to “start solidifying a new career in what they want to be doing before changes in the workforce come over the next few years.”

“They have the skill set and they have the opportunities if they should get downsized out of an organization,” French said.

## Pandemic issue

One nationwide issue to emerge during the pandemic is how women have been pushed out of the labor force. The main reason is that many children are being forced back home due to COVID-19 and a parent needs to be home.

Another reason: Child care costs are on the rise, and it makes sense for some families to keep one parent at home. That usually ends up being mom.

“The women in the family units have taken a larger hit on employment side than on the men’s side,” French said.

French noted that he expects to “to see some occupations that may be more geared traditionally towards women to have bigger shortfalls within the available labor pool than we have in the past.”

## Where to work?

“Right now we’re looking at some amazing growth in the Marion County area, particularly in our industrial parks, with lots of jobs in transportation logistics, manufacturing and distribution,” French noted.

Marion has become a distribution hub in north central Florida. Marion



A sign advertising job opening is planted outside Party Time Rentals in Ocala. Experts say with so many job openings, workers can get jobs that they did not qualify for in the past. DOUG ENGLE/OCALA STAR BANNER

County is home to Amazon, FedEx, Chewy, AutoZone and Dollar Tree warehouses, to name some of the bigger ones. The shortage for stockers and order fillers in the next three years is more than 1,000.

The top jobs that employers are looking to fill are cashiers, retail sales persons and fast food chain accountant workers. And that’s nearly “6,000 vacant positions, or what we call demand, over the course of the next three years,” French said.

He added: “As we reopen to work, those numbers will come down quite quickly.” That’s because teenagers and young adults historically have taken most of those jobs.

“As we look at getting those younger folks getting back into the workforce, we are going to see those numbers start to go down,” he said.

French said once those jobs get filled, “then we’re really going to have to take a concerted look down the list of what the three-year forecast is in those occupations, and then look at what training is going to be needed to continue to build the workforce.”

## Party Time Rentals need help

David Lovell, who has owned Party

Time Rental for more than two decades, said that before the pandemic, his business was booming and at times he needed workers. But now, even with fewer events, he rarely can hire enough people.

“We were crazy busy before the first one (surge) and we were able to find people at that point,” he said, adding that now finding workers is more difficult. “I think it’s because of a variation of things. Maybe people don’t want to work because of COVID or maybe people want to live on their stimulus.”

French said there are many reasons people may not be working: stimulus checks, child care costs or fears of infecting a loved one with COVID.

Lovell said that “we have a good core of people, but it’s just trying to add more. It’s difficult.

“It’s not easy. We’ve been using a temp service,” Lovell said.

Lovell recently traveled across the United States. At restaurants, he was told there wasn’t enough staff to serve customers.

## Marion Fence needs help, too

Marion Fence owner Alex Everts says that, at times, even before COVID-19, it was a challenge to keep a steady crew.

## 3-year demand

(The following list is the Top 10 occupations, and the number of needed jobs in the next three years.)

**Cashiers:** 1,987

**Retail Salespersons:** 1,897

**Fast Food Workers:** 1,826

**Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand:** 1,180

**Waiters and Waitresses:** 1,161

**Stockers and Order Fillers:** 1,028

**Customer Service Representatives:** 960

**Office Clerks, General:** 877

**Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers:** 768

**Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers:** 741

**Total:** 12,425

But since the pandemic it has been hard to find anyone willing to work, even as business picks up again.

Everts says he is getting applicants from other countries, wanting him to sponsor their visas so they can come work for him.

“I had an applicant from Georgia who said he wanted to come interview and he never showed up,” Everts said. “it’s easier to find someone outside the country than to find them in your own backyard.”

## Pastor pushes jobs at church

Eric Cummings, a Marion County School Board member and pastor of New Zion Missionary Baptist Church, said that every week at church during his announcements he “advertises companies that are hiring.”

“I never have done that before,” said Cummings, adding it puts the names of companies and contact numbers on his board for people who need employment.

Joe Callahan can be reached at (352) 897-0307 or at [joe.callahan@starbanner.com](mailto:joe.callahan@starbanner.com). Follow him on Twitter @JoeOcalaNews.

Ocala Spine & Injury has Coronavirus safety and sanitization protocols in place in all offices for your protection.



# Peripheral Neuropathy WARNING!

Now Medicare Covered!

