

Garrard County Jobless Rate at 5.0% in July, Down from a Year Ago

By Ted Cox
tccox@garrardcentralrecord.com

Garrard County’s preliminary unemployment rate was 5.0% in July 2025, edging down from 5.3% in July 2024 but up from 4.6% in June, according to new county-level estimates released Thursday by the Kentucky Center for

FRAN Award From Front

school remained a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for

Behind Scenes From Front

annual Hall of Fame induction ceremony received high praise from attendees, described by participants and their families as one of the most professional and

Forums From Front

seconded by Board Member Ethan Smith. All five members—Dr. Jerry Browning, Mr. Kenneth Hurt, Dr. Connie Lamb, Ms. Davis, and Mr. Smith—voted in favor. Superintendent Kevin Stull

School Taxes From Front

posal, with Dr. Connie Lamb making the motion and Mr. Kenneth Hurt providing the second. Board members Dr. Jerry Browning, Mr. Kenneth

PR Position From Front

district’s public relations department due to a significant increase in technology use across the schools. “We feel like we’ve put a lot of pressure on our PR department,” said Stull. “So what we would like to propose doing for one year to see how this works is creating a part-time position to support that area.” The new position, which

Athletic Trainer From Front

fies both the financial terms and the payment schedule for athletic training services. Superintendent Kevin Stull, presenting the recommendation to the board, emphasized that UK Health has historically provided a certified trainer to oversee the district’s athletic programs. However, attempts made earlier in the year to independently hire a trainer were unsuccessful, prompting the district to return to its agreement with UK. “We didn’t have any luck with that,” Stull stated, referring to the district’s efforts to recruit a trainer independently. “The individual who had been working for us from UK has

Hall of Fame From Front

The motion to delay a vote on the revisions was introduced by Board Member Mary Davis and seconded by Ethan Smith, passing with affirmative votes from all five board members present. Superintendent Kevin Stull recommended tabling the item, citing unresolved questions regarding proposed adjustments. “There’s still a question about how that should play out,” Stull stated, noting the intention to revisit the mat-

Personell From Front

According to the report, dated August 18, 2025, a total of eight resignations and terminations were noted. Among the departures were Brittany Edgington, who served as a preschool paraeducator at Lancaster Elementary School (LES), and Donald Jackson-Roth, a special education

Fences From Front

Garrard County Extension Office, is free of charge and open to neighboring counties. The program is designed to help

Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet. KYSTATS reported 8,402 people in Garrard County’s civilian labor force in July, with 7,978 employed and 424 unemployed. The county’s jobless rate remained below Kentucky’s unadjusted statewide rate of 5.6% for the students and staff alike. “Her hard work and dedication were not missed,” Stull stated. “Even though she spent no time drawing attention to her efforts, everyone saw what impactful events they had ever experienced. According to Stull, a single individual has been instrumental in the planning and execution of each of these achievements: Sydney Ray. From producing digital content that highlights student presented the proposal, stating that the forums are intended to provide clarity to community members who have raised concerns about the gym project. “We’ve been having to say no to them about that,” Stull noted, referring to the lack of progress and funding regard-

Hurt, Dr. Connie Lamb, Ms. Mary Davis, and Mr. Ethan Smith each voted in support of the measure. Superintendent Stull presented the proposed tax rates to the board, noting that public notice had been advertised for the past two weeks in accor-

will span the 2025–2026 school year, includes 88 total workdays, 44 of which allow for travel. The total cost of the contract is \$29,240.20. The contract becomes effective August 22, 2025. The position has been awarded to Priscilla Baierlein, a local media specialist known for her photography and communications work in the community. Board members expressed confidence in Baierlein’s ability to strengthen the district’s public outreach moved to Wisconsin. So at this time, we have no trainer, but UK is still looking for a trainer for us, and we need to approve an amended contract.” Key changes in the amended agreement include a revised payment structure and an increase in compensation. According to the contract document, GCPS will remit \$35,000 for the current service year (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025) and \$76,000 for the upcoming year (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026). Importantly, the payment schedule has been corrected to better reflect service completion: UK will now invoice GCPS in two installments—half of the annual fee on December 1 and the remainder on May 1, with payment due

ter in the board’s next regular meeting. Board members concurred, with Chair Jerry Browning and others emphasizing the need for additional deliberation. During earlier discussion, Superintendent Stull outlined the rationale behind proposed modifications initially suggested by the Hall of Fame committee. One key recommendation involved removing the student representative from the selection committee, citing challenges in tasking students with identifying and evaluating nominees. Instead, the revised proposal suggested maintaining a retired teacher’s

teacher at Garrard Middle School (GMS). Other resignations included Julie Peters (Garrard County High School night custodian), Kevin Montez Iaon (GMS assistant softball coach), and Aubrey New (LES 4-hour custodian). The report also included Kendra Hall (Paraeducator at Paint Lick Elementary), Kathy Ivy (Cook/Baker at Camp Dick Robinson), and Sis Logan (GCHS assistant girls basket-

