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Unemployment for Black Women at 4-Year Low

By Freddie Allen
NPA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Job prospects for whites and men have slowed or stalled lately, black women continue to gain ground in a weak market, according to the jobs report.

Over the last few months, black women have seen the steepest decline in their unemployment rate, so there is a gradual improvement taking place," said Valerie R. Wilson, economist for the National Business League. That improvement doesn't seem to be the result of people dropping out of the labor force.

Wilson continued: "It looks like there were actual gains in employment for black women." In fact, compared to the other groups over 20 years old, black women have experienced the greatest decline in their unemployment rate since September 2012.

The unemployment rate for black women over 20 years old was 10 percent in September 2012, a 1.2 percent decrease from September 2012 and the lowest mark for black women since March 2009.

The unemployment rate for black women was 5.5 percent in September 2013, a 0.8 percent improvement over the 6.3 percent recorded in September 2012. The jobless rate for white women was 6.1 percent in September 2013, down slightly from 6.6 percent in September 2012. The unemployment rate for black women over 20 years old has barely edged since last September when it was 14.1 percent. A year ago the unemployment rate for black men is 14 percent.

Even as some economists suggest that as Wilson recognize the September unemployment rate for black women was the lowest mark in more than four years, she acknowledged that those gains came at a price; many of the jobs available to black women were in industries that traditionally pay low wages.

Wilson said that a lot of the growth has been in the leisure and hospitality sector and professional and business services.

According to the Labor Department, leisure and hospital services added an average of 8,000 jobs per month over the previous 12 months, but the rate was relatively flat in September. The professional and business services sector added 10,000 jobs in the past 12 months and 32,000 jobs in September. Twenty thousand workers found in temporary help services in September.

When you look at the kinds of jobs that are being created, the gains are not necessarily in "high-paying jobs," said Wilson. Uncertainty in the housing market has made it harder for black women to find work, because the manufacturing and construction industries haven't rebounded in the same ways that retail or hospitality have. That's one of the reasons why the African American unemployment rate is high.

The economy added 148,000 jobs in total in September and the national unemployment rate edged down to 7.2 percent in September.

Wilson said that as the unemployment rate ticks down, it masks some of the other weaknesses that exist in the labor market, including the "missing worker" phenomenon and those

workers wading through long-term unemployment.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, non-partisan think tank focused on the needs of low- and middle-income workers, the unemployment rate

"continues to drastically underestimate the weakness of job opportunities" because people who were turned off by an anemic job market and stopped looking for work entirely are not being counted.

In a post on EPI's website about the September jobs report, Elise Gould, director of health policy research at EPI, wrote: "There were over 5 million missing workers in September, and if (Continued on Page 15)



President Barack Obama is greeted by Bill Russell during a stop to view the statue of Russell at City Hall Plaza in Boston, Mass., Oct. 30. The statue was unveiled at a ceremony yesterday. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

Charlotte bucks trends with low-key mayoral race

By Mitch Weiss

CHARLOTTE (AP) - In North Carolina's largest city, the mayoral race has seen no mudslinging. No blistering attack ads like those in state and national races in which divisive partisanship has become normal.

Instead, Democrat Patrick Cannon and Republican Edwin Peacock have tried to stay focused on the critical issues facing Charlotte, the election remaining a low-key affair in a city that has become one of the nation's leading banking and energy centers.

Over the past two decades, Charlotte has become a symbol of the new South - its gleaming skyscrapers and vibrant downtown with two professional sports teams. The city, which promotes its hospitality, hosted the Democratic National Convention last year, and the last two mayors have moved on to higher offices.

Still, the candidates say the city of 760,000 is at a crossroads - with challenges ahead, including job creation. And the two would rather talk about that future than engage in attacks.

The owner of a financial investment company, Peacock, 43, made an unsuccessful bid last year for the Republican nomination in the 9th Congressional District. But the former city councilman impressed voters by campaigning as a moderate; he opposed a statewide amendment last year that banned same-sex marriage.

"If the issue is the economy, then why aren't we focusing on the economy?" Peacock told The Associated Press.

He knows he's at a

disadvantage - 50 percent of Charlotte's 550,000 registered voters are Democrats. About 23 percent are Republicans, the rest unaffiliated.

J. Michael Bitzer, a political science and history professor at Catawba College, agrees that Peacock faces an uphill challenge.

