



## Feb. unemployment rate stable at 5.6% as labor force participation fell to 65.9%

*392,000 people left the labor force last month*

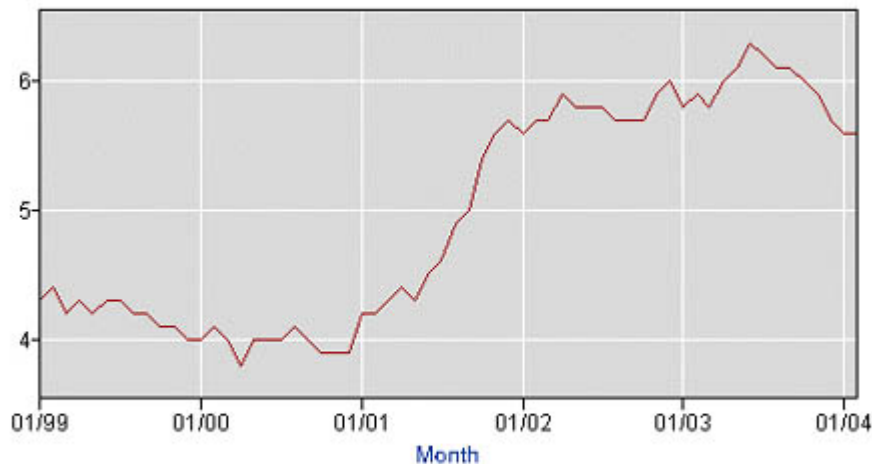
[Fadhel Kaboub](#) Mar . 08 . 2004

On Friday March 5, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released a report on the employment situation in February 2004. The unemployment rate remained unchanged at 5.6% in February. 392,000 people, however, have left the labor force last month bringing the size of the labor force to 146.5 million

"The labor force participation rate fell to 65.9 percent in February, reflecting a steep drop-off in the number of men in the labor force," said Kathleen P. Utgoff, BLS Commissioner, in her statement before the Joint Economic Committee (U.S. Congress) on Friday March 5th, 2004.

The report indicates that about 1.7 million persons wanted and were available to work and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They were not counted as unemployed, however, because they did not actively search for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. They are considered "marginally attached to the labor force."

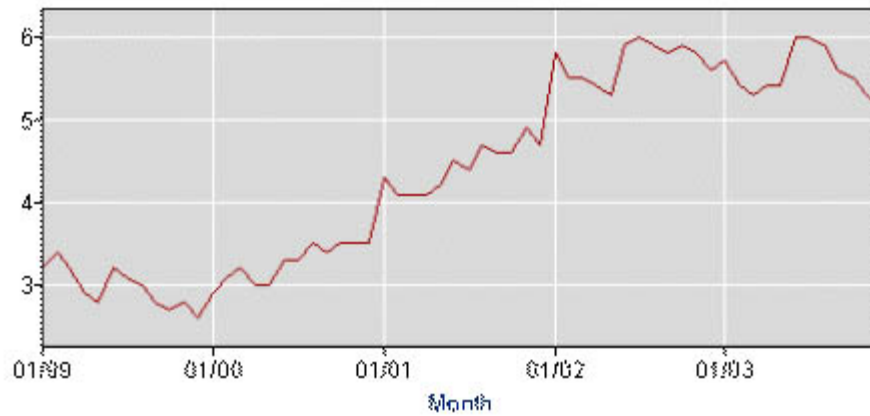
**U.S. Unemployment Rate, seasonally adjusted (1999-2004)**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Of the 1.7 million marginally attached to the labor force in Feb., about 0.5 million were "discouraged workers." That is, they were not currently looking for work specifically because they believed no jobs were available for them. "The other 1.2 million marginally attached had not searched for work for reasons such as school or family responsibilities," said the BLS report.

### Kansas City, MO-KS MSA unemployment rate



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The most recent unemployment report on metropolitan areas published by the BLS shows an unemployment rate in Kansas City of 5.1 percent in December 2003. Kansas City, MO-KS MSA ranked 182nd out of 331 metropolitan U.S. cities.

Columbia, MO MSA ranked 1st with only 1.9 percent unemployment rate, Springfield, MO MSA ranked 49th with 3.4%, Joplin, MO MSA ranked 119th with 4.3 %, St. Joseph, MO MSA ranked 177th with 5.0%, St. Louis, MO-IL MSA ranked 196th with 5.2%.

On the Kansas side, Lawrence MSA ranked 77th with 3.9% unemployment rate, Topeka MSA ranked 138th with 4.6%, and Wichita MSA ranked 228th with 5.6%.

[www.kcaurora.com](http://www.kcaurora.com)

Copyright © 2004 The Kansas City Aurora