The Fourth District’s unemployment rate for April fell to 5.9%, its second consecutive monthly decline of 0.1 percentage point. The nation’s unemployment rate was 5.2% in April and fell to 5.1% in May, the lowest since September 2001.

For the great majority of District counties, unemployment rates declined from March to April. In all but three counties in Fourth District Pennsylvania, unemployment rates fell. Even so, more than half of all District counties posted unemployment rates that exceeded the U.S. average.

Over the past year, nonfarm employment has increased in all of the District’s major metropolitan areas except Dayton, but these gains did not keep pace with the nation’s. Employment in education and health services increased or stayed the same in all major metropolitan areas. Natural resources, mining, and construction was another strong sector, with many metropolitan areas recording employment increases of more than 3% over the past year. While Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Lexington added manufacturing employment, other metropolitan areas’ rates of decline in that sector were higher than the nation’s. Toledo was the only metropolitan area to gain employment in trade, transportation, and utilities over the past year.