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Per Capita Income Falls In 6 Of 7 Ark. Metro Areas

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Per capita income fell in six of Arkansas' seven metropolitan areas in 2009, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The bureau reported Monday that only Pine Bluff's per capita income rose last year, up by 1.6 percent to \$29,170 from \$28,698 in 2008.

Per capita income is the total income of residents in an area divided by the population. Total personal income includes wages and salaries, property income including interest and dividends and receipts such as insurance settlements or unemployment benefits.

Federal spending likely boosted Pine Bluff's income, said Kathy Deck, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas in

Fayetteville.

"Many of the metropolitan areas that had increases were because of stimulus dollars that came one way or another," Deck said.

The Little Rock area's per capita income was \$38,750 last year, down 0.7 percent and 88th in the country. Per capita income in Texarkana was down 1.4 percent to \$31,900; Hot Springs was down 1.8 percent to \$32,705; Fort Smith fell 2.2 percent to \$30,053; Jonesboro lost 2.8 percent to \$29,378; and Northwest Arkansas was down 3 percent to \$31,562.

Income in Little Rock, Pine Bluff, Fort Smith, Hot Springs and Texarkana moved closer to the national average. Nationwide,

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the metropolitan area per capita income was down 2.8 percent from 2008 to \$40,757.

"The state has not suffered as badly in this recession as some of the other states, which was one of the things that allowed us to make progress," Deck said.

"That doesn't mean that we aren't suffering, which these numbers show. These are consistent with a lot of other numbers we're seeing, such as unemployment and generally lower economic activity."

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