farmers and landowners responsibly dispose of old fencing materials while reducing waste in the community. Accepted items include rolled metal fencing such as barbed wire and woven wire, panel fencing for cattle or

month and above the comparable U.S. rate of 4.6%. Neighboring counties showed mixed conditions in July. Jessamine County registered 4.9%, Fayette and Scott counties were 4.7% each, Boyle County was 5.9%, Madison County 5.7%, and Lincoln County 6.7%. Woodford County recorded she did—and they appreciated it deeply.” The recognition at the board meeting served as a reaffirmation of the respect and admiration Ms. Sparks commands athletes and school events to organizing visually dynamic and interactive displays for public functions, Rae’s work has remained largely out of public view—until now. “When a player or family is excited because a student’s picture or video is on a digital ing the potential gym. “We haven’t always been able to be as clear with them about how we are to that spot.” He acknowledged the need for improved transparency and suggested that the forums would create a platform for dialogue and mutual understanding.

dance with legal requirements, though a formal public hearing was no longer mandated. According to Stull, the new rate for real estate will be set at 62.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value, a slight reduction from the previous year’s rate of 62.6 cents. through compelling media and timely updates. “Most of you know who she is and are familiar with her,” said Stull. “We believe that she would bring some significant strength to the area of photography.” The role is designed to be hybrid in nature. On-site responsibilities will include traveling to various schools—Lancaster Elementary, Camp Dick Robinson, Paint Lick Elementary, Garrard Middle, Garrard County High, and within 30 days of each invoice. “This change corrects an error from last year, where payments were mistakenly made at the beginning and midpoint of the semester, rather than after services were rendered,” Stull explained. The term of the amended agreement will run through June 30, 2026, and allows for termination by either party with 30 days’ written notice. Aside from the financial and temporal modifications, the rest of the original contract remains in effect. The board approved the amended contract following a motion by board member Kenneth Hurt, seconded by Ethan Smith. All members voted in favor, including Dr. Jerry Browning, Dr. Connie Lamb,

position and adding a second community member. Further input from board members prompted consideration of expanding eligibility criteria to include individuals who may not have been formal employees or alumni but who significantly contributed to education within the county. Mary Davis advocated for an “honorary recognition” category, aimed at acknowledging individuals who supported the district through leadership, advocacy, or community involvement. “It’s not something that has to be done every year,” Davis explained. “But something

ball coach). In contrast, the district reported 20 new hires across a variety of instructional, coaching, and support positions, suggesting an active effort to fill key roles. These included Jessica Barker as a special education paraeducator at Garrard County High School, April Adams as a math teacher leader at Garrard Middle School, and Kaitlyn Smith, who will split responsibilities

hogs, metal posts, and metal cable without insulation or coating. Items that will not be accepted are metal posts or fencing with materials attached such as concrete, rope, or plastic, as well as sheet metal, wood posts, and plastic

the lowest unemployment rate in Kentucky at 4.5%, while Martin County posted the highest at 10.8%. Statewide, unemployment rates fell in 73 counties compared with July 2024, rose in 35 and were unchanged in 12. Kentucky’s seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate, published separately on within the district. Her selection as this year’s Fran Award recipient reflects not only her individual contributions, but also the high regard in which she is held by those she works screen... Sydney was the creator,” Stull said. “When KSBA participants stood in awe at the spinning wheel that shows awards and prizes—Sydney was the creator. And when Hall of Fame participants left with their jaws on the floor, it was because of Sydney.” “These forums will allow us to be forward with that,” Stull said, emphasizing the district’s desire to address residents’ questions and share information on the current status of the proposed gym construction. While specific dates and locations for the forums were not determined during the

“Not a large reduction, but again, another reduction from your all’s perspective,” Stull remarked during the meeting. Personal property tax will remain unchanged at 64 cents, and the motor vehicle tax rate will stay at 55.1 cents, a rate determined by the state and Garrard Education Center—to capture photos and videos of classroom activities, performances, and school events. Remote duties will involve editing content, managing media files, supporting social media scheduling, and contributing to monthly PR highlights. Baierlein will report directly to the district’s Director of Public Relations, Sydney Arnold Ray. According to the contract, she will work two days per week, receiving a daily rate of \$304.54 and traveling and Mary Davis. Until the time UK appoints a trainer, the board has approved a contract to employ a part-time football trainer for the 2025–2026 school year. The motion, introduced by Board Member Kenneth Hurt and seconded by Mary Davis, received full support from all five board members: Dr. Jerry Browning, Mr. Hurt, Dr. Connie Lamb, Ms. Davis, and Mr. Ethan Smith. Superintendent Kevin Stull emphasized the necessity of having medical oversight at football games due to the sport’s higher potential for student injuries. “We do not currently have a trainer,” said Stull. “Typically in the past, the sport that has created the most potential for

that could be considered for those that did not fit the current criteria yet have furthered education in Garrard County.” The board also discussed how honorary inductees could be defined in the revised guidelines. Kalem Grasham suggested language that would allow for the inclusion of individuals “as a contributor that has positively impacted education in Garrard County,” a proposal that Davis agreed warranted further thought. In addition to eligibility changes, Board Member Connie Lamb raised community concerns regarding funding for the Hall of Fame events.

