

# Unemployment claims on backlog in courts

WICHITA (AP) — The number of Kansans waiting to see if they qualify for unemployment benefits is up considerably from last year, according to a report from the Legislative Research Department.

More than 6,500 Kansans have been waiting to see if they qualify for unemployment benefits, which is more than twice the number of people who were waiting three months ago and four times the level in 2010, *The Wichita Eagle* reported (<http://bit.ly/s5ckyZ>).

Rep. Jim Ward, D-Wichita, requested the report on the backlog and said the problem is that the state Labor Department laid off too many judges who heard appeals.

"Why do we have 5,000 more cases (on the backlog) than we did a year ago? Because they laid off the people who were making the decisions," Ward said. "The question is, 'Why?' They basically don't have an answer for that."

State Labor Department officials said changes instituted since

Gov. Sam Brownback took office will create a more efficient system, and that they're re-staffing the appeals department to nearly pre-layoff levels.

"We're doing everything we can to cut that time down, but yeah, it's too long. There isn't a person here who doesn't think that's too long," said Kathie Sparks, deputy secretary of labor.

Brownback also said he's not satisfied with the waits for appeals and blamed the problem on his predecessors.

"Unfortunately, the prior administration had spent most of the federal money that runs the Department of Labor — most of it is a federally funded agency," he said. "It's very little state funding. We had a big reduction in workforce because we had no money — the federal funds to fund it. So then you have these sort of things that start up."

The Department of Labor started the year with at least 16 appeals judges, stationed around the state. But layoffs in June and subsequent

retirements brought the number down to six. The layoffs were part of a reorganization of the department to concentrate its appeals staff in Topeka.

Although the people hearing appeals had had the working title of judge, state law calls for referees, and the job title was changed to reflect that, said Brett Flachsbarth, the chief of the appeals division. But the job qualifications also changed. Unlike the former appeals judges, the referees are not required to be attorneys.

The department is filling the positions by promoting lower-level, non-attorney employees whose job is to make the initial determination whether a worker is eligible for benefits.

Sparks said the department has 11 judges, or referees, and is hiring three more. When the new referees take office in January, the department will be only two positions short of where it was at the beginning of the year. The department made significant upgrades last week, she said.

## On the Beat

### COLBY POLICE Friday

8:38 a.m. — Report filed for incident involving parent picking up juvenile.

9:46 a.m. — Provided escort for motorist from Summit and Country Club Drive to Wagoner's Repair and Performance.

11:31 a.m. — Clerk called to report tenant said a male subject walked into apartment yesterday; is now at playground. Spoke to subject; all OK.

11:45 a.m. — Caller reported dog at large. Not found, left notice for possible owner.

12:26 p.m. — Caller reported man missing since approximately 10:30 a.m. Subject located.

1:03 p.m. — Helped ambulance crew on call.

4:10 p.m. — Assisted subjects with custody exchange. Report filed.

5:25 p.m. — Multiple subjects called about two little dogs in the intersection of Fourth and Country Club. Dogs were taken to Colby Animal Clinic. Contacted owner.

### Saturday

2:45 a.m. — Report filed for driving under the influence.

11:10 a.m. — Contained a vicious dog. Owners not found.

11:47 a.m. — Caller wanted a welfare check.

12:48 p.m. — Assisted motorist in the 200 block of N. Range.

4:06 p.m. — Caller reported theft of vehicle. Civil matter.

5:36 p.m. — Caller reported three subjects leaving business, one had gun. All OK, subject was working inside building, had a nail gun.

5:59 p.m. — Report of loud music at Colby House. Officers busy at time of call. Dispatched at 6:25 p.m., subject was spoken to, music was turned down.

8:58 p.m. — Report filed on traffic stop for driving under the influence, transporting open container and expired tag.

### Sunday

1:49 a.m. — Traffic: subject came to the Law Enforcement

Center wanting to speak to an officer about an intoxicated subject. At 2:07 a.m. reporting party called to say subject was home.

5:06 a.m. — Security check at the airport.

10:49 a.m. — Caller reported a stray dog in the 100 block of French. Not found.

3:28 p.m. — Subject reported receiving harassing text messages. Spoke to both parties, told to stop.