## Pain, Numbness, & Tingling In The Hands/Feet

The most common method your doctor will recommend to treat your neuropathy is with prescription drugs that may temporarily reduce your symptoms. These drugs have generic names such as Gabapentin, Amitriptyline, or Lyrica and are primarily antidepressant or antiseizure drugs. These drugs may cause you to feel uncomfortable and have a variety of harmful side effects.

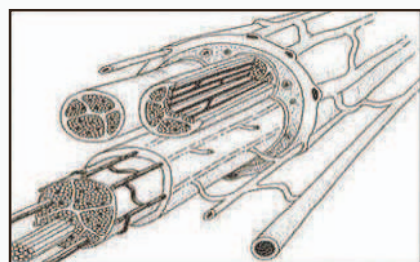


Figure 1: Notice the very small blood vessels surrounding each nerve.

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves often causing weakness, pain, numbness, tingling, and the most debilitating balance problems. This damage is commonly caused by a lack of blood flow to the nerves in the hands and feet which causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow.

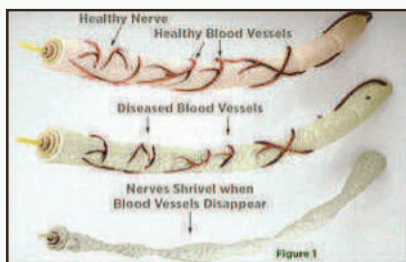


Figure 2: When these very small blood vessels become diseased they begin to shriveled up and the nerves begin to degenerate.

As you can see in *Figure 2*, as the blood vessels that surround the nerves become diseased they shrivel up which causes the nerves to not get the nutrients needed to survive. When these nerves begin to “die” they cause you to have balance problems, pain, numbness, tingling, burning, and many additional symptoms.

The main problem is that your doctor has told you to just live with the problem or try the drugs which you don’t like taking because they make you feel uncomfortable.

There are now facilities right here in Ocala that offer you hope without taking those endless drugs with serious

side effects. (see the special neuropathy severity examination at the end of this article)

In order to effectively treat your neuropathy three factors must be determined.

- 1) What is the underlying cause?
- 2) How much nerve damage has been sustained.
- 3) How much treatment will your condition require?

The treatment that is provided at Ocala Spine and Injury has three main goals:

- 1) Increase blood flow
- 2) Stimulate small fiber nerves
- 3) Decrease brain-based pain

One treatment used to increase blood flow utilizes a specialized low-level light therapy (not to be confused with laser therapy) using light emitting diode technology. This technology was originally developed by NASA to assist in increasing blood flow.

The low level light therapy is like watering a plant. The light therapy

will allow the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair. It’s like adding water to a plant and seeing the roots grow deeper and deeper.

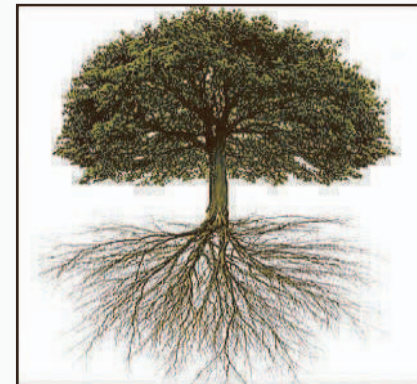


Figure 3: The blood vessels will grow back around the nerves much like a plant’s roots grow when watered.

The amount of treatment needed to allow the nerves to fully recover varies from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. As long as you have not sustained 85% nerve damage then your condition can be treated.

Our medical team will perform a **FREE NEUROPATHY CONSULTATION** for the next **15 people** that call our office. If you qualify, you’ll have the chance to receive a neuropathy severity examination consisting of a detailed sensory evaluation, extensive peripheral vascular testing, and a detailed analysis of the findings of your neuropathy.

Ocala Spine and Injury will be offering this complimentary neuropathy consultation for the next **15 callers**.

**CALL US TODAY AT: 352-274-9633**

**TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY CAN BE TREATED.**

The great news is that our basic neuropathy treatment protocol is now covered by Medicare and most health insurance plans. You literally have nothing to lose but your pain!

## Ocala Spine & Injury

1541 SE 17th St  
Ocala, 34471  
(right next to  
Clyatt Park/  
Scott Carrigan Field)



# Shortage

Continued from Page 1A

fits cutoff should help coax some Americans back to work this fall, economists say.

But experts are at odds over whether, and to what extent, unemployment insurance actually has discouraged people from working. And the recent surge in COVID-19 infections, driven by the delta variant, is disrupting some schools' reopening plans and dissuading some idled workers from renewing their job searches.

