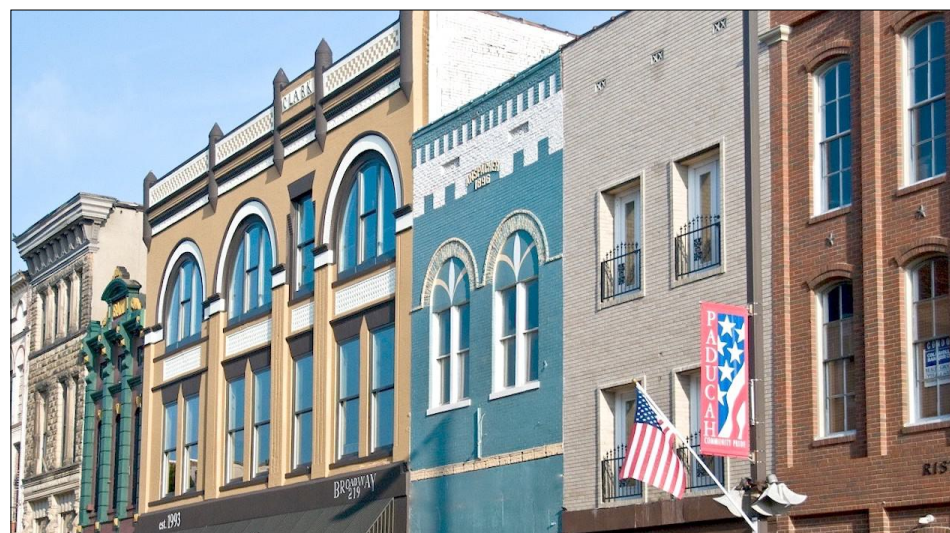


Middlesboro 3rd among downtowns Kentuckians most want to see revived

By Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. – As chain stores, bypasses, and sprawling retail corridors continue to reshape America, many once-beloved downtowns have quietly faded into the background, even though locals still feel deeply attached to them.

Across the country, these historic Main Streets and old commercial districts often carry the bones of something special and increasingly hard to find: brick storefronts, railroad-era buildings, faded signs, old theaters, civic squares, waterfront blocks, and walkable character that newer developments struggle to recreate. Some have seen flashes of newfound investment, while others remain full of untapped potential,



A row of buildings along Broadway in downtown Paducah. That street, Ashland's Winchester Avenue and Middlesboro's Cumberland Avenue were the top 3 areas Kentuckians picked to be revitalized.

waiting for the right mix of restoration, small business energy, and local pride to bring them back to life.

To identify the historic Main Streets and downtown districts Kentuckians most want to see revived, MarketBeat, a financial

media company, surveyed 3,012 respondents about the places they believe still deserve a comeback. The result is a ranking of corridors that continue to inspire nostalgia, civic pride and hope for a more vibrant future.

Kentuckians' top 3 picks:

#1. BROADWAY, PADUCAH

Broadway still carries the feel of a classic Kentucky river-city corridor, lined with older commercial buildings and reminders of Paducah's transportation and trade history. The city developed into an important inland

port due to its location near the meeting of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers. While parts of downtown remain active, many residents still believe the historic core could support a much fuller return of everyday street life and commerce.

#2. WINCHESTER AVENUE, ASHLAND

Winchester Avenue still reflects the scale and confidence of a downtown shaped by river commerce, railroads, and heavy industry along the Ohio River. Ashland became closely associated with steel production during the 20th century, helping drive much of the city's economic growth and downtown development. Even now, many locals feel the corridor deserves a broader revival that matches its

historic importance and architectural presence, and new streetscape investments are beginning to add the kind of energy that makes that future feel closer than ever.

#3. CUMBERLAND AVENUE, MIDDLESBORO

Surrounded by the Appalachian mountains, downtown Middlesboro still has the distinctive layout and historic character of a town built during Kentucky's late-1800s coal expansion. Middlesboro is famously located inside the meteor crater basin known as the Middlesboro Crater, giving the city an unusually dramatic setting. Today, the downtown still feels like a place with strong identity and plenty of untapped revival potential.