8:54 p.m. — Walk through at Walmart.

11:54 p.m. — Employee told officer a theft had just occurred. Report filed.

### THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Thursday

12:39 a.m. — Two arrest warrants served.

9:32 a.m. — Released Tammy Lynn Woodman.

9:35 a.m. — Assisted Highway Patrol at I-70 mile 55.

9:47 a.m. — Released Casey Lane Brooks.

10:12 a.m. — Caller reported front door open at County Rds. 3 and C. Residence checked OK, owner was contacted.

11:35 a.m. — Booked Jeremy Black.

12:12 p.m. — Booked Mark Julius Smith.

12:34 p.m. — Booked Evan Mainus.

1:01 p.m. — Helped Highway Patrol at I-70 mile 52.

2:09 p.m. — Released Black.

2:27 p.m. — Report filed for civil forfeiture on seized trailer.

2:27 p.m. — Helped Highway Patrol at I-70 mile 78.

2:32 p.m. — Released Terry Lynn Woodman.

3:41 p.m. — Booked Dirk T. Sparks.

3:47 p.m. — Released Sparks.

4:52 p.m. — Released John L. Stephens.

6:13 p.m. — Sheridan County called about an erratic driver on U.S. 24 westbound from county line. Unable to locate.

9:14 p.m. — Arrested subject on Arkansas warrant at 1600 block of S. Range.

10:01 p.m. — Booked Clifford B. Malone Jr.

### Friday

8:30 a.m. — Driving under the influence report filed for traffic stop in the 1600 block of U.S. 24.

9:37 a.m. — Booked Alberto Valdez.

11:16 a.m. — Caller from AAA reported a client stuck in the 2600 block of County Rd. Y. Provided assistance.

12:52 p.m. — Caller reported ex-wife had violated protection from abuse order and was refusing to leave residence in Colby. Report filed.

1:55 p.m. — Booked Charlene Dee Plumisto.

2:02 p.m. — Released Plumisto.

2:37 p.m. — Booked James L. Rogers.

6:15 p.m. — Picked up inmate from Sheridan County on a Thomas County warrant.

7:09 p.m. — Booked David E. Gould.

7:40 p.m. — Released Gould.

### Saturday

5:14 a.m. — Vehicle accident with deer at U.S. 24 and County Rd. 6. No report.

8:32 a.m. — Multiple subjects called about a cow out on U.S. 24 eastbound. Moved cow and contacted owner.

10:52 a.m. — Assisted Colby Fire with a house fire in Levant.

11:15 a.m. — Released Justin Tesmer.

5:36 p.m. — Assisted Colby Police.

8:58 p.m. — Booked Jeremy Brandon Wright.

9:28 p.m. — Booked Justin J. Tesmer at 3:30 a.m.

### Sunday

11:28 a.m. — Booked Billy C Goodman.

12:13 p.m. — Booked Kenneth Biggerstaff.

4 p.m. — Caller reported son bit by dog at Thomas County residence. Report filed, subject didn't

show up at Citizens Medical Center.

5:21 p.m. — Checked on semi stuck at County Rd. 18 and K; had a wrecker coming.

8:37 p.m. — Helped motorist at eastbound I-70 mile 43.

8:59 p.m. — Caller reported mo-

tor vehicle collision at I-70 and K-25 off ramp.

10:06 p.m. — Helped motorist on U.S. 24 east of Colby approximately mile 57.


### Monday

1:53 p.m. — Report on file for theft in Rexford.

1:58 p.m. — Booked Mathew Allen Strifler.

7:51 p.m. — Booked Christopher Castaneda.

9:09 p.m. — Released Christopher Castaneda.




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<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Dr. Rubinowitz Oncology	<b>6</b> Dr. Frederick C. Miller Cardiology	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI's	Cardiac Rehab	
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Dr. Frankum Surgery	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Dr. Curtis Cardiology	<b>17</b>
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	DEXA Bone Density	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI's	Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab	
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Dr. Frederick C. Miller Cardiology	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Dr. Reeves Podiatry	<b>23</b> Dr. Reeves Podiatry	<b>24</b>
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	Mammograms	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI'S	Cardiac Rehab	
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab		Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI'S	Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab	

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