Meanwhile, myriad factors are keeping people out of the labor force and those will take longer to resolve, experts say.

They include the large share of workers who decided to switch careers during the pandemic or retire early after a layoff and the daunting logistics of matching millions of jobless people with millions of openings.

"The labor shortages will start to abate in September and this fall, but it's not going to be an immediate fix," says economist Dante DeAntonio of Moody's Analytics. "This could well play out over two, three years."

That means interminable waits for a restaurant table, snaking lines at store cash registers and monthslong delays for home renovations could be partly alleviated in coming months but are likely to stick around in some form for the longer term.

## COVID-19 fears persist to hurt employers

In June, there were a record 10.1 million job openings and 9.5 million unemployed people — the latter figure fell to 8.4 million in August — leaving fewer than one jobless worker for each vacancy. The COVID surge is also curtailing customer demand and led to a disappointing 235,000 job gains last month, the Labor Department said Friday, but worker shortages were a factor as well.

In July, 49% of small business owners said they had job openings they couldn't fill — the most on record — according to the National Federation of Independent Business.

Here's a simple way to think about the shortages: The U.S. has recovered 17 million, or 76%, of the 22.4 million jobs lost last spring as states shuttered businesses to contain the COVID-19 outbreak, leaving payrolls 5.3 million jobs below their pre-pandemic level.

About half of those nearly 6 million missing workers are unemployed, meaning they're looking for a job but can't find one or are being very selective. Some of the roughly 11 million people receiving unemployment benefits are likely in that group. Since they're already in the hunt, they could find positions relatively quickly, says Nick Bunker, economic research director for job site Indeed.

The other half of the 6 million missing workers are out of the labor force.

In other words, they haven't even been looking because of COVID-19 fears, child care duties, or other reasons. It could take them many weeks or even months to get back in the game.

## Are unemployment checks to blame?

The most immediate remedy for the worker shortages could come from Americans who on Monday will lose federal jobless benefits provided during the pandemic.

That includes about 7.5 million people receiving payments they normally wouldn't qualify for because they're gig workers, for example, or they've exhausted their 26 weeks of state benefits, according to the Century Foundation, a progressive think tank.

Most of those workers also have been receiving a \$300 federal weekly bonus on top of their regular state benefits, according to Oxford Economics.

Another 3 million people will lose just the \$300 federal weekly bonus on Monday, the Century Foundation says.

Several studies found the enhanced benefits have had little effect on whether recipients look harder for jobs or accept offers.

JPMorgan Chase says the 26 states that cut off the benefits early, over the summer, didn't notch any stronger job growth in July than the other states.

The most rigorous study of those 26 states — by researchers at Harvard and Columbia, among other universities — said their experience shows that the end of federal benefits would likely lead to about 500,000 additional workers taking jobs in September and October, but it also would result in an \$8 billion drop in spending because only a portion of those losing benefits would land jobs. That would temper the job gains by crimping economic activity and hiring.

A survey by Indeed found that about 20% of unemployed people who casually job-hunted in July cited an employed



**Matt Parker, 35, a live entertainment promoter, was furloughed by his company and then declined to return to work because of concerns he might contract COVID-19 and infect his daughter, a toddler.** FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

spouse or a financial cushion as a reason for their lack of urgency while 23% pointed to COVID-19 fears and 18%, family care duties.

Only 9.5% cited the unemployment checks. "It's not the biggest issue," Bunker says.

Most workers would rather land a permanent job than rely on short-lived benefits, says Heidi Shierholz, an economist at the liberal Economic Policy Institute and former chief economist at the Department of Labor. Noting the economy added nearly a million jobs in both June and July, she suggests the labor shortage "is working itself out."

Other reports argue the payments have contributed more noticeably to the worker gaps. Goldman Sachs, comparing household surveys of workers in states that kept and dropped the benefits, said early cutoffs increased the probability a worker would find a job in July from 21% to 27%, with the effect much larger for low-paid restaurant and hotel workers.

Goldman estimates the end of federal benefits will boost job growth by about 1.5 million through December.

And a Morning Consult survey in late June found that 13% of benefit recipients, or about 1.8 million people, turned down job offers because of the benefits and a similar number likely would accept offers by the end of the year.

"It's definitely a factor," says Morning Consult Chief Economist John Leer.

## COVID-19 fears, child care

Even if 1.5 million to 1.8 million more jobs are filled the rest of the year because of expiring jobless benefits, that would still leave the nation about 4 million jobs shy of its pre-pandemic mark.