"To have that big of a Democratic advantage means a Republican has got to have his party base show up, win a substantial portion of the unaffiliated voters and then hope for some cross-over Democratic support. That's a huge mountain to overcome," Bitzer said.

But if he wins, Peacock said it will prove that a "business-minded, pragmatic, centrist Republican can win" in a Democratic city because he's reaching out to Democrats, Latinos, African-Americans.

And he noted that Republicans have won in Charlotte before: Pat McCrory, a Republican, spent 14 years as mayor before being elected governor in 2012.

A fiscal conservative, Cannon, 47, the mayor pro tem, is the owner of a parking management company. First elected to the City Council in 1993, Cannon is a longtime radio show host who discusses local and national political issues.

"I think the reason you don't see politics being played in Charlotte the way you see it played in other cities is that it's simply not the Charlotte way. And it's certainly not my way," Cannon said in an interview.

Negative ads have become a staple in political campaigns, from the local level to highest of

fice. For example, in this year's New York City mayoral race, Joe Lhota has unleashed attack ads against Democrat Bill de Blasio, saying he's soft on crime.

Peacock said some people suggested he should wage a campaign in which he'd "spend months trying to tear the other guy down."

"I wasn't going to do that," he said, pointing to one of his campaign commercials that promotes unity. "If a good idea comes from Democrats or Republicans, who cares? I'm running for mayor to provide the leadership, to get us moving forward," Peacock says in the ad.

It doesn't mean the candidates haven't sparred in debates. Cannon called Peacock anti-Charlotte for opposing a capital budget plan. Peacock said it was too expensive.

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F.V. Allison, Jr.

F.V. Allison, Jr., Banking Leaders Inducted Into The North Carolina Banking Hall of Fame

RALEIGH - In ceremonies held in the tradition-laden Cardinal Ball Room at the Pinehurst Hotel in Pinehurst, on Oct. 20, seven titans of the banking industry in North Carolina were formally inducted into the North Carolina Banking Hall of Fame. Honorees are:

- * F. V. Allison, Jr., Mutual Community Savings Bank, Durham
- * T. H. Battle, National Bank of Rocky Mount (first elected chairman of the North Carolina Bankers Association)
- * F. Ed Broadwell, Jr., Home Trust Bank, Asheville
- * Frank B. Holding, Sr., First Citizens Bank, Raleigh
- * Robert Mauldin, Centura Bank, Rocky Mount
- * Robert McInnis, High Point Bank & Trust
- * Samuel Wittkowsky, Mechanics Perpetual Savings and Loan, Charlotte (first elected chairman of the North Carolina Savings & Loan League)

"In recognition of their strong leadership, their commitment to the banking industry of North Carolina, their love and support of their local community, and their pioneering example to all in the banking industry, we are honored to induct these leaders into the North Carolina Banking Hall of Fame," said Thad Woodard, president & CEO, North Carolina Bankers Association.

These inductees, the 5th class to be honored, will bring the total membership in the Banking Hall of Fame to 25. They represent community banks, major national banks, thrift institutions and public servants. They helped lay the foundation for the metamorphosis that has turned North Carolina into one of the leading financial services centers in the nation. This gathering of our state's banking leaders - past and present - will be a very special event. All are invited to attend.

The North Carolina Bankers Association brings together all categories of banking institutions that best represent the interests of our rapidly changing state. The state's banks have provided support to their communities since 1804. Look for a current listing at www.ncba.com/.

Coaches, teacher suspended for wearing blackface

SAN DIEGO (AP) - Three San Diego high school coaches and a teacher are being suspended for wearing blackface at a weekend Halloween party, officials announced Nov. 1.

The varsity head football coach, an assistant coach and a teacher at Serra High School face two-day unpaid suspensions for "unprofessional conduct," and a volunteer coach also will be suspended, said Cindy Marten, superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District.

The four posted Facebook photos of themselves at a weekend party wearing blackface, helmets and costumes in a parody of the Jamaican bobsled team from the 1988 Olympics that inspired the movie "Cool Runnings."

The workers have "expressed a deep sense of remorse," Marten said at a news conference where she was flanked by members of the local NAACP chapter and Anti-Defamation League.

"They send their apologies to any person or group of people they have offended and want to make it clear it was not their intention to offend anyone," Marten said.

They will not fight the suspensions, she said. Critics had called the blackface racially insensitive. The NAACP chapter had called for the coaches to resign or be fired.

However, leaders of the local NAACP and the Anti-Defamation League said they were satisfied with the suspensions.