

## NWA Jobs at All-Time High



By: [KNWA, Fayetteville, AR](#)

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FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. -- Economists say employment in Northwest Arkansas is at an all time high, passing the peak from before the recession.

University of Arkansas economist Kathy Deck says our area saw 211,100 jobs in June, a new record.

"We're seeing strong growth across a whole variety of sectors," Deck says. "Broad based employment growth, which is much better than say all in construction, or all in professional and business services, or all in retail. It's really been in all of those."

Others, like construction and financial services aren't growing, but they aren't slipping either.

"Some of the sectors that have been holding us back actually flattened out," she says. "Flat is better than down, so that's really good news."

Deck says the rest of the state, and even most of the country is lagging behind.

"They still are down significantly as a matter of fact," she says. "But some of our regional competitors have gotten close again, Tulsa for example is very close to its peak employment as well."

She says the growth rates look like the boom years in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

"We want to sustain these nice strong growth rates," Deck says. "It's what encourages people to come live here, which means we need to build more houses, build more shopping centers, have more schools, all the good things that we need."

Speaking of shopping centers, Cabela is building in Rogers, bringing jobs with it.

"175 brand new very passionate very experienced in the outdoor employees," says Tracy Doty, Marketing Manager for the Rogers store. "Northwest Arkansas is a fabulous location for retail as well as the outdoors."

Deck says the local job growth is also strong in leisure and hospitality, and health services.

"With the influx of jobs and the influx of people we now have a more diversified population," says Michael Stewart, chief operating officer of Northwest Medical Center in Springdale. "We have four hospitals in the area, and those will continue to grow to meet the needs of the people coming in."

The Springdale campus is in the middle of a \$12 million expansion that will add ten bays to the emergency room, but it will also bring in even more jobs.

"Just this year alone we are probably going to recruit thirty to forty physicians across our system," Stewart says. "For every primary care doctor we bring in, that employs another one to three people... We have nurses, techs, pharmacists and laboratory people."

People who will have dollars of their own to spend here.

"It's a nice virtuous cycle," Deck says.