Many of those missing workers aren't even looking because of COVID-19 worries or child care duties.

Those issues were largely expected to be resolved this fall as the pandemic faded and schools reopened. But while 63.4% of the adult population has been vaccinated, that share has fallen short of projections and new daily COVID-19 cases have increased tenfold since June, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The surge has prompted many reopening schools to temporarily close, offer a hybrid of in-person and online classes, or accommodate families that

prefer to continue virtual learning.

## I thought 'COVID was going away'

Matt Parker, 35, a live entertainment promoter, was furloughed by his company early last year and then declined to return to work in October because of concerns he might contract COVID-19 and infect his daughter, a toddler.

Parker, his wife, Francine, a scientist who is working remotely, and their daughter moved from New York City to Simpsonville, South Carolina, where they can live comfortably off Francine's salary.

Although Matt has looked for jobs, he says he won't accept one until his daughter can get vaccinated, he can work remotely full time — a rarity in live entertainment — or the pandemic eases significantly. He reckons he might go back to work early next year.

"I do feel insecurity" about being out of work for so long, he says.

But, he adds, "It's not like I'm choosing to be lazy. I'm taking care of my child, and I know it's the right thing to do."

Crystal Burdge, 35, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, also decided not to resume her job as a nursing assistant after giving birth to her daughter in April 2020 because she fears getting COVID-19 and infecting her.

Burdge, who was denied unemployment benefits, would like to get retrained as a specialist in medical billing and coding so she can work remotely, but she can't afford the classes.

Also keeping her from rejoining the work force: Her 13-year-old son's school, which was set to resume in-person classes this fall, but abruptly reverted to online instruction.

Burdge's fiancé works 16 hours a day at two jobs, but the couple still has fallen behind on their rent and utility bills. What's worse: Burdge, her fiancée and son all contracted COVID-19 over the summer. "It's very stressful," she says. "I thought things were getting better and COVID was going away."

## Remote work and job-hopping

An unprecedented game of musical chairs also is roiling the labor market.

While most businesses want workers to return to the office at least some of the time after the pandemic wanes, about

40% of workers want to work from home full time, according to a Harris Poll survey for USA TODAY in May.

Many employees, in turn, are quitting jobs that require them to work in offices, says Jim McCoy, senior vice president of talent solutions at ManpowerGroup, a staffing firm.

Others are leaving jobs to take advantage of the abundance of openings and higher wages. A near-record 3.9 million workers quit jobs in June. Yet finding new positions takes time, McCoy says, prolonging the worker shortages.

Alex Berg, CEO of Cratos Equipment, of Pompano Beach, Florida, has been trying to fill a marketing director job for months. The previous director at the company, which distributes construction equipment, left to take a remote job for a 35% raise.

"Finding people that want to work in an office has become increasingly difficult," Berg says.

As more employers allow new hires to work remotely, the competition for employees has intensified, prompting workers to extend their searches, McCoy says.

"We're now competing with employers from around the country," says Eric Griffin, co-founder of Philadelphia-based Mobile Outfitters, which makes a protective film for cellphones.

## Career changes

The pandemic led many restaurant employees and other workers to reconsider their career paths.

About 57% of job switches recorded by LinkedIn from May through July were from one industry to another. Such shifts are likely to take even longer as workers transition to new careers, which may require retraining, says DeAntonio of Moody's.

Parker says he may jump from being a promoter to a marketing specialist for small businesses, which would involve less travel and health risk, and better align with his interests. But it could take more time to launch his own firm.

"I discovered during this crisis that my primary passion is for growing business through marketing regardless of the industry," Parker says.

## Early retirements

More than 3 million Americans retired last year compared to an average of about 2 million since 2011, according to a study by Pew Research Center.

That suggests about 1.1 million baby boomers retired early because of the pandemic. Yet only about 270,000 early retirees intend to resume working within the next year, according to the Morning Consult survey. The effect of the early retirements should fade in a couple of years when most of those boomers would have called it quits anyway, DeAntonio says.

## Bottom line

DeAntonio expects the economy, which already has added 4.3 million jobs this year, to tack on another 2.2 million by year's end. That would still leave the nation 3.5 million jobs short of its pre-pandemic level — a gap that DeAntonio estimates will be closed by the middle of next year.

But creating and filling all the jobs that would have existed if the pandemic had not occurred will likely take until the end of 2023, DeAntonio says.

That's about when the worker shortages should truly be over, he says.



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AP