

Back in June my article took a look at unemployment rates in Clinton County and compared Clinton County's unemployment rate against other counties throughout the state. The latest rates are a mixed bag of information. On the bright side, in August, Clinton County's rate was 7.8% compared with a state wide average of 9.9% and a national average of 9.7%. Also, Clinton County seems to be doing better than its adjacent counties who have unemployment rates as follows: Marion (12%); Washington (8.1%); St. Clair (10.8%); Madison (9.7%); Bond (9.0%); and Fayette (11.2%). However, the bad news is since April our unemployment rate has risen from 6.2%, meaning the economic conditions creating layoffs are continuing to trickle into our backyard.

Further, according to Automatic Data Processing Inc.'s August employment report, large businesses shed 60,000 jobs, medium sized businesses shed 116,000 and small businesses shed 122,000. Large businesses, defined as employing more than 500 people, create approximately 17 million jobs. Medium sized businesses, defined as employing 50-499 people, create approximately 42 million jobs. And small businesses, defined as employing 1-49 people, account for 48 million jobs.

Information and statistics are frequently spun to promote an agenda. However, the following empirical evidence should stand on its own:

Clinton County's unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the State of Illinois.

Our local economy is comprised of a consortium of small business.

Small businesses create the majority of jobs in America.

When the economy shrinks small business contract their jobs at a lower percentage than large and medium sized businesses.

A reasonable person knows that our economy must have all sizes of business to benefit the consumer and be competitive on the world stage. But based on the aforementioned evidence it seems that Clinton County's support for its small businesses may be shielding us from the brunt of this economic trough and may be an example that "bigger is not always better" where business is concerned.

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