between music instruction and intervention at Paint Lick Elementary. Other instructional hires included Sheri Yocum and Lacey Robinson as special education teachers at GCHS and GMS respectively, and Shannon Christopher as an interventionist at GMS. Notable athletic appointments included Carolina Gonzalez as head coach of the girls basketball team at GMS, following her resignation as as-

Aug. 14, held at 4.9% from June to July. County rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and, KYSTATS notes, should be compared only with the same month in prior years because seasonal patterns—such as school schedules, holidays and weather—can affect monthly figures. Estimates with every day. Ms. Sparks’s recognition marks a meaningful moment in the district’s ongoing efforts to celebrate those who go above and beyond in service To recognize her efforts, Stull presented Ray with a “Behind the Scenes” award, urging her—perhaps for the first time—to take public credit for her contributions. Her work continues to serve as a model not only within Garrard County but increas-

meeting, Superintendent Stull indicated that those details would be announced in the near future. Board Chairman Dr. Jerry Browning facilitated the motion process and confirmed the approval following a brief discussion among board members. No objections or questions were raised during the voting procedure. The community forums are expected to serve as a bridge between school district officials and residents, particularly amid ongoing discussions around school facilities and infrastructure planning. after the vote was taken. The newly approved tax rates will apply to the 2026 fiscal year and represent the district’s ongoing efforts to balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of the school system. The addition of a part-time consultant is expected to allow the district to better utilize its growing technological resources, including digital signage, and maintain a stronger, more consistent public presence. As Stull noted during the meeting, “This is going to allow us to be much more active and make sure that [our digital signs] are doing what we want them to do in a timely fashion.” el reimbursement for one day each week. The agreement includes provisions for two possible one-year renewals following the initial term, which runs through June 30, 2026. The position will be funded through the district’s general fund. Board members voted unanimously in favor of the motion, with all five members—Dr. Jerry Browning, Mr. Kenneth Hurt, Dr. Connie Lamb, Ms. Mary Davis, and Mr. Ethan Smith—casting affirmative votes.

injury and harm to a student has been football.” He explained that without a certified trainer on-site, injured athletes are automatically disqualified from returning to play due to the absence of a professional who can evaluate their condition. The newly approved agreement designates Jordan Crutchfield, a licensed trainer and emergency room professional, to fill the role. Crutchfield operates her own LLC and brings relevant medical expertise to the position. According to the contract, she will be compensated \$2,640 for her services over 11 scheduled football game days, working three hours per event at a rate of \$80 per hour. The contract, effective from

Superintendent Stull responded that a \$5,000 donation received after the inaugural Hall of Fame ceremony is being used as seed money to establish an independent education foundation. Once formed, the foundation is expected to fund future Hall of Fame events and potentially support scholarships, summer programs, and other educational initiatives outside the direct fiscal responsibilities of the school district. “We have money in place to do that,” Stull confirmed, noting that funds are currently set aside within the district and will be transferred to the foun-

bring de-fence, we take offence,” highlighting the ease of drop-off. Following the recycling event, an Agriculture Safety Day will begin at 5:30 p.m., hosted by the County Extension Office, Farm Bureau, and

are designed to measure trends among non-military workers who are actively seeking employment. to students, colleagues, and the broader school community.

ingly throughout the state as other districts look to replicate the district’s approach to digital engagement and student celebration.

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August 22, 2025, through June 30, 2026, permits renewal for up to two additional one-year terms. It also allows for termination with 30 days written notice from either party or immediate termination if full athletic trainer services become available through a partnership with UK Health.

Crutchfield will report to Mark Scenters, the Athletic Director at Garrard County High School, and must comply with all Garrard County Schools employment standards, policies, and procedural requirements.

The move is seen as a temporary but crucial step while the district continues efforts to hire a full-time athletic trainer in the future.

dation upon its establishment. He added that the district is in discussions with a potential leader who has nonprofit experience to guide the foundation’s launch and operations. No timeline was provided for when the Hall of Fame revisions will return for a vote, though Superintendent Stull indicated it would likely appear on the board’s September agenda. Until then, board members are expected to continue reviewing the proposed changes and community feedback.

Reed (Cook/Baker at Camp Dick Robinson).

This round of hiring highlights the district’s ongoing efforts to maintain instructional and extracurricular programs as the new school year begins, with staff movement responding to changing needs and opportunities within Garrard County Schools.

Cattlemen’s Association. For questions regarding the recycling program, residents may contact the Garrard County Conservation Office at (859) 792-2620.