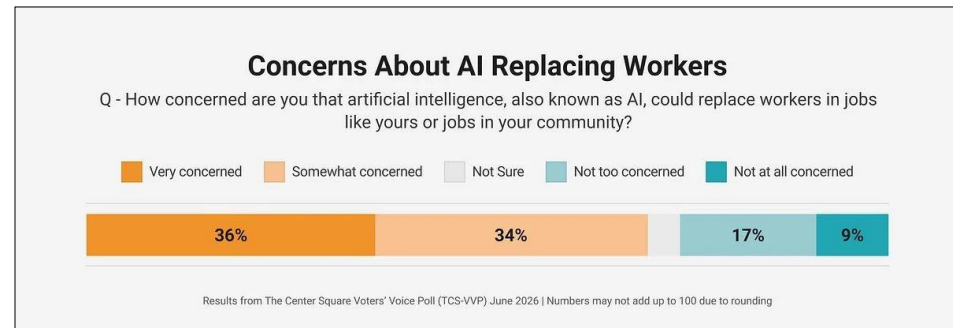
Poll: 70% of Americans 'concerned' AI will take jobs

By Andrew Rice
The Center Square

Roughly 70% of Americans said they were at least "somewhat concerned" that artificial intelligence could replace their jobs, according to a new poll.

The Center Square's Voters Voice Poll found 34% of registered voters reported feeling "somewhat concerned" that AI would do their jobs. The poll also found roughly 36% of Americans said they were "very concerned about AI replacing them at work."

The Voters Voice Poll, conducted by Noble Predictive Insights, surveyed 2,585 registered voters from June 1 to June 4. Respondents were comprised of 915 Republicans, 1,013 Democrats and 297 true



Independents, which means individuals who did not lean toward either major party when asked.

Overall, individuals with less education reported greater levels of concern about AI replacing their jobs. Roughly 40% of respondents with a high school degree or less said they were "very concerned" about AI taking their jobs. About 38% of respondents with no college degree said the same.

Mike Noble, founder of

Noble Predictive Insights, said people with less education were more concerned about AI replacing them. He said AI companies need to focus on ways to educate people about impact, rather than scaling data center facilities.

"Instead of just, 'hey, we need to build this stuff,' they need to educate folks on what this does for them, and also how can they leverage it as a tool," Noble said.

There also appeared to

be a correlation in levels of concern and lower household income. Roughly 41% of individuals with a household income lower than \$50,000 per year reported concerns about AI replacing them at work.

"The lower education you have, the less kind of plugged in you are, the more concerned you are regarding it," Noble said.

Across the political spectrum, Democrats appeared to be more concerned about AI's

impact on the workforce, compared to Republicans. About 41% of Democrat respondents said they were "very concerned" about AI taking over their jobs, compared to 31% of Republicans who said the same.

About 32% of true Independents said they were concerned that AI would take over their jobs. Overall, female respondents were more likely to be concerned about AI taking over their jobs whereas 11% of males said they were "not at all concerned" about AI taking their jobs – the highest percentage response in the category.

Across age groups, most respondents shared similar levels of concern. About 72% of respondents age 65

and older reported concerns over AI replacing their jobs or those of others in the community.

Respondents ages 18-29 and 30-44 appeared less concerned about AI replacing their jobs. About 66% of respondents age 18-29 reported concerns and 71% of adults ages 30-44 reported similar levels of concern.

Noble said younger people have a greater understanding of the impact of AI on the workforce in the long run. He said educating people on AI's use as a tool, rather than a replacement is essential.

"Anytime you add AI or artificial intelligence in there, people are just very skeptical of it," Noble said.

