

County economy remains strong

*State trends
are going the
opposite
direction*

— By Cornelia de Bruin —
The Daily Times

FARMINGTON — San Juan County continues to keep its independent character, ignoring statewide economic trends and dancing to its own beat.

That independent streak is apparent in the latest news of job trends, released Wednesday by New Mexico Voices for Children.

"The state may be celebrating unexpectedly good revenue from oil and natural gas taxes, but other economic news is not so good for working New Mexicans," stated a press release from the Albuquerque-based advocacy group.

It cited data recently released by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which shows the state's unemployment rate rose from 3.8 percent in May to 3.9 percent in June — the first increase since 2001.

Farmington's New Mexico Workforce Connections office begs to differ, however.

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Farmington's seasonally adjusted job growth rate was 3.4 percent in May, up from 3.2 percent in April and 3.1 percent in May one year ago," said Acting Line Supervisor Ellen Brown. "We gained 300 new jobs, most of which are in the goods production area like mining."

The Farmington office doesn't have June's stats yet, Brown added, because it lags about a month behind the Albuquerque office.

Statewide, 7,000 new jobs were created since June 2007, which is a growth rate of less than 1 percent. The statewide manufacturing sector lost 2,000 jobs during the same time period.

"On top of that, inflation is up to 5 percent, according to BLS," the Voices press release states.

The group puts the blame on a sluggish national economy.

"New Mexico's labor market is usually cushioned from the national business cycle, but this time the national downturn is showing up in the state's economy more quickly than usual," New Mexico Voices for Children Research Director Gerry Bradley said.

The organization tracks the information because it is a watchdog for the patterns of living standards for the state's working population and their effects on New Mexico's children.

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