May unemployment rate reported at 4.5%

By Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

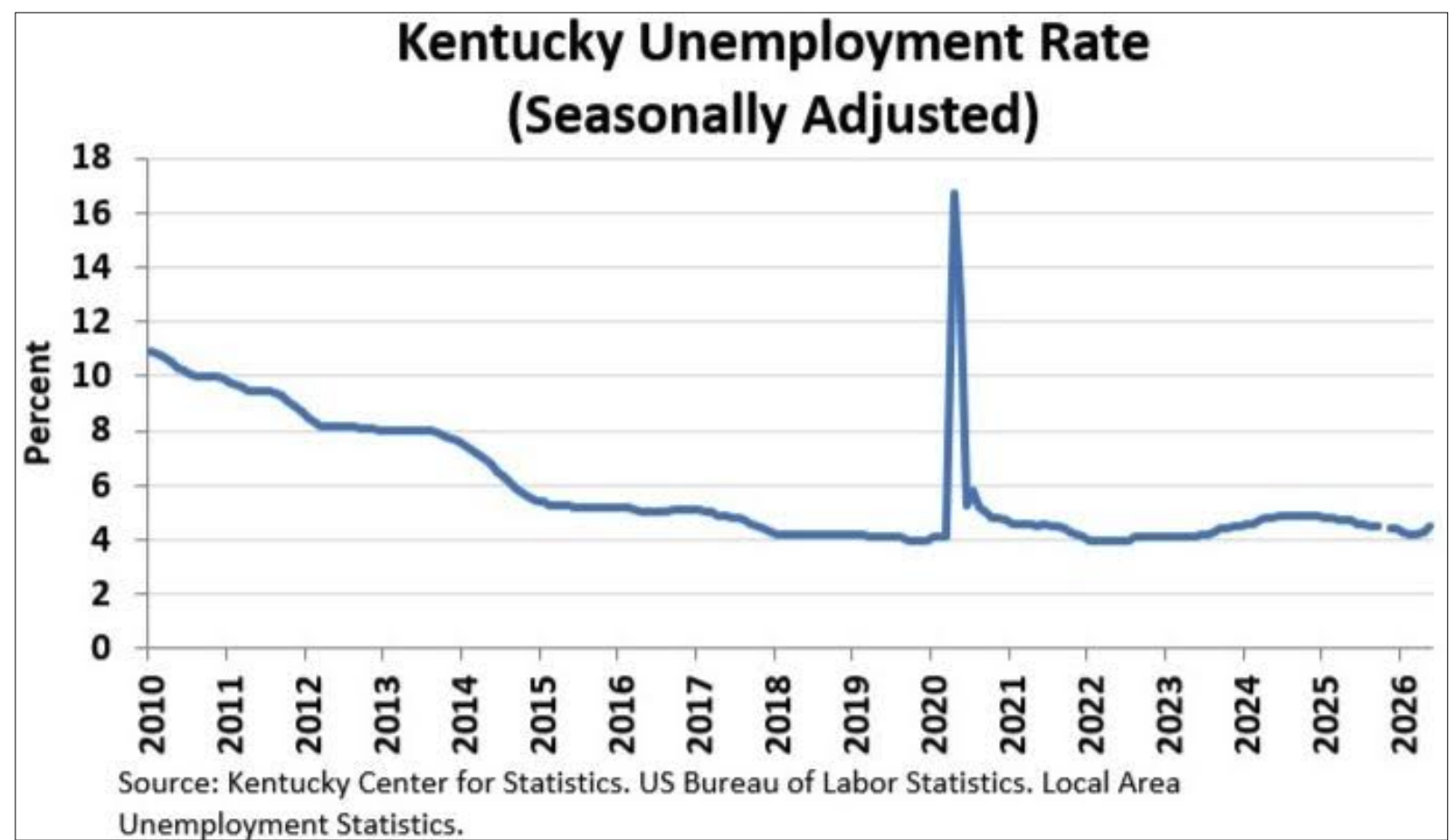
FRANKFORT - Kentucky's seasonally adjusted preliminary May 2026 unemployment rate was 4.5%, according to the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

The preliminary May 2026 jobless rate was up from the 4.3 percent reported in April but was down 0.2 percentage points from one year ago.

The U.S. seasonally adjusted jobless rate for May 2026 was 4.3 percent, which was unchanged from April and from the 4.3 percent recorded in May 2025, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Labor force statistics, including the unemployment rate, are based upon estimates from the Current Population Survey of households. The survey is designed to measure trends in the number of people working and includes jobs in agriculture and individuals who are self-employed.

Kentucky's civilian labor



Long term unemployment graph

force was 2,097,040 in May 2026, a decrease of 556 individuals from April. The number of people employed in May was 2,003,656, a decline of 4,314 from April. The number of unemployed was 93,384, an increase of 3,758 from April.

The University of

Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) Director Mike Clark, Ph.D, explained the reason for the jobless rate climb.. "While the number of people in the labor force was essentially unchanged in May, fewer people reported being employed

and more people indicated that they were without a job but looking for one."

In a separate federal survey of business establishments that excludes jobs in agriculture and people who are self-employed, Kentucky's seasonally adjusted nonfarm

employment decreased by 3,100 jobs to 2,031,100 in May compared to April. Kentucky's nonfarm employment was down 9,100 jobs or 0.4% compared to May 2025.

"Most of the decline in Kentucky's employment for May occurred among wholesalers," said Clark.

"However, the estimates suggest that employment in the wholesale subsector jumped in April but then came back down quickly in May. So, the decline in wholesale employment during May likely reflects monthly volatility rather than a change in the industry's overall trend."